

**Perspectives on the Liberal Arts and Sciences
Course Proposal**

**General Education Advisory Committee
Queens College, City University of New York**

I. Course Information

Course Title:

Credits: Prerequisites:

Existing course, course number:

New course

Department:

Department Contact:

Area of Knowledge and Inquiry

(select one)

- Reading Literature (RL)
- Appreciating and Participating in the Arts (AP)
- Culture and Values (CV)
- Analyzing Social Structures (SS)
- Natural Science (NS)

Context of Experience

(select only if the course emphasizes one of the following)

- United States (US)
- European Traditions (ET)
- World Cultures (WC)

Extended Requirements

(select only if the course meets one of the following)

- Pre-Industrial Society (PI)
- Abstract or Quantitative Reasoning (QR)

The following information is useful to the subcommittee to estimate the college's progress toward the goal of offering enough sections and seats in each Perspectives category. How often does the department anticipate the course will be offered? Please also estimate the anticipated number of sections and number of seats per section.

Every semester number of sections: number of seats per section:

Every Fall or Every Spring number of sections: number of seats per section:

Other: number of sections: number of seats per section:

Course Description

Please include a course description. If the course will include variable topics or be taught in various forms, please provide as many descriptions of specific sections as possible.

This course provides an introduction to the study of urban diversity in the United States. It explores the different forms of identity, community and cultural belonging that dot the urban landscape, and analyzes the historical, social, political, and economic forces that shape the everyday lives of diverse urban populations. The course also analyzes debates over migration, assimilation, pluralism, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism and introduces students to urban studies' multidisciplinary approaches for the study of diversity and inequality.

General Education Requirements: This course fulfills two general education requirements. Through its discussion of urban studies approaches for studying the social production of difference and inequality, this course fulfills the "Analyzing Social Structures" Area requirement. Because this course engages in discussions of the American social and political system, social values and attitudes toward society, and the role of urban residents in shaping their communities and values, it fulfills the "United States" Context of Experience requirement.

II. Criteria for Perspectives Courses

Justification

Please describe how the course will address criteria for Perspectives on the Liberal Arts and Sciences courses.

Be sure to include an explanation of the course's specific learning goals for students to make a connection between these and the general criteria for Perspectives courses.

1. Be designed to introduce students to how a particular discipline creates knowledge and understanding.

URBST 103 is a new course, designed specifically to fulfill the PLAS criteria. Cities have always been centers of diversity in American society and global mobility has made cities even more diverse than they were in the past. This course provides students with an introduction to scholarly approaches that have been used to analyze diversity in American cities. It examines the political, economic and cultural forces that shape the arrival, settlement and movement of different groups, and explores their incorporation into the cultural, economic and political life of cities. The range of topics that are ripe for discussion in this course include everything from immigrant, racial, and ethnic communities to the jazz scene, hiphop culture, gay subculture, squatter communities, and so forth. Indeed, any urban setting that is the site for cultural production and community building could be discussed, including the role of churches, temples, mosques, synagogues, barbershops, beauty salons, soccer leagues, sports facilities, firehouses, union halls, or social clubs.

2. Position the discipline within the liberal arts and the larger society.

Given the diversity of our student body, this course addresses themes that should be an essential part of Queens College's General Education curriculum. It contributes to the liberal arts curriculum by showing the historical and contemporary importance of US urban diversity and by explaining the role of cities and their inhabitants in creating new forms of difference in American society. The course also exposes students to concrete knowledge of different urban groups. This knowledge can enhance their capacity to act as citizens and to engage effectively in civic life. At the center of this course is urban studies' multidisciplinary approach, which combines research methodologies and theoretical paradigms from across the social sciences to create innovative, real-world knowledge of the challenges and opportunities of city life. Students learn how this orientation, when applied to the study of difference and identity, distinguishes the field from related disciplines including political science, sociology, history, anthropology and from disciplines in the humanities.

3. Address the goals defined for the particular areas of knowledge the course is designed to fulfill.

The course fulfills the criteria for the Analyzing Social Structures (SS) Area of Knowledge and Inquiry. With careful attention directed at the problems, limitations and ongoing need to rethink various paradigms for analyzing how culture, power and difference works in various urban settings, this course addresses the structural and institutional forces that shape how cities work and that produce and reproduce differing patterns of difference and inequality.

The course also emphasizes the United States (US) Context of Experience. Recognizing the central role of cities in shaping migration and the changing racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of America, and that they have been important sites of civic engagement and democratic practice, URBST 103 addresses ongoing contests over inclusion and exclusion from the unique vantage point of urban residents.

In addition, a Perspectives course will, where appropriate to its discipline(s) and subject matter:

4-5. Be global or comparative in approach and consider diversity and the nature and construction of forms of difference.

The course is comparative in several senses: it compares the diversity of urban groups across historical periods and between different regions and areas. It also compares subcultural styles, identity politics, and community action within and across US cities, exploring how regional, economic, demographic and political differences create distinct urban lifestyles and how different lifestyles clash and/or coexist with each other. Different sections may emphasize one axis of comparison more than another, depending upon the backgrounds and experience of the instructor.

Urban Diversity deals directly with diversity and difference, placing them at the center of an analysis of the production and reproduction of urban forms and lifestyles.

Coursework will engage students in active inquiry (see examples below in Section III). Most courses will emphasize urban history and contemporary experience and will use primary documents, though these are not appropriate for all sections of the course.

Criteria Checklist

Please be sure that your justification addresses all three criteria 1-3, below. For criteria 4-8, please check all that apply and discuss these in your justification.

A Perspectives course must:

1. Be designed to introduce students to how a particular discipline creates knowledge and understanding.
2. Position the discipline(s) within the liberal arts and the larger society.
3. Address the goals defined for the particular Area(s) of Knowledge the course is designed to fulfill.

In addition, a Perspectives course will, where appropriate to its discipline(s) and subject matter:

4. Be global or comparative in approach.
5. Consider diversity and the nature and construction of forms of difference.
6. Engage students in active inquiry.
7. Reveal the existence and importance of change over time.
8. Use primary documents and materials.

III. Course Materials, Assignments, and Activities

Please provide an annotated list of course readings and descriptions of major assignments or exams for the course, as well as distinctive student activities that will engage students in working toward the course goals discussed in the course description and/or justification.

Please include the author and title for each reading or text, along with a short description providing information about how the reading will contribute to course goals.

Course Materials:

A broad range of course material is appropriate for this course. The texts described below exemplify the kinds of material that could be used to meet course objectives. This is hardly an exhaustive list.

Major Assignments

In addition to exams, course assignments will be designed to emphasize active learning among the students. Here are some sample assignments:

Robin D.G. Kelley. 1997. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional*. Boston: Beacon Press.

This is a critical interrogation of popular and academic representations of the black inner city. It contrasts the derogatory ways that inner city residents are often represented with the celebration and popularization of their cultural styles.

Paul Willis. 1977. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

A classic in Birmingham School subcultural studies, this book uses ethnography to trace the creation of anti-school culture among working class boys, showing how distinctions between the middle- and working classes are formed. It is a great way to show students how differences get created "on the ground" in everyday urban life.

Philip Kasinitz; John H Mollenkopf; Mary C Waters. 2004. *Becoming New Yorkers : ethnographies of the new second generation*. New York : Russell Sage.

A collection of essays exploring theories of assimilation and cultural diversity with case material from immigrant groups in NYC. Useful in helping students to understand debates over assimilation.

Christopher Mele. 2000. *Selling the Lower East Side* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). A study in historical sociology of gentrification, redevelopment and cultural belonging in a New York City neighborhood. Useful in helping students to understand the political economy of place-making and residential segregation.

Lewontin, Richard, "A Question of Biology: Are the Races Different?" In *Science for the People*, March/April 1982

A biological anthropologist uses genetic research to refute the idea that race is a biological fact. Important starting point for students who tend to see race as genetic.

Karen Brodtkin 1994. "How Jews Became White Folks." In *Race*, edited by Gregory and Sanjek. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

This article teaches students that whiteness itself is constructed. It uses the case of American Jews to show how they became white. For example, shows how Jewish incorporation into the category of "white" was linked with their participation in post-war suburbanization.

Takaki, Ronald. 1989 *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Boston: Beacon. A detailed account of US immigration and the creation of racially stratified urban labor markets, this book could be used to explain how racial and ethnic differences are produced and how they articulate with class-based differences.

Kathy Lee Peiss. 1986. *Cheap Amusements : Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-century New York Philadelphia* : Temple University Press, 1986.

A classic feminist work that describes the subordination of women in urban labor markets and paradoxically the autonomy gained by single women who worked in cities. It is but one work that can be used to approach the topic of the gendering of the city.

Manuel Castells. 1982. *The City and the Grassroots*. Berkeley: University of California Press. A classic in urban studies this book provides a theoretical introduction to urban activism, focusing on the politics of collective consumption and self-determination in the struggle for urban space. It provides important case studies of gay and latino ghetto formation. This is but one example of the vast literature in urban studies that could be used to explain the spatial and geographical basis for the production of urban diversity.

Tracy E Ore, ed. 2008. *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality : Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality*. Mountain View, Calif. : Mayfield Pub. A useful introductory textbook on the social construction of difference and inequality in the US, it could be incorporated with urban readings to give students a broad understanding of US urban diversity.

Major Assignments

In addition to exams, course assignments will be designed to emphasize active learning among the students. Here are some sample assignments:

1) Study of an Urban Subculture

At the end of the semester you will hand in an original paper (7-10 pp) on a sub-cultural group or community of your choice. You are encouraged to incorporate a mini-ethnography into your paper. This will require that you design, implement and write up a fieldwork project. Students who do not want to conduct fieldwork may base their papers on secondary sources. You are encouraged to discuss your paper topics with me as early in the semester as possible. The paper is due in my office on

Thursday, December 18, by 6pm. I will be happy to read and comment on preliminary drafts at any time up to two weeks prior to the due date.

2) Ethnicity Paper

Trace your own ethnic roots. Interview your parents, grandparents, or other relatives to discover how your ancestors (or report on yourself) came to the U.S. Discuss experiences with settlement and incorporation into the U.S. How were your ancestors (or you) received by other Americans? How did you or your relatives assimilate? What cultural traditions have been maintained? How did or does your ethnicity affect your or your relatives' life chances. How does it affect your view of yourself? Place your ancestors' or your own migration and settlement experiences within an historical context, comparing your experiences with accounts of your ethnic group from two sources outside of the class readings. More detailed guidelines about this paper will be distributed mid-semester. Papers should be 7-10 pages, double-spaced in 11 pt. to 12 pt. font with 1 inch margins on all sides

3) Immigration and Changing Neighborhoods Assignment

The information for this paper will come from 2 sources:

- 1) You will conduct interviews with two persons from any one NY neighborhood (from any borough or a town in an adjacent county), one a foreign born person (an immigrant) and another a U.S. born long term American, and ask them questions about immigration's impact on their neighborhood. These two persons can be from any ethnic/racial/cultural background but cannot belong to the same family. (The interview questions and other methods-related issues will be discussed in class.)
- 2) You will gather background information (history, demographics, media articles, etc) about the neighborhood you are focusing on.

After gathering the required information, you will analyze the information and synthesize it into an organized paper with a clear introduction, sections with titles, and conclusion. The analysis should include mentioning some issues regarding immigration's impact on the changing neighborhood.

The paper should have a list of references mentioning the sources you have used. Note: While you will discuss the two persons you interview in the paper (their views, life-experiences, etc), make sure not to mention their real names. You can use pseudonyms that go with their ethnic/racial/cultural identities; for example, if you are interviewing a Muslim male you may assign him a name such as Usman Ahmed, or in case of a Latina you could give a name such as Aida Hernandez.

Perspectives courses must be recertified every five years, and we are seeking ideas for how to best carry out this assessment. What forms of evidence that the course is meeting its goals as a Perspectives course would be appropriate to collect for this course during the next five years? How would you prefer assessment to be conducted? How might evidence of effective teaching and student learning be collected and evaluated?

Syllabi will be collected and reviewed periodically to assess the extent to which they continue to meet the criteria for Perspectives courses. We will collect this information and periodically submit a short report to the GEAC. Obviously there should be no punitive measures attached to the collection of this information or the evaluation protocol might be compromised. The Urban Studies Department has established for itself a comprehensive outcomes assessment protocol designed to collect and evaluate a wide variety of evidence of effective teaching and student learning. It will not be difficult to assess the extent to which this course is meeting the respective goals as part of our wider evaluation activities.

However, there are important questions about Perspectives courses that might be best answered through a college-wide assessment of the new general education curriculum. One big and important question is whether the goals of this new general education curriculum are more transparent to the students than are the goals of LASAR. Another is whether or not the quality of general education is improving on campus. It would make sense for the college to establish an assessment committee sooner rather than later if it hopes to collect evidence about these

V. Administration

What process will your department develop to oversee this course, suggest and approve changes, and conduct assessment? Who will be in charge of this process? Also indicate whether the course will be primarily taught by full-time or adjunct faculty, or by a combination of the two types of instructor.

URBST 103 will be primarily taught by full-time faculty with the occasional adjunct also teaching the course. The Urban Studies' Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will devise a teaching manual, based in large measure on this proposal, for distribution to all faculty teaching this course. The manual will include sample syllabi as well. The curriculum committee will oversee all administrative matters and evaluation protocols for our Perspective courses. In addition to standard evaluation protocols, which include regular observations of all instructors and reviews of all syllabi, the committee will incorporate an evaluation of our Perspectives courses into our ongoing outcomes assessment protocol. We will devise several means – pre- and post-testing, the analysis of student portfolios, and so forth – to determine the extent to which our new Gen. Ed. courses are effectively taught and our students are reaching their general education learning objectives. Our curriculum committee is comprised of Jeff Maskovsky, Tarry Hum, Alice Sardell, Len Rodberg, Dana-Ain Davis, Melissa Checker and Madhulikah Khandelwal.

VI. Syllabus

Please attach a sample syllabus (or set of syllabi, for courses on variable topics or courses that will be taught in variable formats).

Some resources to guide syllabus construction:

- The Provost's page outlining guidelines for syllabi:
http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/provost/Cur_stud/Syllabus_expectations.htm
- Sample syllabi for W courses, from Writing Across the Curriculum:
<http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/wsyllabi.htm>
- Goals for Student Writing at Queens College:
<http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/Goals.htm>
- Harvard's Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, suggestions for syllabus planning:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k1985&pageid=icb.page29695>
- Lehman College's Gen Ed Syllabi Project:
http://www.lehman.edu/lehman/programs/generaledu/gened_syllabi_project.html

Submit this completed form and a sample syllabus (or set of syllabi) by email to Eva Fernández (eva.fernandez@qc.cuny.edu), Director, Center for Teaching and Learning.

Urban Diversity

URBST 103

Syllabus

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the study of urban diversity in the United States. It explores the different forms of identity, community and cultural belonging that dot the urban landscape, and analyzes the historical, social, political, and economic forces that shape the everyday lives of diverse urban populations. The course also analyzes debates over migration, assimilation, pluralism, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism and introduces students to urban studies' multidisciplinary approaches for the study of diversity and inequality.

General Education Requirements: This course fulfills two general education requirements. Through its discussion of urban studies approaches for studying the social production of difference and inequality, this course fulfills the "Analyzing Social Structures" Area Requirement. Because this course engages in discussions of American social values and attitudes toward society, and the role of urban residents in shaping their communities and social values, it fulfills the "United States" Context of Experience requirement.

Course Objectives: 1) To acquire basic knowledge of US urban diversity; 2) To learn how to place urban communities and neighborhoods in their historical, political and economic context; 3) To learn urban studies' approaches to the analysis of diversity and inequality; and 4) To develop critical reading and writing skills.

Required Readings-

- i) Course Package available from the Professor
- ii) Becoming New Yorkers, Kasinitz et al. 2004

Grades

Class Participation, Class Journal, Short Assignments	25%
Mid-term Paper	25%
Final Project Paper	50%

Schedule of Classes

Jan 25: Introduction to Urban Studies

Section I: DIVERSITY AND AMERICA'S URBAN DILEMMA

Feb 1: Heterogeneity

Worth, Urbanism as a Way of Life

Feb 8: Cities as Containers of Difference: Consequences for Our Cities and their Inhabitants

Leonardo Vazquez, 2006. Thomas Jefferson: The Founding Father Of Sprawl?
United States Land Use.

Kenneth Jackson 1985, Crabgrass Frontiers: The Suburbanization of America

Section II: IMMIGRANT CITY

Feb 15: Race: Biological Fact or Social Construct?

Lewontin, Richard, "A Question of Biology: Are the Races Different?" In *Science for the People*, March/April 1982

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant "Racial Formations"

Brodin, "How Jews Became White Folks"

Feb 22: Race, ethnicity, and social class in US history; NYC historical patterns; & immigration and NYC.

Thomas Bender, "New York As a Center of 'Difference'"

John Kuo Wei Tchen, "A Pioneer Settlement" (New York Before Chinatown).

Nancy Foner, "Introduction" & "Who They Are & Why They Have Come"(From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration).

Notes on Cultural Pluralism, Melting Pot, & Assimilation (by Prof. Eisenberg)

Feb 29: Becoming New Yorkers?

(Mid-term due, Field visit, & Introduction to Final Project)

Kasinitz et al. Becoming New Yorkers

Natasha Warikoo, "Cosmopolitan Ethnicity: Second Generation Indo-Caribbean Identities"

Roger Sanjek, "The Future of Us All" (Chs. The Social Order of New York City" and "The Impact of New Immigration")

Milagros Ricourt & Ruby Danta, "Hispanas de Queens: The Emergence of Latino Panethnicity."

March 7: (Fieldvisit to a Queens Neighborhood & Intro to Mid-term paper)

Section III: URBAN SUBCULTURES AND THE SYMBOLIC ECONOMY

March 14: The Post-Industrial City and the New Symbolic Economy

"Whose Culture? Whose City?" by Sharon Zukin. In *The Cultures of Cities*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

"The Shopping Cart and the Lexus" by Rebecca Solnit and Susan Scharzenberg. In *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*. New York: Verso, 2000.

March 21: Urban Culture Wars

Yo' Mama's Disfunktional by Robin D.G. Kelley. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998

March 29: Subcultural Style

Chapter 4 in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* by Dick Hebdige. New York: Routledge, 1979.

"Artists and Immigrants in New York City Restaurants" by Sharon Zukin et al. In *The Cultures of Cities*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

Section IV: ENGENDERING THE CITY

April 4: Sexism and Urban Form

Delores Hayden, What would a non-sexist city look like?

Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements, Excerpts.

Robin Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional*, Excerpts.

April 11: Bohemia, The Arts and Sexual Subcultures

Ross Wetzsteon, 2002. Republic of dreams : Greenwich Village, the American Bohemia, 1910-1960
Simon & Schuster, excerpts.

April 18: (Neighborhood Tour of the West Village and Chelsey)

May 2: Multiculturalism: Debates and Dilemmas

Wieviorka, Michel, "Is Multiculturalism the Solution?" Ethnic and Racial Studies 21(5) September
1998: 881-916

May 9: Review: Cultures and Subcultures in the City