Geography of New York City Metro Area (Hunter College CUNY)
Geography 357 (Undergraduate) / Geography 709.57 (Graduate)
Fall, 2015 Mondays 5:35-8:15PM   **Jack Eichenbaum,** Ph.D. instructor
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Web: www.GeogNYC.com

A. Objective

Informed immersion in NYC is a main objective of this class. You will learn by exploration and observation more than by media! The city is your laboratory to complement readings, lectures and discussion. You should emerge from this class with enhanced appreciation of the entire city. Study assignments include keeping a journal of walking assignments as well as readings. Field work will focus on the five boroughs of New York City. (Students with difficulties in walking or using public transportation or who have phobias regarding unfamiliar neighborhoods should consider this before registering.)

B. Calendar

This class first meets on Monday, August 31, 2015. There is no class on Labor Day, Monday, September, 7. **The next class meets <u>in the field</u> on Thursday, Sept 10. (see below).** There is no class on Monday, Sept. 14. **We return to the classroom on Monday, Sept. 21.** The CUNY schedule calls for NO classes on Monday, Oct. 12 (Columbus Day).. The last day of class is Monday, December 14. The last day to submit final project is Monday, December 21.

Saturday, November 7 and Sunday, November 15, 9-5 PM will be reserved for student led field trips, constituting class time. All are expected to attend as well as help organize. (To compensate for this time, other classes are shortened.) Classroom time will be available for discussion of student projects and other matters. Where possible, information pertaining to this class will be disseminated via email. *My email address is jaconet@aol.com and my phone number is 718-961-8406.*

On Thursday, September 10, 2015, the class meets in the field for a walking tour of East Harlem and the Upper East Side led by the instructor. By 5:20 PM assemble @ 125 St/Lexington Ave (4,5,6, Metro North) in front of Pathmark. Use bathrooms before you leave! We start walking at 5:30 PM. This is Walk #1.

Students who are late should note tour directions below. Call another student's cell phone number to catch up. If necessary, do the walk on your own time ASAP. (Refer to AIA Guide and a Google map)

125 St- Madison Av- 121 St - Sylvan Court- 121 St- Third Ave- 116 St- Park Ave –115 St- internal walkways in Taft houses (between Park/Madison)- 112 St- Madison Ave-110 St-Ellington-Circle-Central Park (parallel to Fifth Ave-106 St) Fifth Ave-103 St-(thru walkway and under viaduct)-Park Ave (East side)-95 St-Third Ave-96 St-Third Ave- 91 St-Third Ave-86 St-Lexington Ave

C. Required Independent Walking Assignments

There are seven additional assigned walks which you will do on your own time. <u>I suggest you do these as early in the semester as possible when the days are longer and the air is warmer!</u> The directions for each walk can be accessed from the Dept of Geography, Geog 357 web site<u>. Walks #2 and #3 must completed for the Sept 21 class.</u> It would be a good idea to do others early! They will be discussed in subsequent classes.

#2 Topography: The Glacial Moraine in Jamaica, Queens
#3 Topography: The Hudson Highlands in Inwood and the West Bronx
#4 Lower Manhattan Waterfront and Landfill
#5 Brooklyn Waterfront and Brooklyn Heights
#6 Long Island City Waterfront and Queensboro Plaza
#7 Mott Haven (Bronx) and Harlem River
#8 Staten Island Ferry and St. George

Purpose of walks: Exploration is the laboratory for the science of Geography. You are also living and working in the lab! Take notes around the general themes for each walk as well as anything else that seems remarkable. Notes will be needed for later classes/lectures. This class relies on WALKING assignments more than READING assignments, especially at the beginning. Learn to READ the environment directly. **(Put your I-phones away!)** Each walk should take about 2 hours including note-taking and curiosity but not including transportation to/from. Follow street to street directions given but feel free to diverge and return. Walks 4 and 5 are easily done consecutively if you can plan for the time needed.

Hints on how to prepare for walks:
The instructions for the walks are on the Geography 357 web page.

Find pages in AIA guide that relate to the particular walk and MAKE COPIES.
Find the area to be covered on a Google map (or paper atlas) and MAKE A COPY. (This is
    preferable to constantly accessing a map on an I-phoone.) You can make notes on the paper
    map.
Check sunset time. Usually you can see well enough for a half hour after sunset. Note that days
    are getting shorter as the semester continues. In early November, daylight savings time ends,
    making sunset effectively an hour earlier.
Weekend mornings are least crowded times.
Walks can be made into family excursions or even dates. You are also encouraged to walk
    together with other students.
Bring a clipboard for taking notes and referring to copied material..
Check MTA website for weekend subway diversions.

D. Curriculum Overview

1. Topography
    * Relief
    * Navigable water
    * Biodiversity
    * Historical settlement
    * Place Naming
    * Recreation

2. Transportation and Technology (eras approximate)
    * Sail-Wagon-Canal 1625-1840
    * Steamboat-Iron Horse (1820-1860)
    * Steel Rail (1860-1910)
    * Bridges-Tunnels-Subways-Parkways (1900-1940)
    * Expressways-Airports-Containers (1940-2012)
    * Infrastructure geography as a response to transportation and technology

3. Demography
    * Assignment on family migration history
    * Immigration to NYC 1625-1925
    * Immigration to NYC 1965-present
    * Internal migration to NYC
    * Intraurban migration within NYC
    * Class and Ethnic patterns

4. Lines on the land (Political Geography of NYC)
    * Macro-political (Dutch, British, Commissioner's Plan, Land use and building regulation,
       Annexation, Consolidation, Zoning, City planning, Federal programs, Robert Moses)
    * Micro-Political (BIDs, Historic Districts, Landmarks, Property Owners Assc)

*Assignment on Geography of NYC in the media.

E. Grades

Grading for this class is based on four expressions of your comprehension:

1. 40%   Leadership and oral-written presentation of a field experience in NYC
You will co-lead a field segment with another student on either Saturday, November 2 or Sunday, November 10. Field assignments will be made on the first day of class. More information on requirements for this presentation is discussed elsewhere in this document.

2. 40%   Final Exam: Take home essay format. Will require some field work.
More on that later.

3. 10%   Short answer quiz on lecture concepts and assigned walks.
This concerns facts pertinent to lecture content through mid-October and all assigned walks. It will be given in late October and graded in class.

4. 10%   Classroom participation

Maximum grades will sum to 1000 points. Letter grade will follow CUNY standards.

5. Extra Credit: . Classroom review of required walks.
You are the teacher for about 25 minutes. These voluntary assignments will be made on the first and second day of classroom classes. Successful presentations raise grade by one level (example. B to B+ or B+ to A-) Your presentation must include photographs and involve the class!

F. Readings: GNYC Fall 2015

You can use the following reference book continually and it should prove to have value well beyond the scope of this class. It's often available at The Strand at a substantial discount.

The AIA Guide to New York (5th edition) by N. White and E. Willensky,

Assigned readings are on line
http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog357/readings.html
Selected chapters have been scanned.
Short articles will occasionally be assigned by email.

1. *The New American Ghetto* by Camilo Jose Vergara, Rutgers University Press, 1997 (This is a picture book on reserve. Go to the Hunter library and look at it!)
2. *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's Global Cities* by Janet Abu-Lughod, University of Minnesota Press, 1999
3. *The Power Broker* by Robert Caro, Random House, 1975
4. *The Future of Us All : Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City* by Roger Sanjek, Cornell University Press, 1998
5. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs, 1968
6. **"The Mannahatta Project"** by Nick Palimgarten**, *New Yorker ,*** 10/1/07

The following books/atlases/reports may be helpful for planning field experiences and preparing written assignments. They are useful references for specific topics.

A Geography of the New York Metropolitan Region *by Edward Bergman*
The Vera Institute Atlas of Crime and Justice in New York City by Lola Odubekun
New York City in the 1980's by John Mollenkopf
Plan for New York City 1969   New York City Planning Commission
The Newest New Yorkers 1990-1994 Department of City Planning, New York, 1996
New York: An Illustrated History Ric Burns and James Sanders, 2001
Atlas of the Census DCP, New York, 1985
The Encyclopedia of New York City by Kenneth Jackson, NY Historical Society, 2010
The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn edited by John Manbeck, Citizens Committee, 1998
The Neighborhoods of Queens by Claudia Gryvatz Copquin, Ciitizens Committee, 2007
Crossing the Boulevard Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan, 2003

The Internet offers additional resources. Here are some sites I like**. I expect many of you will add to this list during the semester. (Send email to all if you find something generally useful!)**

http://www.nyc.gov   Official NYC website and link to all NYC government agencies
http://nycserv.nyc.gov/nycproperty/nynav/jsp/selectbbl.jsp Display parcel assessment
     information by borough-block-lot or by address
http://www.oasisnyc.org/   Oasis displays integrated Block/lot, Census, Aerial photo,
    Open space info **You can make your own maps!**
http://www.nycsubway.org/ Unofficial site bursting with subway history etc.
http://www.nycroads.com/roads/ History and geography of NYC's expressways and
    parkways
http://www.forgotten-ny.com/Home%20page/index.html exploration of old, odd and
    forgotten NYC
http://www.gothamgazette.com/ Current events in NYC and excellent links for
    statistical sources and publications (search)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4X6CbnC7hzs   (for transporation unit)
http://narrative.ly/2013/01/on-tract/ Walking through all NYC Census tracts
http://www.vanderbiltcupraces.com/blog/article/the_closing_of_the_motor_parkway_and_the_current_utilization_of_its_right-o# Vanderbilt Motor Pky

G. Miscellaneous Resources

The Map Division (Room 117) of the New York Public Library
(5 Ave/41 St) is an extremely valuable resource for this class, particularly for information related to
field projects. Specialized maps, guidebooks and other information, including some of the materials above,
are accessible here. The librarians are municipal treasures and the setting is regal and inspirational. See the
website http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/map/map.html

Other Venues (see web pages: may require appointments, membership, permission)
Museum of the City of New York (photographs, prints, exhibits, tours, store)
New York Historical Society (library, prints, architectural drawings, exhibits, store)
Municipal Art Society (advocacy, lectures, walking tours.)
Queens Museum (The New York City Panorama 1/1200 scale model of NYC)
Queensboro Public Library (Jamaica- "Queens Archives Division" collection)
Brooklyn Historical Society (tours, exhibits, library)
Bronx, Queens, Staten Island Historical Societies (limited collections, exhibits, tours, experts,
     leads to other knowledgeable people)
Neighborhood Historical Societies-particularly Queens (local areas info, knowledgeable people)
Community Planning Boards (some data , leads to local experts)
Borough offices of Dept of Finance (property), Buildings, City Planning (Manhattan bookstore)
     (some data, some expertise)

H. Guide to Field Work for November presentations

Learning/Observation in the Field/or with old Maps/or relate to classwork:
(_**Boldface questions are required;**_ others strongly suggested where applicable.)

What route would people use to get here in colonial times (by sail/wagon)?
Was there ever a ferry terminal near here?
When (if) did rail (train, trolley, El, subway) transport reach here?
When did improved roads (turnpikes, Post Rds, boulevards, local streets, parkways, Xways) arrive?
How did major transportation innovations affect the area?
Are elevators, high-rise construction, or other special technologies particularly important to this area?
What are the highest and lowest places in this area?
Where does water flow naturally?
Are/were there flooding problems in this area?
Are/were there special health hazards in this area? (Lead poisoning, mosquito-spread disease, abnormal
     cancer rate, rape/murder rate etc)
When did public infrastructure: parks, schools, police station, fire station, hospital arrive here?
Are there very big/very old trees in the area?
When (and what kind) did commercial activity appear in this area?
What class/culture(s) are served by current commercial activity?
Any industrial activity here? When/what?
When were existing commercial structures built (style)?
When were existing industrial structures built (style)?
Are there deviations to a typical 'grid'- find reasons for deviant streets.
Is there a pattern to the street naming? Were street names ever changed?
Are their recurring peculiarities in the boundaries between lots on blocks? Why?
Are there "super-blocks" created by closing off streets?
Is there evidence of slum clearance; public housing construction; other subsidized housing projects;
     Urban Renewal; condemnation of property for roads, schools or other public works; Model
     Cities program; private planning; restrictive covenants; large uniform developments
Does the present frontage of similar buildings suggest where previous lot lines were?
Does development appear to be concentrated in one time period, in several, or continual?
What has/does the Community Planning Board, Borough President done/do that affects this area?
Are there active Civic groups, Property Owners Assn., BID's, Merchants Assn with influence here?
What (mix of) economic classes of people reside here? How has this changed historically?
What (mix of) cultures/ethnicities of people reside here? How has this changed historically?

Other Questions to Research by Interview/Reading

What crime rates are unusually high or low here? (Police precinct)
Who is investing in the neighborhood? (local banks)
Who is coming and going where? (realtors, postal carriers, schools)
Where do local organizations meet; what do they discuss? (local newspapers)

For Geography of NYC 2015   Contact List   (Please BLOCK print NICE!)

NAME (Last, First) _____

Preferred Telephone (Area) (Number) _____

Preferred E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

FIELD DAY and AREA _____

(Above info will be circulated to the class by e-mail as a contact list; Info below is for instructor)

Neighborhood of current residence _____**ZIP** _____

NYC Neighborhoods lived in for at least 3 years _____

_____

Birthplace _____

US States or Foreign countries lived in besides NY
_____
_____

What do you love about NYC? _____

_____

What do you hate about NYC? _____

_____