BOROUGHS & BARRIOS: Moving through New York City and Los Angeles
COMLIT 60AC
Summer, 2021
4 semester credits

Course Description

Physically, New York and Los Angeles spread across the map and encompass multiple neighborhoods and communities, seemingly facilitating our ability to access, explore, and find new connections. Socially and economically, both cities have been figured as distinctly “American” dreamscapes—places of refuge and freedom, success, and self-invention—that hinge on the promise that the American city works like an open circuit, enabling unrestricted movement and mobility to and for everyone who visits or decides to make it home.

But who comes to the American city, and why? How do visitors, residents, and (im)migrants negotiate and move through “The Big Apple” and “The City of Angels,” reimagining urban life in the process? With these questions in mind, we will spend the semester tracing the crises of (im)mobility that mark the histories of these two U.S. urban centers but also the possibilities for place-making that have been explored by marginalized communities in New York City and Los Angeles.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites.

Instructor Information, Contact, Office Hours, & Communication

Note: If you receive a personal email from Prof. Palau or your GSI, you are required to respond within 24 hours. Please check your email frequently and know that failure to respond to a personal email will impact your final course grade. The summer goes by quickly, and it's critical that we stay in communication with each other!
**Lead Instructor**

Karina R. Palau, PhD
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**Graduate Student Instructor (GSI)**

Yana Zlochistaya
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Your GSI will be your main point of contact for our course except for technical questions. (See below for information on how to contact Technical Support.)

Your GSI will assist you directly with questions about assignments and course requirements as outlined in the Assignments and Calendar. GSIs also facilitate bCourses discussions, hold weekly office hours via Zoom, send out important updates about the course, and engage with your writing assignments.

Here is some general guidance on how to direct your emails. That said, when in doubt, email us both! We work as a team.

- Topics to direct towards your GSI:
  - Clarification questions about assignments and course requirements
  - Questions specific to content/ideas that emerge in your section’s discussion
  - Concerns or compliments that arise from discussion-section activities

Topics to direct towards your lead instructor:

- Clarification questions about overall course content
- Concerns or compliments that arise from the course overall
- Frustrations that emerge from interactions with your GSI that you cannot resolve directly

**Office Hours**

Please come to office hours and remember that we're human! Prof. Palau and Yana each offer one virtual office hour per week. If you
cannot make the scheduled time because of time zone conflicts, work schedules, etc., please email so we can set up an appointment.

We encourage you to stop by office hours as soon as possible, but note that you are required to virtually meet with an instructor once before Week 5 of our course. You may choose to meet with either Prof. Palau or Yana for a 10-15-minute slot; plan to use this time to talk through your ideas about our course materials, ask questions, or discuss your writing assignments. Failure to have one office-hour meeting with an instructor will impact your participation grade for our course.

Office hours cannot be used to compensate for a lack of participation in other aspects of our course, but we know from experience that students who attend office hours tend to learn more. We encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to interact with us on a one-on-one basis and let us get to know you!

Course Mail & Announcements

Your instructors frequently send important updates to the class through bCourses. Make sure to check Course Mail for messages from the instructors at least once per weekday. You can access course email by clicking on the bCourses Inbox link, or you can choose to have your course mail forwarded to your personal email account or cell phone.

Please save your substantive questions about assignments for office hours rather than email. If you email us, please recognize that we will do our best to respond to weekday emails within 24 hours. If you send an email over the weekend, we will reply as soon as possible, but it may take until Monday.

Remember to respond within 24 hours if you receive a personal email from Prof. Palau or your GSI.

Course Materials and Technical Requirements

Books for Purchase

Links to all our required course materials will be shared through bCourses. That said, given the complications of reading long texts in a virtual format and negotiating the online check-out system for library books, we highly recommend that you buy book-length texts in hardcopy or audiobook form.
• *Open City*, Teju Cole
• *Passing*, Nella Larsen
• *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, Chester Himes

**These four books are widely available, but note that our course moves quickly. You should do your best to ensure that you have access to all four novels in Week 1.**

**If you buy books in hardcopy**, note that the assigned novels are available new and used, and you are not required to buy a particular edition. Any edition will do. Please consider supporting your local bookstore whenever possible; many bookstores can order texts that they don't have in stock, and you can pick up your book within a few days. If you can, buy local!

**If you buy audiobooks**, keep in mind that you will still be asked to engage certain passages and pages of the *written text* as part of our course. Audiobooks are a great option if you enjoy podcasts or music, or if you feel that you learn best by listening. Also, all of us might find it helpful to take a break from reading off a screen at some point this summer, so consider giving audiobooks a try.

**Technical Requirements**

This course is built on a Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas and UC Berkeley’s version is called bCourses. You will need to meet these [computer specifications to participate within this online platform](#).

**Optional**

bCourses allows you to record audio or video files of yourself and upload them in the course. Although doing so is not required for any of the activities, using these features will enhance your engagement in the course. If you would like to use these features, you will need to have a webcam and a microphone installed on your computer.

**Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulties please alert one of the GSIs immediately. However, understand that neither the GSIs, nor the instructor can assist you with technical problems. You must call or email tech support and make sure you resolve any issues immediately.
In your course, click on the "Help" button on the bottom left of the global navigation menu. Be sure to document (save emails and transaction numbers) for all interactions with tech support. Extensions and late submissions will not be accepted due to "technical difficulties."

Assignments & Grading

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

- Discussion Board Participation 20%
- Weekly Reading Quizzes 7%
- Perusall Readings & Annotations 10%
- Close Reading Collaborations 14%
- Creative Project 14%
- Writing Assignments (One short Close-Reading Assignment & One Essay) 20%
- Final Exam 15%

Important notes on grading:

- We will distribute detailed guidelines for all core assignments in this course.
- We are not competing with each other in this course, so end-of-term grades will not be curved.
- If you choose to take the course P/NP, you must complete all core assignments (including the writing assignments and Creative Project) in order to receive a P grade.

Learning Activities

Academic Integrity Pledge & Online Classroom Access

Before you are allowed access to your course material, you must read and make your pledge to Academic Integrity in the online classroom.

We expect you to fully participate in all the course activities described here:

- Complete assigned readings
- Watch and listen to lecture presentations
• Complete collaborative annotation and active reading assignments
• Read web-based announcements and postings assigned during the course
• Compose and post assigned responses to lectures and readings
• Complete writing assignments, including the analysis essay
• Complete the final exam

Modules

Our course material has been divided into a total of 8 modules, one for each week of our course. Each module groups together topics related to a particular area of study, and modules typically combine readings, multimedia lectures, discussion forums, reading quizzes, and various interactive assignments to help you engage the materials that we are studying in a given week. At the beginning of each Module, you can find a list of the Learning Goals that we use to design learning activities for that week and a calendar that provides an at-a-glance view of relevant due dates.

Discussion Board Participation

20% of your course grade

Each module contains a group discussion in which you will write reflectively and critically about the discussion topic. We will not have the opportunity to meet in person, so our posts and responses are considered your class participation and represent a unique opportunity for you to exchange views with your classmates, share experiences and resources, and ensure your understanding of our course material.

For each module, you are required to participate in two forms: 1) through making a substantive post of your own, and 2) by responding to at least two classmates’ answers. Discussion prompts and details are posted for each module, but we recommend thinking of these posts as paragraph-length responses. You should plan to invest time and thought into all your discussion-board contributions, including your responses to classmates' posts.

In addition to contributing your own post for each module, you must respond to at least two other student’s answers to the posted question/s. Your answers must engage your classmates’ ideas and optimize the opportunity to exchange ideas and dialogue about the materials and themes we are studying that week. Responses must be
respectful in tone, even when you disagree, and they must avoid personal attacks and demeaning language.

Note that our course will address difficult topics related to race, violence, and systemic inequalities in American life; please be prepared to use the discussion boards to talk openly and honestly about these topics while recognizing that we form part of a learning community. Our goal should be to support each others' learning and expand our understanding, even if and when we disagree or have strong feelings about the topics and materials that we engage together.

**Weekly Reading Quizzes**

*7% of your course grade*

Except for final-exam week, each module contains a short quiz designed to test your reading comprehension of the texts and materials assigned for that module. Questions will be multiple choice and graded automatically by the Canvas LMS. Refer to the calendar for all due dates. You may take the quiz twice but not within the same 24-hour period; only your highest score will be calculated towards your grade. (See each quiz for details.)

If you have a Letter of Accommodation at UC Berkeley that demonstrates your need for extra time on quizzes and exams, please confirm with your instructors that your letter has been received. Note that, when you start a quiz or exam on bCourses, you can check the timer to confirm that you have the correct time accommodation.

**Perusall Readings & Annotations**

*10% of your course grade*

Along with Close-Reading Collaborations (described below), this activity is designed to encourage us to pay close attention to the texts we read, build conversations around the nuances of our course materials, and practice our analysis skills. Each week, we will access various short texts and/or excerpts from one of our books for purchase via an online collaborative annotation software called Perusall. To access this software, use the Perusall link on our course navigation menu, and follow the calendar of assignments posted there.

**Weekly Close-Reading Collaborations**
14% of your course grade

Each week, we will collaboratively annotate an excerpt from that week’s readings on a shared GoogleDoc. You will access excerpts through the “Collaborations” link on bCourses, then contribute your notes and ideas by posting them as marginal comments in the Google Doc.

A sample Collaboration is posted in Module 1 so that you have an example to reference, plus we will distribute a general rubric that you can use as a guide when posting your Collaboration contributions.

Writing Assignments

20% of your course grade

Discussion Boards will provide an excellent space to practice your writing and analysis skills every week this summer, but we will also complete two core writing assignments. For the first, you will write a one-paragraph Close-Reading Assignment that focuses on closely, carefully analyzing one short passage from a course reading. We will then read your assignment and provide you with feedback before you write one analytical essay towards the end of the summer term. The Analysis Essay (approximately 1000 words) will ask you to build on the skills we practiced through the Close-Reading Assignment and Discussion Boards and should offer a thorough analysis of one or two of our course materials. Detailed guidelines for the essay will be posted on bCourses, and we will also work through a series of short writing assignments designed to help you plan and write your paper.

Creative Project

14% of your course grade

At the end of the summer term, students will complete an individual project of their own design that explores, expands upon, resonates with, or complicates the ideas that we have encountered about the politics of urban space and place. You might produce a study of an urban neighborhood, conduct interviews, research a recent event that has impacted you or your community’s sense of space/place, or produce an art piece that converses with a set of materials that we have studied. The piece that you produce must be creative, and you will share your final product with the class via a file (text, audio, and/or images or videos) that you can post to bCourses.
Students will have the option of co-producing a Creative Project with one or two classmates if they decide that collaborative work best supports their learning.

**Final Exam**

*15% of your course grade*

Due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, final exams for Summer Sessions 2021 will be taken online. (Typically, final exams for Summer Sessions courses must be taken in-person on the Berkeley campus or overseen by an approved proctor.) In this situation, we must trust one another to uphold UC Berkeley’s Code of Conduct and act with academic integrity.

The final exam is cumulative and contains short answer and short essay questions. We will provide an overview of the structure of the final exam by Module 6.

**There will be no make-up exam.** If you miss taking the final or try to take it in a manner for which you have not received permission, you will fail this class automatically.

If you have a Letter of Accommodation at UC Berkeley that demonstrates your need for extra time on exams, please confirm with your instructors that your letter has been received and plan to pace yourself through the final exam accordingly. We ask that you follow the recommendations stated in your Letter of Accommodation.

**Reminder: Your Course End Date**

Your course will end on August 13th but you will continue to have full access to the course site until August 27th. After that date, you will have read-only access to the course.

**Course Policies**

**Students with Disabilities**

All abilities and disability identities are welcomed in this class. If you require course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability, contact [UC Berkeley’s Disabled Students' Program](https://ucdss.ucberkeley.edu)
Please notify the instructor and GSI and inform them which accommodation(s) you would like to use for this course.

UC Berkeley is committed to providing robust educational experiences for all learners. With this goal in mind, we have activated the ALLY tool for this course. You will now be able to download content in a format that best fits your learning preference. PDF, HTML, EPUB, and MP3 are now available for most content items. For more information visit the alternative formats link or watch the video entitled, "Ally in bCourses."

**Late Work Policy**

Homework assignments, readings, and Discussion Board posts all have specific due dates and times, which you can track using the bCourses calendar. Because our course must pack a semester's worth of material into just 8 weeks, we will move very quickly. Please commit yourself to staying on top of our weekly assignment schedule and reach out to us if you anticipate being unable to complete an assignment on time. We are open to offering extensions, but we also know that an 8-week course flies by, making it difficult to get back on track should you fall behind. For this reason, we cannot grant a string of extensions, especially on smaller assignments (for example, Discussion Board posts) that are part of our weekly routine.

If you need an extension, email us as soon as you're aware of the anticipated delay, and provide an estimated date when you will submit the late assignment. If you submit an assignment late and did not receive an approved extension, you will not receive full credit for late assignments.

**Honor Code**

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code and that an attitude of honesty, integrity, and respect will shape all your interactions with your classmates and their ideas, as well as your engagements with the materials that we study together.

**Collaboration and Independence**
Reviewing lecture and reading materials and studying for exams can be enjoyable and enriching activities to share with fellow students. We recommend that you collaborate with each other throughout our course. However, unless otherwise instructed, homework assignments, the essay, and the final exam are to be completed independently, and materials submitted as homework should be the result of your own independent work.

**Cheating & Plagiarism**

All the assignments, comments, and discussion board contributions submitted under your name must represent your own work. Furthermore, all the work that you submit in this course must represent your own thinking and language. Copying text or ideas from another source—including work by a classmate—without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question.

Anyone caught cheating on any assignment in this course will receive a failing grade for the assignment in question. They will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct and may receive a failing grade for the entire course.

If you have questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please ask. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, explore the resources linked below:

- UC Berkeley Library Citation Page, Plagiarism Section
- GSI Guide for Preventing Plagiarism

As a tool to promote academic integrity in this course, Turnitin will be used to check essays for originality. Turnitin takes assignments submitted through bCourses and compares them to a database of books, journal articles, websites, and other student papers. This creates an opportunity for you to improve your academic writing skills by ensuring that your sources have been properly cited and attributed. Turnitin can also help you gauge how much of your essay represents your own thinking and language. Please note that a low “Similarity Index” score does not necessarily indicate that the essay in question is without academic integrity issues. For more information on Turnitin see:

- UC Berkeley Turnitin Page, Students Getting Started
Incomplete Course Grade

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the final exam may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing or by email to the GSI and course instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances. According to the policy of the college, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

End of Course Evaluation

Before your course ends, please take a few minutes to participate in the course evaluation to share your opinions about the course. Information about the course evaluation will be made available in bCourses.

Schedule of Readings

Below is a weekly course schedule. All readings, lectures, and assignments are provided in the week assigned in bCourses. Check bCourses for specific assignment due dates.

Module 1: New York City as (Im)migrant Dreamscape

Readings

- "The New Colossus," Emma Lazarus
- "The Buttonhook," Mary Jo Salter
- "How I Found America" & "The Open Cage," Anzia Yezierska
- "Mannahatta," Walt Whitman
- "The Lower East Side of Manhattan," Victor Hernández Cruz

Audio and Visual Materials

- Art by H. Edgar Heap of Birds and Alan Michelson

Module 2: Migrations "Great" and Small

Readings
• *Passing*, Nella Larson (book for purchase)
• "Harlem," "One-Way Ticket," "Juke Box Love Song," & "Let America Be America Again," Langston Hughes

**Audio and Visual Materials**

• Paintings by Jacob Lawrence

**Module 3: Harlem as Barrio, Harlem as "Nowhere"**

**Readings**

• "Sonny’s Blues," James Baldwin
• "Prologue" to *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
• "Harlem Is Nowhere," Ralph Ellison
• "Ode to the DiaspoRican," María Teresa "Mariposa" Fernández
• "Nuyorican School of Poetry" & "Postcards of El Barrio," Willie Perdomo
• Selections from *When the Spirits Dance Mambo*, Marta Moreno Vega

**Audio and Visual Materials**

• Photographs by Gordon Parks

**Module 4: Testing Mobility in the "Open" City?**

**Readings**

• *Open City*, Teju Cole (book for purchase)
• Excerpts from *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau

**Audio and Visual Materials**

• Humans of New York photoblog

**Module 5: Between Dreamscape and Dystopia: "The City of Angels" in (Im)migrant Narratives**

**Readings**

• "This Is What $10,000 Did to Me,” Anzia Yezierska
• *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, Chester Himes (book for purchase)
Module 6: Documenting Urban "Renewal" in "The City of Angels"

Readings

- Chávez Ravine, Culture Clash
- "Prologue" to There There, Tommy Orange

Audio and Visual Materials

- The Exiles, Dir. Kent Mackenzie

Module 7: Rethinking the Zoot Suit & L.A. "Riots"

Readings

- Excerpts from Zoot Suit, Luis Valdez
- Excerpts from Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, Anna Deavere Smith

Audio and Visual Materials

- Zoot Suit, Dir. Luis Valdez
- Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992

Module 8: Alternative Moves in and through Los Angeles

Readings

- Poems by Verónica Reyes