

**University of California, San Diego**  
**HIUS 147/USP165: History of the American Suburb, Spring Quarter, 2009**  
**Abraham Shragge, Lecturer**

Lectures: MWF 12:00 –129:50 AM, in Center Hall 105  
Office: 317 Social Sciences Research Building  
Office Hours: Mon. and Thur., 3:00-4:15 and by appointment.  
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**Course Description:**

The course consists of lectures, discussions, readings, and media presentations examining the evolution of American suburban places. What defines suburbs in the United States? Do they represent single-family detached houses, manicured lawns and prosperity, epitomizing the “American Dream”? Or do the nation’s suburbs represent conformity, racial segregation, class snobbery, and homogeneity? Until recently, the dominant history of suburbs has reflected both of these themes. In the past several years, however, emerging scholarship has suggested new directions for the study of American suburbs. An examination of older as well as new scholarship will help to answer these questions.

**Required Texts:**

The following books are required reading for the course. All are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, and *may* be on reserve at Geisel Library.

1. Fogelson, Robert M. *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870-1930*. Yale University Press, 2005.
2. Nicolaidis, Becky and Wiese, Andrew, eds. *The Suburb Reader*. Routledge, 2006.
3. Waldie, D.J. *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*. St. Martin’s Press, 1996.
4. Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford University Press, 1985.

*These items are required reading for the course. Copies of the books may be on reserve in the Geisel Library.*

**Course Requirements:**

- A. Class Meetings:** All students are expected to attend lectures, and to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.
- B. Examinations:** There will be an in-class midterm examination (fifty minutes in length) on Monday, May 4, and an in-class final examination (three hours in length) on Wednesday, June 10 starting at 11:30 AM. Use of bluebooks is required for the exams. Students may expect to be questioned on any and all course material, including lectures, assigned readings and media presentations.
- C. Independent Writing Assignment:** An essay, eight to twelve pages in length, is due on **Friday, May 22**, at the beginning of class. The essay is to be based on a combination of primary- and secondary-source research. Complete instructions on the Independent Writing Assignment appear below.

- D. Course Grades:** The midterm exam is worth 25% of the course grade; the final exam is worth 35% of the course grade; and the research paper is worth 40% of the course grade. In order to pass the course, students must hand in the research paper on time. *Late papers will be accepted only in emergencies, and only by arrangement with the instructor prior to the regular due date.*

### **Independent Writing Assignment**

The term “American Dream” and the ideas that comprise it seem to permeate contemporary popular culture, journalism, and scholarly literature. While Kenneth Jackson does not use the term itself in his introduction to *Crabgrass Frontier*, the chapter makes numerous direct as well as indirect references to “the dream,” in sum suggesting that an American “suburban dream” exists as a subset of the larger ideals. Other course readings similarly present and critique “the dream” and may thus offer useful points of departure for your research.

Using a combination of primary and secondary sources other than assigned readings, write a well documented essay that

1. Defines the “American Dream” and its subset, the “suburban dream”;
2. Examines the ideologies and cultural mythologies behind the dreams;
3. Investigates the history of an American suburb of your choice\* in terms of the intersections between the dreams and reality, and in particular how perceptions and realities have changed over time;
4. Presents a thorough treatment of the general topic, including consideration of the following elements, as appropriate:
  - a. The “actors”—the boosters, speculators, developers, government officials, prospective residents, actual residents; disgruntled residents, etc., who created, developed (or impeded development), populated, or left the suburb;
  - b. The large-scale societal forces that shaped events and attitudes (e.g., politics, law, government policy, war, culture, economy, immigration, race and ethnicity, class, gender, religion, etc.);
  - c. Other important forces that shaped events, such as annexation, technological change (e.g., transit networks, construction materials and techniques), evolving social mores, immigration patterns, globalization, geography, availability of essential resources such as water, etc.;
5. Argues a consistent thesis throughout the paper.

Primary sources may include photographs or other pictorial materials, architectural plans, maps, technical documents, planning documents, government documents and reports, interviews, newspaper articles, letters, and other such materials created at the time of the events discussed in the essay.

\*Recommendation: You will find the search for primary sources far easier if you pick a suburb in Southern California. Former suburbs that are now incorporated into larger cities, for example Kensington, University Heights and East San Diego in San Diego, are acceptable choices. If you do pick a local suburb, in order to ensure your classmates equal access, please do not check source materials out of the library. Good collections of primary sources may be found in the

university, college and public libraries around San Diego; the San Diego Historical Society and numerous neighborhood and suburban historical societies; and local and regional planning agencies.

**Additional General Requirements for the Essay:**

**Length and Form:** The paper is to be eight to twelve pages in length, typewritten and double-spaced. Margins should be of standard dimensions (no more than 1.25 inches) and typeface no larger than “12-pitch.” Please do not go over the maximum length of twelve pages. Failure to comply with any of these requirements will result in a reduced grade for the assignment.

**Documentation:** You must acknowledge your intellectual debts to the outside readings, course readings, and interviewees, through the use of footnotes or endnotes, which are always required for direct quotations, paraphrases, or the restatement of someone else’s ideas, as well as for the presentation of specific factual information. You are instructed to use the standard citation form utilized by historians, abundant examples of which appear in the assigned texts. For book reference, use the author’s full name, title of book, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, and pages referenced. To cite an article from a journal, use the author’s full name, title of article, journal in which it appeared, volume number, date, and page numbers. If citing from a lecture, use the lecturer’s name, title of lecture, and the date and place it was presented. When using material from an oral history or an interview, cite the name of the interviewee and the date. If you have any questions about citations, inquire of the instructor, or consult with one of the many guides that are available.

**Turnitin.com:** Before the paper is due, instructions will be distributed in lecture on how to submit the essay electronically via WebCT. Students agree that by taking this course the final essay will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site. Proven cases of plagiarism on any work, like cheating on exams, will result in an “F” on the assignment and, in some cases, an “F” in the course. Moreover, the college reserves the right to impose additional sanctions on all cases of proven academic misconduct or plagiarism. ***Papers must be submitted electronically to Turnitin.com no later than 5:00 PM on the due date, Friday May 22. This is an absolute requirement of the course. Papers will be penalized at the rate of one full grade per day late; failure to submit a paper to Turnitin.com will result in a grade of F for the assignment.***

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct includes cheating on assignments and exams, and plagiarizing. All such transgressions can result in serious penalties. Plagiarism – presenting the *words* or *ideas* of another as your own – is particularly serious. If at any time you are unclear about the definition of plagiarism or how to avoid it, please ask. You are encouraged to review the University’s “Policy on Integrity of Scholarship” on the Student Policies and Judicial Affairs home page at:

<http://ugr8.ucsd.edu/judicial/JudicialAffairs.htm>

**Deadlines, Punctuality, Courtesy and Attendance:** The essay assignment deadline is firm. Papers are due at the start of class on the due date. Students are expected to attend all lectures. Class will begin on time, so please arrive promptly and plan to stay for the entire class session. Late arrivals and early departures are a nuisance to your classmates and your instructor. Turn off cell phones, Blackberries, pagers and MP-3 players/iPods before entering the classroom, and leave them off and out of sight until class is dismissed. Laptop computers may be used in the classroom only for the purpose of taking notes, a privilege which may be withdrawn at any time. Eat your breakfast before or after, but *not* during class.

**Course Readings, Assignments, and Events:**

<b>WEEK/DATES</b>	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>EVENTS</b>
1. 3/30 – 4/3	<i>Crabgrass Frontier</i> , Introduction and Chapters 1-5; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapter 1.	
2. 4/6 – 4/10	<i>Crabgrass Frontier</i> , Chapters 6-11; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapter 2.	
3. 4/13 – 4/17	<i>Crabgrass Frontier</i> , Chapters 12-16; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapter 3.	
4. 4/20 – 4/24	<i>Bourgeois Nightmares</i> , Introduction, Chapter 1; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapter 4.	
5. 4/27 – 5/1	<i>Bourgeois Nightmares</i> Chapter 2; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 5, 6.	
6. 5/4 – 5/8	<i>Bourgeois Nightmares</i> , Epilogue; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 7, 8.	<b>Midterm, Monday, 5/4</b>
7. 5/11 – 5/15	<i>Holy Land</i> , first half. <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 9, 10.	
8. 5/18 – 5/22	<i>Holy Land</i> , second half; <i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 11, 12.	<b>Paper Due Friday, 5/22</b>
9. 5/25 – 5/29	<i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 13, 14.	
10. 6/1 – 6/5	<i>Suburb Reader</i> , Chapters 15, 16.	
Finals Week	Final Exam	<b>Weds. June 10, 11:30 AM– 2:30 PM</b>