

## WASHINGTON, DC: RACE, RIGHTS, AND REGION

George Mason University

Fall 2001

History 389-006

Mondays, 7:20 to 10:00, Robinson B 203

Course Web Site: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/masur/f2001/hist389/>

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### Course Description:

This course explores the complexities of life in and around Washington, DC, from the early nineteenth century to the present. As the course title suggests, we will focus on *race, rights, and region*. *Race*. We will discuss slavery and emancipation, the growth of segregation, and efforts to guarantee civil rights for African Americans. We will consider how racial politics shaped the development of housing and business patterns in the city and suburbs. *Rights*. Since at least the Civil War, the rights of all District residents have been linked with the rights of African Americans. We will discuss the loss of “home rule” during Reconstruction, the implications of the commission government of the District, and the reinstatement of limited home rule in connection with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. This involves exploring the historic influence of Congress on local politics the District. *Region*. Throughout the course, we will discuss the District’s regional identity. While our focus is on the city itself, we will also consider how Washington has interacted with surrounding areas. Is Washington a “southern” city? What has been its relationship to nearby Maryland and Virginia?

This course will also explore methods in urban history. We will emphasize *how* we know about Washington--not simply *what* we know. The assigned readings will introduce you to a wide range of approaches to urban history. We will discuss and evaluate how urban historians (including yourselves) produce “history” and how their methods and analytical frameworks shape our understanding of the past.

### Requirements:

Three activities are central to this course: Reading, attending and participating in class, and completing assignments and exams. Class sessions will combine lectures and discussions. Because this is a small class, your oral participation will be especially important. I will penalize you for repeated absences (i.e. more than one) and for late work. In order to complete the two papers, you will need to visit Washington at least twice. You are always welcome to contact me with questions about the course, and I encourage you to visit me in office hours.

Short Paper:	10%
Midterm:	25%
Longer Paper:	25%
Final Exam (take home):	30%
Class participation (including oral presentation of longer paper):	10%

Required texts (for sale at bookstore)

- Howard Gillette, ed. *Southern City, National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, D.C., 1800-1860*.
- James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion & Folklife in the City 1850-1970*.
- Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic and the Great Migration*.
- Howard Gillette, Jr., *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.*
- Mario Bencastro, *Odyssey to the North*.

Course schedule

Week 1: Aug. 27	Introduction Founding the Nation's Capital
Sept. 3: Labor Day [No class] Sept. 4:	Work on First Assignment  *Proposal Due
Week 2: Sept. 10	<b>The Early Years: Building a Capital City</b> 1. Gillette, ed. <i>Southern City, National Ambition</i> (entire) 2. Gillette, <i>BJB</i> , ix-26 *First Assignment Due
Week 3: Sept. 17	<b>The Rise and Fall of Local Democracy: The Civil War and Reconstruction</b> 1. Gillette, <i>BJB</i> , 27-68 2. Noah Brooks, "The Death of Slavery," from <i>Washington, D.C., in Lincoln's Time</i> , originally published in 1895. 3. Joseph P. Reidy, "'Coming From the Shadow of the Past': The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900." <i>Virginia Magazine of History and Biography</i> 95, no 4 (1987), 403-428.
Week 4: Sept. 24	<b>Migration</b> 1. Clark-Lewis, <i>Living in-Living Out</i> , through 122. 2. Kathryn Allamong Jacob, "Like Moths to A Candle: The Nouveaux Riches Flock to Washington, 1870-1900," in <i>Urban Odyssey</i> .
Week 5: October 1	<b>Urban Reform: The City Beautiful?</b> 1. Gillette, <i>BJB</i> , 69-129 2. Kirk Savage, "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument," in <i>Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity</i> , 127-149 3. Borchert, <i>Alley Life in Washington</i> , 1-56

<p>Week 6: Wednesday Oct. 10 [Oct. 8 and 9; Columbus Day recess]</p>	<p><b>Segregation and the Flourishing of African American Culture</b> [Film in class: <i>Duke Ellington's Washington</i>]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clark-Lewis, <i>Living In, Living Out</i>, 123-end.</li> <li>2. Mary Church Terrell, "History of the High School for Negroes in Washington," <i>Journal of Negro History</i> 2, No. 3. (July 1917), 252-266.</li> <li>3. Michele F. Pacifico, "'Don't Buy Where You Can't Work': The New Negro Alliance of Washington." <i>Washington History</i> 6, no. 1 (1994): 66-88.</li> <li>4. Peter Perl, "Race Riot of 1919 Gave Glimpse of Future Struggles," <i>Washington Post</i>, 1 March 1999.</li> </ol> <p>*Second Assignment Due</p>
<p>Week 7: Oct. 15</p>	<p><b>Mid-Term Exam: 1 hour, in class</b></p> <p><i>Mr. Smith Goes to Washington</i>, excerpts.</p>
<p>Week 8: Oct. 22</p>	<p><b>Focus on Methods</b> James Borchert, <i>Alley Life in Washington</i> [entire] <u>Special reading instructions:</u> 1. Skim book 2. Read appendices carefully, 3. Read book.</p>
<p>Week 9: Oct. 29</p>	<p><b>“Urban Renewal” and Civil Rights in the Federal City, Part I</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gillette, <i>BJB</i>, 132-169</li> <li>2. Beverly W. Jones, “Before Montgomery and Greensboro: The Desegregation Movement in the District of Columbia, 1950-1953,” <i>Phylon</i> 43, no. 2 (1982): 144-154.</li> <li>3. Audrey Thomas McCluskey, “Setting the Standard: Mary Church Terrell’s Last Campaign for Social Justice,” <i>The Black Scholar</i> 29, no. 2/3, 47-53</li> <li>4. Michael S. Mayer, “The Eisenhower Administration and the Desegregation of Washington, D.C.,” <i>Journal of Policy History</i> 3, no. 1 (1991), 24-41.</li> </ol>
<p>Week 10: Nov. 5</p>	<p><b>Civil Rights in the Federal City, Part II</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thomas G. Smith, “Civil Rights on the Gridiron: The Kennedy Administration and the Desegregation of the Washington Redskins,” <i>Journal of Sport History</i> 14, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 189-208.</li> <li>2. Renee Romano, “No Diplomatic Immunity: African Diplomats, the State Department, and Civil Rights,” <i>Journal of American History</i> 87, no. 2 (2000), 546-579.</li> </ol>
<p>Week 11: Nov. 12</p>	<p><b>The Johnson Administration and the Return of Home Rule</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gillette, <i>BJB</i>, 170-214</li> <li>2. John W. Hechinger, Sr., “Black and Blue: The D.C. City Council vs. Police Brutality.” <i>Washington History</i> 1999-2000 11(2): 4-23.</li> <li>3. Steven J. Diner, “The City Under the Hill,” <i>Washington History</i> 8, no. 1 (1996), 54-61.</li> </ol>

	<p>4. Ben W. Gilbert, "Toward a Color-Blind Newspaper: Race Relations and the Washington Post," <i>Washington History</i> 5, no. 2 (1993-94), 4-27.</p>
Week 12: Nov. 19	<p><b>Redefining Race and Region</b> Mario Bencastro, <i>Odyssey to the North</i></p>
Week 13: Nov. 29	<p>*Second assignment due *Presentations in class [Catch up on Reading]</p>
Week 14: Dec. 3	<p><b>Washington History/National History</b>  1. [E] Jamin B. Raskin, "Is This America? The District of Columbia and the Right to Vote," <i>Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review</i> 39 (1999).  2. [E] Whit Cobb, "Democracy in Search of Utopia: The History, Law, and Politics of Relocating the National Capital," <i>Dickinson Law Review</i> 99 (Spring 1995).</p>