##### UPDATED 4-2-18

##### (Dis)Placed Urban Histories

###### Spring 2018

###### Mondays 3:30-6:10pm

###### IDSEM-UG 1826/NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study

###### Location: 1 Washington Place, Rm. 601

###### Instructor: Rebecca Amato

[**becky.amato@nyu.edu**](mailto:Becky.amato@nyu.edu)

###### Tel: 212-992-6305

###### Office Hours: 2-4pm, Wed./Fri. or by appointment

###### Office: 1 Washington Place, Rm. 512

###### Course Web Site: http://wp.nyu.edu/melrose\_spring\_2018/

**Description**

Neighborhood change comes in many varieties. Mid-twentieth century urban renewal in U.S. cities brought bulldozers and tower-in-the-park housing developments to dozens of poor neighborhoods considered ripe for revision. Early-twenty-first century gentrification, meanwhile, has brought high-end commerce and affluence to areas once occupied by low-income and working class communities. In the Melrose section of the South Bronx, a series of changes have influenced the streetscapes and lives of residents. Rampant arson in the 1970s and 1980s destroyed acres of the neighborhood, for example, while migrants from Puerto Rico and immigrants from the Dominican Republic, West Africa, and Bangladesh, among others, settled in the remaining homes of Melrose to build new lives in a new city. Most recently, federal dollars have been earmarked for Melrose’s reconstruction and redevelopment. This course, offered in partnership with the Bronx-based community empowerment organization WHEDCo, invites students to become activist historians whose objective is to identify, map, and collaboratively interpret the key themes and places that have historical, social, and cultural meaning to Melrose residents. Students will conduct archival and secondary research; meet with activists and residents who are working to protect the interests of the current community of Melrose; and produce collaborative, mini-exhibits with residents and business owners that designate places of significance to the neighborhood. The course will culminate in a digital and physical map of these sites that will encourage residents and visitors alike to discover the rich history of the neighborhood and the indomitable resilience of its people. Readings may include Evelyn Gonzalez’s  *The Bronx: A History* , Mark Naison and Bob Gumbs’s  *Before the Fires: An Oral History of African American Life in the Bronx from the 1930s to the 1960s* , and Tom Angotti’s  *New York For Sale: Community Planning Meets Global Real Estate*.

**Our goals for this course are to:**

* Learn how to produce a strong, historical, evidence-based narrative by conducting both secondary and primary research
* Gain analytical and historical authority in contributing to discourses around urban planning policy.
* Work collaboratively and effectively to deliver a history-based, public walking tour on both physical and digital platforms.
* Embrace the opportunity to learn from people’s lived experience of their neighborhoods and of displacement, rather than relying solely on theory and observation from afar.

**Required Texts:**

Readings are downloadable in PDF form from the course web site or in paper form in class.

**Your Responsibilities and Grading**

1. **Class Participation:** Attendance, thoughtful reading, and active participation in class discussions are essential components of the seminar format. Please come to class prepared to contribute fully to discussions. You may find it especially helpful to take notes as you read and come to class with a few points and/or questions you would like to address. **(15%)**
2. **Journal (5x):** At five points during the semester you will be given an assigned task – fieldwork, archival research, reflection, etc. – that will take the form of a journal entry. Each entry should be 2-3pp long. The journal will be graded as a whole, not per entry. **(25%)**
3. **Research-Based Mini-Exhibit:** Using the Clio app, you will demonstrate your ability to synthesize primary and secondary sources into a coherent and compelling research narrative and mini-exhibit that will be incorporated into a public walking tour. **(30%)**
4. **Walking Tour:** The final project for this course is a collaborative effort to assemble and develop a public walking tour of mini-exhibits built upon the research you have conducted about Melrose and places of significance to the community. **(30%)**

Generally, I will be grading you on how well you are able to articulate and synthesize the ideas shared in class, in your readings, and in our projects. I will also be watching for your ability to meet the goals I have outlined above. You may want to keep a few other pointers in mind to ensure that you meet the expectations of this course:

* **Do not turn in work late.** If you anticipate needing extra time for an assignment, you must contact me in advance with a good reason. If you do turn in late work without contacting me first, it not only must be accompanied by an appropriate, documented explanation, but you should expect your grade to reflect the tardiness of the assignment.
* **Be organized.** While it will be tempting to slack on some of the assignments during slow weeks, you will surely suffer during weeks when we have heavier reading and assignments due. Try to keep to the syllabus and work ahead if you are able.
* **Don’t be late for class.** It’s distracting and it will have a negative impact on your grade. (Tardiness will result in a ½ absence.)
* **Don’t miss class.** More than 2 unexcused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade for the course.
* **Respect the time and energy of our collaborators at WHEDco.** We are being given a very special opportunity to work with residents of Melrose and learn together. Please give them the respect they deserve by **being on-time** for meetings and workshops, listening with compassion, and being a responsible collaborator.

**A Note on Incompletes**

Incompletes will not be granted unless you approach me with a serious, well-documented excuse (i.e. doctor’s note and the like.) If I do agree to a grade of incomplete, you will be expected to complete all of the necessary work by the date that I set.

**A Note on 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 for a full description of the academic integrity policy. [https://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policies1/academic-integrity.html]

**A Note on Personal Integrity**

Courses built on a model of community-engaged pedagogy and research, like this one, involve more stakeholders than just the professor (me) and students (you.) We will be working with real people whose real lives are shaped by the pressures of displacement due to gentrification, planning, migration and immigration, and other forces. While I, of course, expect you to present yourselves respectfully and with integrity, and honor the experiences and integrity of our collaborators in Melrose, I hope that you will have high standards for yourselves in this context as well.

**A Note on Religious Holidays**

Students who anticipate being absent because of any religious observance should notify me in advance so we can make arrangements for any work that may be missed. This is in accordance with University Policy. Please let me know if you have any questions.

**A Note on Syllabus Changes**

You should consider the schedule below a work in progress. While I expect to keep to the assignments as listed, I may make changes from time to time to reflect the workload and timetable necessary to complete our final exhibit. However, I will notify you well in advance of any changes.

**Class Schedule**

**January 22: Introduction**

* **WATCH IN CLASS:** *The Fire Next Door, CBS Reports* (First aired March 22, 1977)

Transcript available here: http://billmoyers.com/content/the-fire-next-door/

**January 29: Theorizing Place and Displacement**

* **READ:** Doreen Massey, “Double Articulation: A Place in the World,” in Bammer, Angelika, *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Indiana University Press, 1994.

Jeff Malpas, “Chapter 8: Place, Past and Person,” in Malpas, Jeff, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, 1999.

Allen Jones, Chapters 1 and 5, *The Rat That Got Away: A Bronx Memoir*, 2009.

David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review 53*, September-October 2008.

**February 5: The Politics of Neighborhood History**

* **READ:** Nancy Raquel Mirabal, “Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and The Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco’s Mission District” (2009)

Cathy Stanton, "[Hardball History: On the Edge of Politics, Advocacy, and Activism](http://ncph.org/history-at-work/hardball-history-stanton/)" in NCPH, History@Work, March 25, 2015.

Sidonie Smith and Kay Schaffer, “Conjunctions: Life Narratives in the Field of Human Rights” (2004)

**JOURNAL #1 DUE Friday, 2/9**

**February 12: Narrating the South Bronx – Workshop at WHEDco – MEET AT 50 E. 168th Street, Bronx**

* **READ:** Evelyn Gonzalez, “The South Bronx,” in *The Bronx: A History*, 2004.

Rebecca Solnit and Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, “Burning Down and Rising Up” in *Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas*, 2016.

Lydia Yee, “Photographic Approaches to the Discourse of the South Bronx” in Farmer, John Alan, *Urban Mythologies: The Bronx Represented Since the 1960s*, 1999.

Grandmaster Caz, “South Bronx Subway Rap” <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Grandmaster-Caz/South-Bronx-Subway-Rap>

“Interactive: Presidential Visits to the Bronx Throughout History” from *DNA Info*, May 27, 2015.

**February 19: Resisting the Narrative**

* **READ:** Evelyn Gonzalez, “The Road Back,” in *The Bronx: A History*, 2004.

Johanna Fernandez, “The Young Lords and the Social and Structural Roots of Late Sixties Radicalism,” in *Civil Rights in New York City: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*, 2011.

Emita Brady Hill and Janet Butler Munch, “Chapter Seven: Father Bob,” in *Bronx Faces and Voices: Sixteen Stories of Courage and Community*, 2014.

Mark Naison and Bob Gumbs, “Victoria Archibald-Good” in *Before the Fires: an oral history of African American life in the Bronx from the 1930s to the1960s*, 2016

**JOURNAL #2 DUE Friday, February 23**

**February 26: Research Training at NYPL, Milstein Division**

**March 5: Community Meeting and Workshop at Dreamyard**

* **READ:** Eve Tuck, “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities” (2009)

**March 12: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK**

**March 19: Planning for the South Bronx: Urban Renewal**

* **READ:** Mindy Thompson Fullilove, “Chapter 3: Urban Renewal” in *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It*, 2016 edition.

Hilary Ballon, “Robert Moses and Urban Renewal,” in *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York,* 2007.

* **EXPLORE:** *The Urban Reviewer*, http://www.urbanreviewer.org/

**(Clio Training and Audio Editing Training)**

**March 26: Planning for the South Bronx: Melrose Urban Renewal Area, Melrose Commons, and Bronx Commons**

* **READ:** Tom Angotti, “Chapter 4: From Protest to Community Plan,” in *New York For Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*, 2008

Petr Stand, Yolanda Garcia, Eddie Bautista, Barbara Olshansky, “Melrose Commons, A Case Study for Sustainable Community Design: Prepared for the 1996 Planners Network Conference” in *Planners Network, The Organization of Progressive Planning*.

A selection of newspaper articles and posts about Bronx Commons.

**JOURNAL #3 DUE Friday, 3/23**

**April 2:  Writing History for the Public and Interpreting Primary Documents**  
**READ:** WHEDco, Melrose Community Needs & Actions Report, November 2016  
  
(Clio Training and Audio Editing Training)

**April 9: Under Pressure: Development and Gentrification**

**READ:** Julian Brash, Bloomberg’s New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City, Ch. 4 (pp. 100-129)

A selection of articles from blogs, newspapers, and periodicals about real estate in the South Bronx.

**April 16: Walking Tours, Exhibits, and The People Who Love/Hate Them**

**READ:**Nina Simon, The Participatory Museum, Ch. 1, 6, pp. 1-22; 203-230.  
  
Kevin Murphy, “Walking the Queer City” (1995)  
  
Sean M. Starowitz and Julia Cole, “Thoughts on Creative Placetaking,” Lumpen Magazine (July 2015)  
  
Juliet Kahne, “Does Placemaking Cause Gentrification? It’s Complicated,” Project for Public Spaces (November 2015)  
  
**JOURNAL #4 DUE Friday 4/20 -- This journal will be your Clio entry.  In other words, this section will be due later than originally assigned, but before the main report is due.**  
  
**April 23:  Finalizing Materials/In-Class Teach-in — MEET AT WHEDco, 50 E. 168th Street, Bronx**

**Historical Report DUE IN CLASS on Monday, April 23.  You will have 5 minutes to present your place to the class and to our collaborators at WHEDco.**

**April 30:  Community Walking Tour, Test Run**

We will map out the actual walking tour and determine how long it would take to do the entire tour. So wear your walking shoes!

**May 7:   JOURNAL #5 DUE TODAY + Snacks and Final Discussions**