

English 260: Imagining Urban Ecologies: Rome, London, Los Angeles
Interim 2014
1-3 pm, M-F RML 515
Instructor: Mary Trull
Office Hours: M, W, Th 3-4 pm and by appointment
RML 417 x3445

We think of “urban” as the opposite of “natural,” but cities are not only situated in nature; they are produced by human cultures interacting with earth, water, and the biosphere. This course explores urban ecology through interdisciplinary readings and activities, with special attention to understanding how a city and its literature are shaped by land, water, technology, and natural catastrophes in specific places and times. We will start with ancient Rome, move on to 17th- and 18th-century London, and end with contemporary Los Angeles. We will pay special attention to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE, the Great Fire of London in 1666, and Rodney King’s beating and the social upheaval of 1992, viewing these as both human and ecological events.

Required Textbooks (available for purchase in St. Olaf Bookstore):

- Grant Heiken et al., *The Seven Hills of Rome: A Geological Tour of the Eternal City* (Princeton University Press, 2007; 978-0691130385)
- Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (Penguin, 1993; 9780140178241)
- Anna Deavere Smith, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Random House, 1994; 0385473761)
- David L. Ulin, ed., *Another City: Writing From Los Angeles* (Perseus; 9780872863910)
- Mary Austin, *Land of Little Rain* (Free Kindle eBook)
- See Moodle (M) or Handouts (H) for all other readings listed below

Assignments

- Juvenal Place/Object Assignment 20%
- Point Paper 10%
- Place/Practice/Voice Essay 20%
- Class Participation 15%
- Final Exam 35%

Class Policies

- **Accommodations.** If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Connie Ford (ford@stolaf.edu) or Laura Knobel-Piehl (knobel@stolaf.edu) in the Academic Support Center (507-786-3288, Buntrock 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. If you have already arranged accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, please arrange for the submission of your accommodation letter within the first two weeks of class. Accommodations will only be provided after the letter is submitted to me and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I expect you to initiate a conversation with me about the accommodations.
- **Oxford Debates.** Oxford Debates involve the whole class in debating a proposition. Kick-off speakers will be appointed; after each kick-off speaker has given an initial speech and a rebuttal, the house will be divided and speeches will be made by each side of the house in turn (including an Undecided side), rotating among all present.
- **The Writing HelpDesk** is located in Rolvaag Library, next to the Reference Desk. Peer tutors offer help with any stage of the writing process, from research to final polishing. Walk-in tutoring is available Mon-Thur 10am-5pm and 7-10pm, Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 11am-5 pm, Sun 1:30-5 pm and 7-10 pm, and also by appointment.
- **Good attendance** is crucial for success in this class. Students may miss up to 3 classes for any reason. For each class missed in excess of three, the participation grade will be lowered by one increment (e.g., A to A-). A student who misses more than nine classes will receive a failing grade for the class.

- **Late work.** Please ask in advance if you would like to turn in a paper late. Otherwise, late papers are lowered by one grade increment for each class day they are late (e.g., a paper due on Friday and turned in by 4 pm Monday will be lowered from an A to A-). No work will be accepted after the final exam period for the class.
- **Plagiarism** will be penalized by either a failing grade on the paper in question or immediate failure of the class. Please feel free to ask me for help and consult [St. Olaf's Academic Integrity policy](#).

Schedule

ROME

- M Jan. 6 Introductions
- Introduce Juvenal Place/Object Assignment
 - Juvenal, Satire 1
 - BI Session with Ken Johnson, RML 355
- T Jan. 7 Roman Geology and Hydrology
- Readings:
 - Required:
 - Heiken et al., *The Seven Hills of Rome* pp. 1-50
 - Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book 1:1-437 (H)
 - Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, Book 1 chaps. 4 and 7; introduction to Book 8 (H)
 - Optional:
 - Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, Book 1 chaps. 1-3; Book 8 chaps. 5-6 (M)
 - Frontinus, *De Aqueeductibus Urbis Romae* 1-22 (M)
 - [AQUACLOPEDIA: a picture dictionary of Roman aqueducts](#)
 - 1:00 Guest Lecture in RML 250: Jason Menard on Google Maps Engine Lite and Ancient Rome
- W Jan. 8 Roman Literature and Myth
- Readings:
 - Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book 3 (all), Book 15:60-478 (H)
 - Virgil, *Georgics*, II.1-258 (H)
 - Horace, Odes 1.9, 1.11, 3.13, 4.7 (H)
- Th Jan. 9 Roman Architecture and City Planning (Guest Lecture by Nancy Thompson)
- Readings:
 - Diane Favro, "Making Rome a World City" (H)
 - Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, Book 36 chaps. 1-16 (skim chap. 4) (M)
 - Juvenal, Satire 3 (H)
 - Horace, Odes 1.37, 1.38, 2.16 (H)
- F Jan. 10 Responses to Suffering
- **12 noon: Point Papers due via Moodle Upload (see end of syllabus)**
 - Readings:
 - Introduction to Stoics and Epicureans: <http://philosophyforlife.org>
 - Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, Book 3 (H)
 - **Class Debate:** What is the best ethical response to human suffering?

- M Jan. 13 Mt. Vesuvius Erupts
- Readings:
 - Doug Stewart, "Resurrecting Pompeii" (M)
 - Pliny the Younger, letters 6.16 and 6.20 (H)
 - W. H. Auden, "In Praise of Limestone" (H)

LONDON

- T Jan. 14 The London Plague of 1665
- Readings:

- [Dermot Kavanagh, from “London Fictions”](#) (M)
 - [Primary Text Exercise from National Archives](#) (M) (please work through the activities – you don’t need to hand in your answers, though)
 - Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*, sel. (H)
 - **Place/Practice/Object Presentations**
- W Jan. 15 The Great Fire of London, 1666
- Required Readings:
 - Stephen Porter, *The Great Fire of London*, 29-59 (H)
 - Samuel Pepys’ Diary, sel. (H)
 - John Dryden, “Annus Mirabilis” (H)
 - [Primary Text Exercise from National Archives](#) (M) (please work through the activities – you don’t need to hand in your answers, though)
 - Optional Readings:
 - Diary of John Evelyn, 1665-1666 (M)
- Th Jan. 16 Rebuilding London
- Readings:
 - Stephen Porter, *The Great Fire of London*, 92-115 (H)
 - Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Town Eclogues” (H)
 - Samuel Johnson, “London” and “The Vanity of Human Wishes” (H)
- F Jan. 17 Romantic London, I
- Readings: William Wordsworth, sel. (H)
 - Nicole LaRose, “Wordsworth’s Urban Theater and the Imaging of Community” (M)
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- M Jan. 20 Romantic London, II
- Readings:
 - William Blake, from *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* and other poems (H)
 - Joanna Baillie, “London” (H)
 - Tate Museum’s William Blake Online:
 1. [Tour of Blake's London](#) (just look around)
 2. [Cast of Characters in Blake's Mythology](#) (read about all 10)
 3. [Focus on Jerusalem](#) (read all the way through)
 - Yale University Center for British Art -- [Blake Archive](#)
 - View Plates 12, 27, 34, 83 (corresponding to your handout). *Use the Erdman numbers.*
 - For each plate, read the Illustration Depiction.
 - Optional: Look at the transcription to see the context for the passage in your handout.
- T Jan. 21 The River Thames
- Readings:
 - Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.401-674 (H)
 - Edmund Spenser, “Prothalamion” (H)
 - Alexander Pope, “The Alley. An Imitation of Spenser” (H)
 - [T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”](#) (M)

LOS ANGELES

- W Jan. 22 The American West
- Readings:
 - Mary Austin, *Land of Little Rain*, sel. (Kindle eBook)
 - “The Land of Little Rain,” “Water Trails of the Ceriso,” “The Scavengers,” “The Streets of the Mountains,” “Water Borders,” “Other Water Borders,” “Nurslings of the Sky”
 - Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, chaps. 1 & 2
 - Blog: [Southland: Excavating the Urban History of Greater Los Angeles](#)

Th	Jan. 23	Water and Real Estate
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mike Davis, <i>City of Quartz</i> pp. 196-214 (M) ○ Walter Mosley, "Equal Opportunity," from <i>Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned</i> (H) • Optional Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marc Reisner, <i>Cadillac Desert</i>, chap. 10: "Chinatown"
F	Jan. 24	Mountains and Real Estate
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: John McPhee, "Los Angeles Against the Mountains" (H) • Introduction to Film Noir • Screening, 7 pm: <i>Chinatown</i> (
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M	Jan. 27	LA Noir
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Raymond Chandler, "Red Wind" (H) • Place/Practice/Voice Essay Due
T	Jan. 28	Race and Violence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: <i>Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992</i> by Anna Deavere Smith • Oxford Debate: The events of 1992 are better called a revolution than a riot.
W	Jan. 29	Memoir and Identity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: in <i>Another City: Writing From Los Angeles</i>: Lewis, Alfaro, George, Raynor • Screening, 7 pm: Paul Haggis, <i>Crash</i> (113 min., 2005)
Th	Jan. 30	Wrap-Up; Discussion of <i>Crash</i>
F	Jan. 31	Final Exam

Point Paper: Epicurean and Stoic Responses to Suffering

Your point paper is an **edited and ordered first response** to our reading for Friday, Jan. 10, due at the beginning of class. You should respond with a clear thesis to the question, "What is the best ethical response to human suffering?" by defending either a Stoic or an Epicurean point of view.

In reading your paper, I am interested in **your fresh response** to the reading, "uncontaminated" by lecture or class discussion. These papers allow me to see **how you think as well as what you think**; they allow you to connect directly with the reading and get practice in organizing an argument.

Be clear, be interesting, be succinct (400 to 500 words). State your thesis clearly in the first paragraph. Use your paper to develop a focused thesis thoroughly; avoid hopping from one impression to another. Refer to details and quotations in the text and cite them parenthetically.