

Professor Matthew D. Matsaganis
Spring Semester 2006

E-mail:

matthew.matsaganis@usc.edu,
mdmatsaganis@yahoo.com;

Class on the Web:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/>

Office Hours:

Thursday 1-4 pm
& by appointment

MEET THE PROTOTYPICAL
21ST CENTURY COSMOPOLIS:
LOS ANGELES –
PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE



[A] ***Course OVERVIEW***

Los Angeles has been portrayed by architects, geographers, historians, political scientists, sociologists, and urban planners, as well as art, communication, community, film, immigration, and media scholars as the *prototypical* 21st century city. The *evolution* of this model *cosmopolis* is explored by focusing on various aspects of the life of Los Angeles and weaving together strands of research that allow for a rich understanding of the forces that are shaping the city. As Los Angeles is a source of vision, especially in an environment of intensifying *globalization*, its transformation is inextricably linked to developments in California, the United States, and the world. A clear view and the analysis of these visions is a key aspect of this course.

[B] ***Class FORMAT***

- This class is conducted as a seminar. Students prepare for every meeting with the instructor following the directions they are given and the schedule provided at the end of the syllabus. The instructor lectures during most classes in order to provide the students with the necessary background to better understand the readings. The lecture is intended to lay the ground for the subsequent analysis of the assigned readings and to generate discussion.
- Given the character of the course, students play an active role in shaping class discussion. To that end, students master the reading assignments associated with each weekly topic and come to class prepared with questions, criticisms, and comments. To

facilitate discussion, each student is expected to come to class with brief written answers (i.e., one short paragraph) to the following questions: (1) What was the most valuable piece of information, idea, or passage in the readings assigned for today's class? Why? (2) What was the most confusing/least valuable idea, information, or passage in readings assigned for today's class? Why? Although these answers will not be graded, they will be collected at the conclusion of each meeting.

☞ Occasionally, for each assigned reading, one student will be asked to lead-off the class discussion by providing a 5-minute critical review.

☞ Guest speakers are occasionally invited to class to address specific topics and themes and to answer students' questions.

☞ Field trips are also scheduled for students to get better acquainted with the city they are studying.

Note

When the class is oriented toward students studying film and television it is of particular interest to explore portrayals of Los Angeles and representations of Los Angeles life through the products of the movie and television industries. To this end, viewing segments of a selected variety of films or television programs is key. The discussion following the screening is led by one or more students charged with the responsibility after consulting with the instructor a week in advance.

[C] *Required READING*

- The instructor provides the students with the readings, a list of which may be found below (please see under the heading: *Schedule Breakdown*).

[D] *ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION*

☞ Students are required to propose, write, and present a term paper/project (*approximately 20 pages in length*). The paper is intended to evaluate the students' understanding and ability to integrate the materials covered in class, but to also take them beyond that literature.

☞ Students choose a topic, discuss it with the instructor, and submit a proposal that is evaluated. Creative approaches are encouraged, but must be cleared with the instructor first. The instructor should be consulted regularly as the term progresses and the project nears completion.

☞ Every student must formally present her or his project to class at the end of the term. The presentation is graded.

☞ Students are also asked to keep an "LA Journal." Weekly journal entries may have a variety of forms (text, image, sound, etc.) and are meant to encourage the students to reflect on their encounters with the city. Journals are handed in on the date noted in the schedule provided below and are evaluated.

.....▶ *Grade breakdown:*

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|----------------------------------|-----|
| (i) Term paper/project proposal: | 10% |
| (ii) Term paper/project: | 40% |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| (iii) Presentation: | 10% |
| (iv) LA Journal: | 20% |
| (iv) Class participation: | 20% |

[E] **Schedule BREAKDOWN (by WEEK)**

Notes:

- City tours are discussed in advance in class and planned with the students
 - Guest speakers are announced one week in advance
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Week 1 Introduction to the course

Week 2 *Starting at the beginning –Los Angeles, the early years*

- Abu-Lughod, J. L. (1999). *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles. America's global cities.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1-16.
- Banham, R. (1990). *Los Angeles: The architecture of four ecologies.* Hammondsworth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books, pp. 21-36
- Fogelson, R. M. (1993). *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930.* Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp. 1-2, 5-42.

☛ City tour 1 *(see note above)

Week 3 *The prototypical 21st century city*

- Abu-Lughod, J. L. (1999). *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles. America's global cities.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 271-284, 358-398.
 - Dear, M., Schockman, H. E., & Hise, G. (Eds.) (1996). *Rethinking Los Angeles.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 1-14
 - Fogelson, R. M. (1993). *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930.* Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp. 137-204, 247-272.
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Week 4 *Ethnic Los Angeles*

- Fogelson, R. M. (1993). *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930.* Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp. 63-84.
- Waldinger, R., & Bozorgmehr, M. (Eds.) (1996). *Ethnic Los Angeles.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 3-37, 445-470.

- Waldinger, R. (Ed.) (2001). *Strangers at the gates: New immigrants in urban America*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp. 1-29, 30-79

Week 5

*Politics in the City of Angels: Impossible dreams
& possible nightmares, part I*

- Baldassare, M. (Ed.) (1994). *The Los Angeles riots: Lessons for the urban future*. San Francisco: Westview Press, pp. 3-17, 47-71, 237-254.
- Fogelson, R. M. (1993). *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, pp. 205-228.
- Gooding-Williams, R. (Ed.) (1993). *Reading urban uprising*. New York; London: Routledge, pp. 97-114, 117-154.
- Horne, G. (1995). *Fire this time: The Watts uprising and the 1960s*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, pp. 3-42

☞ Guest speaker *(see note above)

Week 6

*☞ Politics in the City of Angels: Impossible dreams
& possible nightmares, part II*

☞ Transforming communities – The metamorphosis of L.A.

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN; London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 178-199.
- Ball-Rokeach, S.J, Kim, Y.C. & Matei, S. (2001). Storytelling neighborhood: Paths to belonging in diverse urban environments. *Communication Research*, 28, 4, 392-428.
- Dear, M., Schockman, H. E., & Hise, G. (Eds.) (1996). *Rethinking Los Angeles*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.57-75, 77-95.
- Matei, S., Ball-Rokeach, S.J, & Qiu, J.L. (2001). Fear and misperception of Los Angeles urban space: A spatial-statistical study of communication-shaped mental maps. *Communication Research*, 28, 4, 429-463.

Term project/paper proposal due

Week 7

Mediated realities and the reality of the media in L.A.

- Kim, Y.C. (2003). The Internet and traditional media in “geo-ethnic” urban communities: A contextual approach. Top Four Paper. Communication and Technology Division. Paper presented to the International Communication Association Conference. San Diego, CA: May 23-27, 2003.

- Tunstall, J., & Walker, D. (1981). *Media made in California: Hollywood, politics, and the news*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-12, 13-28, 86-119, 120-137, 186-197.
- New California Media (2001). *Profiles of ethnic media: California's new civic communicators*. San Francisco, CA: New California Media, pp. 77-83, 91-95.

Suggested reading:

- Gootlieb, R., & Wolt, I. (1977). *Thinking big: The story of the Los Angeles Times, its publishers, and their influence on Southern California*. New York: Putnam.

Week 8 *The construction of the Los Angeles identity through art, part I*

- Banham, R. (1990). *Los Angeles: The architecture of four ecologies*. Hammondsouth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books, pp. 57-73.
- Barron, S., Bernstein, S., & Fort, I. S. (2000). *Made in California: Art, image, and identity, 1900-2000*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, pp. 49-63, 64-101, 146-191, 234-271.

Week 9 *The construction of the Los Angeles identity through art, part II*

- Banham, R. (1990). *Los Angeles: The architecture of four ecologies*. Hammondsouth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books, pp. 111-134.
- Cándida, S. R. (1995). *Utopia and dissent: Art, poetry, and politics in California*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 3-31, 67-89, 145-171.

Week 10 *Inventing Hollywood – The ‘entertaining’ Los Angeles*

- Ceplair, L., & Englund, S. (1980). *The inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the film community, 1930-1960*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, pp. 299-324, 325-429.
- Friedrich, O. (1997). *City of nets: A portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s*. Berkeley; Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, pp. 1-29, 31-60, 105-139.
- May, L. (1983). *Screening out the past: The birth of mass culture and the motion picture industry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 167-199.

Week 11 *Term project presentations – Part 1*

LA Journals due at the beginning of class

Week 12 *Term project presentations – Part 2*

Term projects due at the end of class

[F] *TERMS and CONDITIONS*

Attending every class meeting is to the students' benefit. The variety of texts examined is significant and the evaluation of the term project depends heavily on the extensity and quality of integration of class materials and other relevant literatures. Thus, participation in class discussions is considered critical, as it allows students to grapple with texts and synthesize information and knowledge from a number of different sources. Students should begin working on their term projects as soon as possible and consult regularly with the instructor to ensure that their projects are completed on time. Extensions for handing in assignments are given only under extreme circumstances.