Course Description
Advice manuals popular in the mid-nineteenth-century illustrate a long held anxiety about the urban landscape. The assumption was that the city was rife with “confidence men” and “painted women” who sought not only to swindle newcomers but also to recruit them into their nefarious fold. The city was thus imagined as a mercurial landscape of shifting forms and deceptive appearances unfit for wholesome living. This course explores the history and changing shape of ideas about dwelling in the American city. From the mid-nineteenth century guidebooks to the design section of New York Magazine, from Walt Whitman’s poetry to hashtags and twitter feeds—we will examine how Americans have made themselves physically and imaginatively at home in the city. Writers we will consider include Edith Wharton, Joan Didion, Marshall Berman, Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin. We will look at the design work of Frederick Law Olmstead and Robert Moses, and photography of the urban landscape. Music by Radiohead, the Rolling Stones and from the Harlem Renaissance as well as the films of Charlie Kaufman will help us think about the ways different mediums capture, reflect and shape the urban experience and what kinds of obstacles—psychological, social and class-based—the city poses for the activity of dwelling. Students will contribute to a course blog, write three short papers and collaborate using social bookmarking to research their final papers.

Required Texts:
Most texts will be available on the “Readings” page of the Course blog (dwellingandtelling.wordpress.com). Print and read the texts under discussion for each session and bring them with you to class. Please purchase the editions of the texts listed below.

Walt Whitman, Song of Myself (1855 Edition)
Publisher: Dover Thrift Editions
ISBN: 0486414108

Paul Auster, The New York Trilogy
Publisher: Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition
ISBN: 0143039830

Learning Goals
This course aims to help students improve analytical reading and writing skills through sustained discussion and critical writing. We will treat writing as a mode of thinking and experiment with different approaches to and steps in developing the critical essay, including free writing, blogging, multiple drafting, revising, and polishing. This course will be collaborative, and one of its main objectives will be to foster an intellectual community as the foundation of our writing projects.
Course Requirements:

**Participation (15%)**: Active participation, both online and in class, is central to success in this course. Bring the text under discussion to each session having read it thoroughly and come up with some questions to pose to the class.

**Discussion Leading Assignment (10%)**: Each student will lead one discussion on the blog and the first 15 minutes of one class. As discussion leader, you will research the day’s reading, post questions to the course blog, direct our attention to specific parts of the text, and share with us your reading of it. We will discuss the details of this assignment in the first class.

**Blog Contributions (15%)**: At least two days before each session, the discussion leader will pose questions to the class on the course blog. Each student must respond to the questions by noon the day before the session. The blog will function as a place to workshop ideas about the text before we come together to discuss them. Don’t be afraid to voice your confusion or frustration here, as those feelings often produce fruitful avenues of inquiry into the text.

**Essays 1 & 2 (30%)**: These will be 3-5 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides (follow MLA guidelines as documented in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Ed.). Topics will be distributed well in advance of the essay due dates and will come out of class discussion. You will be asked to bring in drafts of your papers to participate in writing workshops and peer review sessions. You may rewrite papers for a higher grade provided that you meet with me to discuss the rewrite and submit it within one week.

**Essay 3 (30%)**: This essay will be 6-8 pages in length, and will follow the same formal guidelines as the first two essays. For the third essay, you will collaboratively research photographers of American urban life and landscapes by using Diigo, a social bookmarking tool and the course blog. Each student will then further research two photographers and write a critical comparative essay.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance factors into your participation grade. More than two unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation mark and excessive absences will result in a failing grade for the course. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance and get any work or announcements you missed from a classmate. Send me by email any work that is due on a day you are not in class and bring a hard copy to the next class. Habitual lateness will negatively impact your participation grade as will coming to class without the text under discussion.

**Academic Integrity**

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website ([http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html](http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)).
Course Schedule

(Subject to Change)

Wednesday, 9/3

• Introduction

• Sign-up for Discussion Leading Assignment

• Excerpts from 19th Century Advice Manuals (Blog)

Unit 1: Urban Advice  
Monday, 9/8

• Karen Haltunnen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*; Ch. 1 pgs 1-33 (Blog)
• **Discussion Leader: Olivia Hoffman**

**Wednesday, 9/10**
- Joan Didion, “Goodbye to All That;” pgs 225-238 (Blog)
- John Devore, “New York Doesn’t Love You” (Blog)

**Unit 2: Mapping the City**
**Monday, 9/15**
- **First Paper Workshop**

**Wednesday, 9/17**
- Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*; Ch. 1 “The Image of the Environment” pgs 1-13 and Ch. 3 “The City Image and its Elements” pgs 46-90 (Blog)
- Jorge Luis Borges, “On Exactitude in Science” (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Natascha King**

**Monday, 9/22**
- **First Paper Due**
- **Discussion Leader: Diana Fujii**

**Wednesday, 9/24**
- Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City.” pgs 156-163 (Blog)
- Excerpts from Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blog)

**Monday, 9/29**
- Screening and discussion: *Synechdoche, New York*

**Wednesday, 10/1**
- Screening and discussion: *Synechdoche, New York*

**Unit 3: Detecting the City**
**Monday, 10/6**
- Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the 19th Century;” pgs 66-85 (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Vivien Yue**
Wednesday, 10/8
- Edgar Allan Poe, 431; “The Mystery of Marie Roget,” pgs 506-555
- Radiohead
- **Discussion Leader: Jack Johnson**

Monday, 10/13
No Class

Wednesday, 10/15
- **Second Paper Workshop**

Monday, 10/20
- Paul Auster, *City of Glass* pgs 1-100
- **Discussion Leader: Juliana Mandel**

Wednesday, 10/22
- Paul Auster, *City of Glass* pgs 100-5
- **Second Paper Due**

Monday, 10/27
- Slavoy Žižek, “Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire,” Pgs 48-66
- **Discussion Leader: Addie Weyrich**

**Unit 4: City Planning**

Wednesday, 10/29
- *City Beautiful* (Blog)
- Frederick Law Olmstead plans for Central Park (Blog)
- Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*; Ch. 5 “Mysteries of the Great City,” pgs 182-207 (Blog)

Monday, 11/3
- Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* pgs 25-100
- **Discussion Leader: Becky Chung**

Wednesday, 11/5
- Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* pgs 100-192
- Robert Moses (Blog)

Monday, 11/10
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*; Introduction, pgs 3-28 (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Meredith Stein**
Wednesday, 11/12
- Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*; Ch. 5 “In the Forest of Symbols, Some Notes on Modernism in New York,” pgs 287-348 (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Kristen Chiu**

Monday, 11/17
- Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* Ch. 1; “Sunshine or Noir?” pgs 15-99 (Blog)
- Thomas Pynchon, “A Journey into the Mind of Watts” (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Arjun Parikh**
- **Diigo Contributions Due**

**Unit 5: Dwelling**

Wednesday, 11/19
- Martin Hediegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” pgs 141-161 (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Tayleur Hylton**

Monday, 11/24
- Hannah Arendt, From *The Human Condition* (Blog)
- **Discussion Leader: Seth Trochtenberg**

Wednesday, 11/26
- Susan Fraiman, “Shelter Writing: Desperate Housekeeping from ‘Crusoe’ to ‘Queer Eye’” pgs 341-359 and “Bad Girls of Good Housekeeping: Dominique Browning and Martha Stewart” pgs 260-282 (Blog)
- Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*; Ch. 1 “The House: from Cellar to Garret. The Significance of the Hut” pgs. 3-38
- **Discussion Leader: Maddie Perimutter**

Monday, 12/1
- Edith Wharton, From *Decoration of Houses* and “Mrs. Manstey’s View;” pgs 1-11 (Blog)

Monday, 12/8
- **Final Paper Workshop**

Wednesday, 12/10
- **Final Paper Workshop**