

**“A City Tour”: Multimedia Assignment**  
**“The City in History: The Nineteenth-Century European City” Syllabus**  
**Fall 2006**

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This assignment asks you to take us (through the magic of technology) back to a European city in the long nineteenth century (from 1789 to 1914 and the outbreak of war). You will focus your efforts on a particular city at a particular point in time (a year, a few months, or a couple of years) and on some particular aspect(s) of that city. Your aim is to understand the city as a whole and to make sense of some aspect(s) of the city in depth. Your ultimate goal is to develop an interpretation of your city-in-time.

The research that you do for this project has several elements. You will want to: build a strong bibliography of primary and secondary sources (perhaps including web resources); read the work of important histories of your city to understand its historical development and its condition at the time of our visit; pull together a set of important primary sources; develop your own interpretation of your city-in-time.

The work that you produce for this project includes three components:

- a digital dossier of resources for understanding your city-in-time,
- a paper that presents your city-in-time and your interpretation,
- a digital presentation that you will share with the class.

Your goal is not to dazzle us with the tourist sights of the city or to set out an encyclopedic view of the city. Rather, your aim is to help us understand your city-in-time through the same kinds of questions that have guided our discussions. Some of these questions:

- What made the city “go”? What drove its economy? What attracted people to the city?
- The Physical Environment. What did the city look like? What was its layout? Was it a planned city? What urban works were underway at the time of our visit?
- The Population. Who lived in the city? Who came to the city?
- Neighborhoods. What were the best known neighborhoods? What were the most notorious? Where did the workers/the upper class/the poor/the middle class/the rich live? Where did people shop? Where did they enjoy leisure hours?
- Tourists. Were there many tourists? Where did they go? What did they see? What did they avoid?
- Nineteenth-Century Change. How was your city changing?
- Social, Political, and Cultural Struggles. What kinds of struggles were played out in your city?
- Experience. How did residents and visitors experience the city? With what fears? What pleasures?
- Representation. How was your city represented in art, literature, or film?

Let me give you some details on each of the three elements.

## *The Digital Dossier*

One large part of this assignment is to put together a dossier of digital documents on your city-in-time. You will have to create a few files for this dossier, but for the most part, your work here is that of the collector. Your aim is to bring together resources that will help in a fuller understanding of your city-in-time.

Resources that you *must* create:

- A list of your digital documents. For each document you will want to include a brief explanatory caption, a full (and precise) citation (in Chicago-style) and a note of how you acquired the text or image (“Scanned 9/15/06,” “Transcribed 9/15/06,” or “Downloaded from ‘The Siege and Commune of Paris, 1870-1,’ Special Collections, Northwestern University, <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/spec/siege/docs/PAR00121.html>”). [a Word doc or pdf]
- Excerpts from primary sources (important and revealing textual sources on your city-in-time) [a Word doc or pdf]
- Excerpts from secondary sources (important commentaries on your city-in-time from historians [a Word doc or pdf]
- A bibliography of sources on your city (use Chicago bibliography style). Separate by primary sources, secondary sources, and web sources. Note (perhaps with an asterisk) the sources that are most important to your project. [a Word doc or pdf]

You may also want to create:

- Your own statistical tables [as a Word doc or pdf]
- Your own brief chronology [as a Word doc or pdf]

Digital documents should include some or all of the following:

- Maps [as jpegs or tiffs]
- Statistical Tables, Chronologies from other sources [jpeg or tiff]
- Drawings, Illustrations, Paintings, Photographs [jpeg or tiff]
- Audio [wav or mp3]
- Still images from historical films or documentaries [jpeg or tiff]
- clips from historical films or documentaries [quicktime or avi]

Organize your files with care. The documents you create should be at the top-level of your folder. Then you should create separate subfolders for images, audio, and video. I’d suggest organizing the files within each of these subfolders (and on your list of documents) to make clear the different kinds of sources you have collected.

## ***The Paper***

Your paper should present your city-in-time, your angle, and (most importantly) your interpretation of your city-in-time. This will be the basis for your presentation. There is no required page length, though I would expect a minimum of about 12 pages. A strong and thorough treatment would probably be much longer, though I put a premium on quality over quantity.

Follow Chicago-style format. Use footnotes or endnotes to identify the source of quotations, details, and interpretations. You may also use them to: point to additional sources, point to further examples, make connections to other cities or other interpretations.

You should organize your paper with care, in a manner that is appropriate to your material. But I would suggest the following as a template:

- 1) Introduce your city and your topic. Lay out your interpretation of your city-in-time.
- 2) Present an overview of your city.
- 3) In two to five sections, present the important elements of your city tour. You may certainly spend time presenting and discussing images and texts, but don't write your paper as an annotated catalog or a list of images. You'd like each of these sections to speak to your larger interpretation
- 4) Conclude your paper. Briefly sum up what you've done. Tell us how we should think about your city-in-time given the work that you've done. You might also go beyond your city-in-time, to tell us how we should think about cities, or about your topic (labor strife, crime, evening entertainment, etc.) more generally given the work that you've done.
- 5) A bibliography of sources (which will likely be the very same as the bibliography in your digital dossier). As in the digital dossier, you should indicate the sources that are most important for your project.

## ***The Presentation***

In your presentation, you will take us on a virtual tour of your city-in-time. I suggest that you follow the same organization as your paper. The digital documents in your dossier will provide the images (and perhaps the audio) for your presentation. You will provide the narration, drawing from your paper. I suggest doing this from notes, but without reading it word for word off the page. Prepare your presentation as a Powerpoint presentation.

You have twenty minutes for your presentation.

Think of your audience as a group of undergraduate history majors, and budding urban historians, at the College of Wooster (not experts on the city and certainly not tourists). Your aim is not to dazzle us with the brightest sights (though you will probably want us to know about some of them!), but rather to explain your city and your interpretation to us.

### ***Due Dates***

Fri., Oct. 6 (wk 6)	Deadline for approved topic
Fri., Oct. 13 (wk 7)	Turn in working bibliography
Fri., Oct. 27 (wk 9)	Turn in sample of digital documents
Fri., Nov. 10 (wk 11)	Turn in a rough draft of substantial sections of the introduction to your multimedia dossier and of your script
Mon., Nov. 27 (wk 14)	Multimedia dossier DUE
Sat., Dec. 9 (wk 15)	Paper and presentation DUE

### ***Criteria for Evaluation***

*Digital Dossier* (40% of project grade). How extensive, how deep, and how well constructed is your digital dossier? Have you made use of a wide range of sources? Are your digital documents well selected? Are your digital documents of high quality?

*Paper* (40% of project grade). How well do you treat your city and your topic? Do you present an insightful interpretation? Do you make use of important primary and secondary sources? Do you organize your paper well? Is it well written? Is it interesting? The small things: a good bibliography, correct format, a paper free of errors.

*Presentation* (20% of project grade). Do you give us a good picture of your city? Do you have a clear and insightful interpretation of the city and your topic? Do you present it clearly? How well constructed is your presentation? Do the images, sounds, texts, maps, and clips help tell your story? Is it interesting?

### ***Guides to Historical Research and Writing and Chicago Style***

It's ironic: I get more questions about proper citation format than about interpretation. Let's be clear: the presentation of your material and your analysis is more important than your footnote style. But proper style counts for something. I suggest that you look at Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Short Guide to Writing in History* (recommended for this class and for history majors and available at the reference section of the library). A helpful short guide to Chicago-style format, together with a sample paper and bibliography, is available online at Diana Hacker, "Research and Documentation Online," <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/history.html>.

For further suggestions about historical research, you might look to Jules Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, Richard Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, or Patrick Rael, "Reading, Writing and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students" at Bowdoin College, <http://academic.bowdoin.edu/writingguides/>.

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