

**Egalitarian Metropolis:  
Urban Studies, Urban Design & Social Justice in Detroit**

Winter 2021

RCSSCI 360-003/Arch 409-003

T/TH 2:30-4:00

Instructors:

Angela D. Dillard

Professor of Afroamerican & African Studies, History, and in the Residential College, LSA  
[adillard@umich.edu](mailto:adillard@umich.edu)

Robert Fishman

Professor of Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning, Taubman College  
[fishmanr@umich.edu](mailto:fishmanr@umich.edu)

**Overview**

What does/can/should an egalitarian metropolis look like? And how does a focus on Detroit allow us to ask and answer these conceptual -- and practical -- questions in ways that draw on a variety of disciplines including architecture, history, urban planning, and the urban humanities?

This course offers an interdisciplinary perspective on urban studies, urban design and the ways that concerns around social justice and equity can influence how we think about cities in the past, present and future. Drawing on a range of faculty expertise in LSA and Taubman, this team-taught course also incorporates the voices of practitioners and community members involved in current attempts to revitalize Detroit and “Detroit-like” cities in the United States and elsewhere. By “Detroit-like cities” we mean urban areas that have experienced negative population growth, deindustrialization, economic disinvestment, racial stratification, environmental injustices and concomitant crises in housing, health care, policing, criminalization, and education. At the same time, Detroit and Detroit-like cities offer opportunities to conjoin critical humanistic inquiry, urban design, and policy solutions for building more equitable and sustainable cities.

This course is co-designed and co-taught as part of the Egalitarian Metropolis Project, which is a partnership between the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning and the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. It combines traditional course materials with a team-based orientation to teaching and learning. Seminar participants are expected to complete regular short written reflections, two 3-5 page essays, and a final project that you will complete as a member of an assigned team.

The learning goals for this course include an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing Detroit and Detroit-like cities; an appreciation for and knowledge of the ways that the built environment can influence the nature of lived reality; an introduction to the urban humanities; and the ability to use frameworks of equity and justice in regards to how we think about, plan for, and work towards more egalitarian urban and metropolitan regions. Most centrally this course begins -- and ends -- with the future. Throughout the semester you'll be

working in assigned teams to create your own distinctive, creative and well-informed vision of the future of Detroit that embodies the principles of egalitarianism, sustainability and inclusion.

## Course Schedule

**T. Jan 19:** Introduction to Learning Opportunities and Expectations

---

### **Assignment #1: Introduce Yourself & Get to Know Harmonize**

Between now and **Friday by midnight** please take a moment and introduce yourself to each other using the Harmonize tool. Harmonize support media-rich discussion allows to:

- Upload multiple files directly within posts and easily record audio and video comments.
  - [Annotate images](#) and [video](#) to provide feedback.
- 

### **Section One: The Future in Detroit**

“In Detroit, the future is still being written . . .”

**Th. Jan 21: Detroit as a Future City**

**Read:** “Detroit: The Most Exciting City in America?,” *New York Times*:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/travel/detroit-michigan-downtown.html>

**Read:** “Are Cities in Decline the New American Frontier?”

<https://www.history.com/news/new-frontier-detroit-eminem>

**Read:** “Detroit, New Frontier”

<https://www.shareable.net/detroit-new-frontier/>

**Watch:** Eminem’s Super Bowl Ad 2011

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLD798UrKC8>

**Assignment #2:** Use Harmonize to upload commentary on these short articles and/or upload an article, image or video of your own choice that captures the “Future in Detroit” theme. **This assignment is due before class today (1/21), by 1:00pm.** The goal here is for us to collectively explore the language and imagery that are typically used in discussions about Detroit, its decline and its revitalization. [5 points]

**T. Jan 26: Detroit Future City**

**Explore:** Detroit Future City Website: <https://detroitfuturecity.com/>

*“Through the shared vision of the Strategic Framework, Detroit Future City (DFC) is committed to advancing the quality of life for all Detroiters. We will accomplish this in*

*partnership with residents and public and private stakeholders, and through data-driven strategies that promote the advancement of land use and sustainability, and community and economic development.” Our Shared Vision, DFC Mission Statement*

**Assignment #3 Reflect & Write:** Take a look at the DFC video, “We Are Detroit Future City,” featured on the front page of their website. Reflect on it and then view it again. Following your second viewing do a little writing. What do you notice? How is DFC’s vision for the future of Detroit described -- both verbally and in visual language? See if you can identify 3-5 key themes, ideas, concepts that are being utilized. And see also if you can compare/contrast with images presented in the materials we explored during our class last Thursday. The responses should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs and not more than one and a half pages. Please come prepared to discuss your reflections and observations. **Your written reflection must be uploaded on the class Canvas site by noon on Tuesday, Jan 26th.** [5 points]

### **TH. Jan 28: Critiques of Detroit Future City**

The DFC plan has come under some criticism in both the past and the present. The two pieces assigned for today, one required and the other highly recommended, should give you enough background to be able to think critically about what the DFC does and doesn’t do well. **To round out our discussion we’ll be joined by Professor Margaret Dewar, professor emerita of urban and regional planning in the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan.**

Her research focuses on American cities that have lost large shares of their peak population and employment and now have extensive blighted buildings and vacant land. With June Manning Thomas, Dewar co-edited *The City After Abandonment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). She has written numerous articles on planning and policy in the context of extreme urban decline. Her current research projects look at preventing tax foreclosures, reinforcing housing stability for households that go through tax foreclosure, explaining how residents have slowed disinvestment in their neighborhoods, encouraging land use transitions to positive “green” uses when the highest and best use may be a dumped-on vacant lot, and analyzing physical evidence of care in neighborhoods with extensive disinvestment.

**Read:** Gregory Markus & Amy Kring, “Planning, Participation and Power in a Shrinking City: The Detroit Works Project,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 42:8 (2020), 1141-1163. On Canvas under “Files.”

**Also recommended:** L. Owen Kirkpatrick, “Urban Triage, City Systems, and the Remnants of Community: Some ‘Sticky’ Complications in the Greening of Detroit,” *Journal of Urban History*, 41:2 (2015), 261-278. On Canvas under “Files.”

### **Section Two: The Future in the Past**

In this section of the course we’ll go back in time, to the “dawn” of the city and to some of the key historical moments that have shaped present-day Detroit.

## T. Feb 2: Dawn of Detroit

For this week's class we'll be reading sections of the remarkable book, *The Dawn of Detroit*, by historian Tiya Miles who wrote the book while a member of the U-M faculty. We recommend that you purchase a copy of the book because it's beautifully written and utterly compelling. It should also be available for free for up to 30 days via Proquest's eBook Central, which can be accessed through the U-M Library system

**Read:** Tiya Miles, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits* (NY: The New Press, 2017), Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 5 and Conclusion

EBook U-M Library Loan: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lib/umichigan/detail.action?docID=5751102>

**Assignment #4:** Select a place or event or person discussed in the Miles book and annotate it using the Harmonize tool. Think about making a selection and providing annotation in a way that makes the history come alive for us in the present. **Due by February 2, at noon.** [4 points] **For an additional 1 point please comment on at least two other posts by members of the class.**

## TH. Feb 4: Telling Stories about Detroit's Past: Detroit River Story Lab Project: A Visit with David Porter

David Porter is the principal investigator for the Detroit River Story Lab project, which works with regional organizations to co-produce and disseminate historically nuanced, contextually aware, and culturally rooted stories recasting the role of the Detroit River in the lives of adjacent communities from an anti-racist perspective and documenting its history as part of the Underground Railroad. He is also Professor of English and Comparative Literature in LSA. He will be visiting with us today (3:15-4:00) to talk about the vision for this collaborative project.

**Listen:** "University of Michigan Dives Into New Project Highlighting Detroit River Stories," WDET Interview with David Porter, November, 2020: <https://wdet.org/posts/2020/11/23/90319-university-of-michigan-dives-into-new-project-highlighting-detroit-river-stories/>

**Read:** "U-M's Detroit River Story Lab to Amplify Waterways Narratives," UM Record, October 26, 2020: <https://record.umich.edu/articles/u-ms-detroit-river-story-lab-to-amplify-waterways-narratives/>

**Browse:** Detroit River Project FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Detroit-River-Project-165264333498533/>

**Also take a look at:** "Q&A: Darin Stockdill talks about the need for Detroit River curriculum in middle school," on UM's Detroit website: <https://detroit.umich.edu/news->

[stories/ga-darin-stockdill-talks-about-the-need-for-detroit-river-curriculum-in-middle-school/](#)

**And of you're interested the Detroit River Project's most recent grant proposal:**

Two documents are uploaded in "Files:" "Mellon Monuments One Pager" and "Submitted Proposal Narrative"

### **T. Feb 9: City Water: A human right?**

Providing clean water for all citizens was perhaps the overriding project of 19th century urban governments and the principal means to combat cholera - the Covid-19 of the 19th century - and other epidemic diseases. But, as with other former urban achievements, access to clean water is under threat in Detroit. Can access to clean water become a human right?

**Read:** We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective. *Mapping the Water Crisis*.

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/0zpf8i8qoq5upl2/081116\\_Mapping%20the%20Water%20Crisis\\_web.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/0zpf8i8qoq5upl2/081116_Mapping%20the%20Water%20Crisis_web.pdf?dl=0)

\*\* Your UM Google account allows you to sign into Drop Box. Let us know if you have any difficulties.

Nina Misuraca Ignaczak. "Detroit Water Shutoffs and a Crisis of Public Health"  
<https://beltmag.com/detroit-water-shutoffs-crisis-public-health-coronavirus/>

**Assignment #5** (Harmonize): Choose one of the remarkable maps in *Mapping the Water Crisis* add a brief comment explaining how this map better shows important information than words or tables of figures. **Due on Tuesday (2/9) by noon. More information on dealing with copying the maps will be provided.** [5 points]

### **Section Three: Movement and Migration/ Space and Equity**

#### **TH Feb 11: Movement & Migration: How the Great Migration ReMade Urban America, I**

**Watch:** "Detroit 48202"

<https://www.amdoc.org/watch/detroit-48202/>

Pam Sporn's *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route* explores the rise, demise and contested resurgence of America's "motor city" through a multi-generational choir of voices who reside in mail carrier Wendell Watkins' work route. Archival footage and oral histories convey the impetus behind the African American migration up north to push against the boundaries of racial and economic segregation. The testimonials of Wendell's neighbors and friends shed light on the impacts of redlining and the fight for housing justice, the legacy of industrial and political disinvestment, the fragility of Black home-ownership as impacted by the mortgage and financial crisis, and a confluence of events and failed policies that resulted in Detroit's bankruptcy. Blamed

for Detroit's devastation but determined to survive, the resilient community offers creative solutions to re-imagine a more inclusive and equitable city.

**Assignment #6 Collective Essay Review of Detroit 48202: Know/Learn/Wonder:** You will be using a variation on the know/learn/wonder exercise. In the first section of your essay write about what you and the members of your group already knew about Detroit and its histories before watching the film. In section two, write about three to four aspects of this history that you learned from "Detroit 48202." In the third and final section summary some of the key things that watching the film has made you wonder about, which is to say what it made you curious about in terms of wanting to know more. Your essays should be 3-5 pages in length and must make direct reference to the documentary. If you use additional sources, please include a bibliography at the end. [10 points]

**T. Feb 16: Movement & Migration: How the Great Migration ReMade Urban America, II**

**Read:** Robert Fishman, "Detroit and the Acceleration of History," *Log #37* (January 2016): 32-48. In Canvas under "Files."

**Reminder, Assignment 6 due by midnight tonight**

**TH. Feb 18: Detroit Divided: Racialization of Space Project**

The 20th century Great Black Migration from the American South was marked by what social scientists St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton in *Black Metropolis* (1945) called "the job ceiling" and "the color line." The "job ceiling" set strict limits regardless of skills on jobs that Black workers could hold; the "color line" strictly segregated Black households into racially-defined areas, almost always where the housing stock was oldest and most deteriorated. This "predatory exclusion" (K-Y Taylor) resulted in black households, already limited in what they could earn, were forced to pay more for the worst housing.

Many teams of scholars, including one from the Michigan-Mellon Project on the Egalitarian Metropolis, are now working on documenting the "racialization of space" in Detroit and other cities and the process of predatory exclusion. *We might also have a visitor or two for today's class, depending on the availability of members of the Michigan-Mellon project team.*

**Explore:** Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America

<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.096/-94.57>

This is a national project created by three teams at four universities that seeks to archive the history of inequality in the United States for the digital age. Read the "Introduction" and spend some time exploring the various city and regional maps, including the ones created about Detroit.

**Read:** Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton University Press, 2005), Chapter 8 ("Homeowners Rights: White Resistance and the Rise of Antiliberalism"); Chapter 9 ("United Communities Are Impregnable: Violence and the Color Line"); and the Conclusion. Available online as an ebook through the UM Library: <https://www-degruyter->

[com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/princetonup/view/book/9781400851218/10.1515/9781400851218-015.xml](http://com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/princetonup/view/book/9781400851218/10.1515/9781400851218-015.xml)

**Watch:** Interview with Taylor from Democracy Now:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwOrGpVLeN4>

**Assignment #7:** (Harmonize) Locate on the timeline of the Taylor interview a brief moment where you believe Taylor most effectively addressed issues central to this course. **Due today, 2/18, by noon.** [5 points]

**Bonus Watch (Not Required, but recommended if you have the time):** Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor public lecture on her book, *Race for Profit*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXwZN\\_jGgFs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXwZN_jGgFs)

*Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor offers a damning chronicle of the twilight of redlining and the introduction of conventional real estate practices into the Black urban market, uncovering a transition from racist exclusion to predatory inclusion. Widespread access to mortgages across the United States after World War II cemented homeownership as fundamental to conceptions of citizenship and belonging. African Americans had long faced racist obstacles to homeownership, but the social upheaval of the 1960s forced federal government reforms. In the 1970s, new housing policies encouraged African Americans to become homeowners, and these programs generated unprecedented real estate sales in Black urban communities. However, inclusion in the world of urban real estate was fraught with new problems. As new housing policies came into effect, the real estate industry abandoned its aversion to African Americans, especially Black women, precisely because they were more likely to fail to keep up their home payments and slip into foreclosure.*

#### **Section Four: Race & Redevelopment**

**T. Feb 23: Redevelopment and Race in Detroit from Black Bottom to Lafayette Park & Beyond** (with possible class visit by Jamon Jardon from Black Scroll Network and Tours in Detroit: <https://blackscrollnetwork.weebly.com/>)

*“Black Bottom suffered more than most areas during the Great Depression, since many of the wage earners worked in the hard-hit auto factories. During World War II, both the economic activity and the physical decay of Black Bottom rapidly increased. In the early 1960s, the City of Detroit conducted an Urban Renewal program to combat what it called “Urban Blight.” The program razed the entire Black Bottom district and replaced it with the Chrysler Freeway and [Lafayette Park](#), a mixed-income development designed by Mies van der Rohe as a model neighborhood combining residential townhouses, apartments and high-rises with commercial areas. Many of the residents relocated to large public housing projects such as the Brewster-Douglass Housing Projects Homes and Jeffries Homes.”* From Encyclopedia of Detroit, Detroit

Historical Society: <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/black-bottom-neighborhood>

**Explore:** Infographics on Urban History & Planning via --NESS  
<https://nessmagazine.com/infographics-on-the-urban-history-and-planning/>

**Read:** June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race*, chap. 3  
Ch3 is under “Files” and Available as Ebook through UM Library:  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=606c9b71-5535-4667-9c52-7dd700c0810d%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#AN=698561&db=e00xna>

Caroline Constant, *The Modern Architectural Landscape*, chap. 8.  
Ch 8 is under “Files” Available as Ebook through UM Library: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lib/umichigan/detail.action?docID=4454310>

#### **Th. Feb. 25: From the Renaissance Center to a revitalized city**

Although the downtown Renaissance Center (1977) was supposed to revitalize Detroit after the 1967 riots, it in fact proved to be the last monument to the failures of top-down urban renewal. By contrast, the methods, goals and projects advocated by Maurice Cox, Detroit’s Director of City Planning and Development from 2015 to 2019, seem to better represent the hopes of the present moment.

**Review** the NESS site’s front page feature on the history of urban planning in Detroit.  
<https://nessmagazine.com/infographics-on-the-urban-history-and-planning/>

**Read:** Conrad Kickert, *Dream City*, chap. 9  
Available in Canvas under “Files”

**Read:** NESS interview with Maurice Cox: <https://nessmagazine.com/planning-delivering-implementing/>

**Explore:** The --NESS site also features a variety of urban redevelopment projects in Detroit:

- East Detroit Riverfront Framework Plan
- Detroit Cultivator: Akoaki with Oakland Avenue Urban Farm
- Searching for Sugar Land: Drawing the Hypercity Network
- Fitzgerald Revitalization Project

**Assignment #8** (Harmonzie + -- NESS): Pick one of the Detroit based projects listed above and highlighted on the NESS site and annotate it using the Harmonize tool. What seems promising about the project? What feels problematic? What might you want to suggest to the PIs? What additional questions would you like to ask those working on the project? This might make for a good opportunity for everyone to use the video annotation function on Harmonize, which is encouraged but not required. Due on Thursday, 2/25 by noon. [5 points]

#### **Section Four: Toward an Egalitarian Metropolis**

In this section of the course we continue to draw on the historical analysis and insights developed over the past several weeks. While considering various contemporary visions for creating cities that are more egalitarian, sustainable, inclusive and just, we will also explore a host of challenges, especially environmental racism, inequalities across metropolitan regions and the problems associated with the carceral state.

#### **T. March 2: Grace Lee Boggs and the Greening of a Shrinking City**

**Read:** Grace Lee Boggs, Detroit's Quiet Revolution: How We Came to See Vacant Lots Not as Blight but as opportunities to grow our own food," *Nation*, September 2, 2009: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/detroits-quiet-revolution/>

**Read:** Thomas Sugrue "Post-script, Grace Lee Boggs," <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/postscript-grace-lee-boggs>

**Watch:** American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs, Trailer: <http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/memorial-film/>

**Listen:** "Remembering Detroit's Grace Lee Boggs" NPR (2015)" <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/remembering-detroits-grace-lee-boggs>

Bonus: Grace Lee Boggs, "Think Globally, Act Locally: Towards a New Concept of City-zenship," Speech from June 2004; see especially the passages on Detroit Summer. Under "Files" on Canvas

#### **TH. March 4: Greening Detroit, Continued**

**Read:** On Jackie Victor & Avalon Bakery: <https://www.detroitlover.net/jackie-victor>

**Explore:** Series of Short pieces on Malki Yakini and the Detroit Black Food Security Network: <https://detourdetroit.com/malik-yakini-detroit-black-food-security/>  
<https://www.hourdetroit.com/eats-food/malik-yakini-on-combatting-food-insecurity-in-detroits-black-community/>

DBFSN Website: <https://www.dbcfsn.org/>

**Watch:** How Urban Agriculture is Transforming Detroit:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/devita\\_davison\\_how\\_urban\\_agriculture\\_is\\_transforming\\_detroit/reading-list#t-222696](https://www.ted.com/talks/devita_davison_how_urban_agriculture_is_transforming_detroit/reading-list#t-222696)

### **T. March 9 Mass Incarceration, Criminalization & Policing**

One major barrier to Detroit's recovery as an egalitarian metropolis is the legacy of mass incarceration, a repressive body of policies and practices that began to take shape in the 1970s and led by the end of the 20th century to the United States having more of its citizens incarcerated per capita than any other developed nation. We'll start our collective investigation with a broad perspective on how mass incarceration shapes various landscapes across the country, via the work of Brett Story, and then narrow in on how it has shaped the urban and human landscape in Detroit.

**Watch:** Brett Story, *A Prison in Twelve Landscapes*

This is available online through UM Library. Go here and sign in using your UM/Gmail login information: <https://umich.kanopy.com/product/prison-twelve-landscapes-1>

**Read:** Brett Story, *Prison Land*, Introduction and Chap. 1

This is available in e-book form via the UM Library system: <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/10.5749/j.ctvdjrphr?pq-origsite=summon>

Chapter 1 is available under "Files" on Canvas

**Explore:** The Carceral State Project's "Detroit as a Carceral Space" initiative, especially "Detroit Under Fire," and the "Wayne County Jail Documentation Project:"

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/dcc-project/publications/detroit-as-a-carceral-space/>

### **TH. March 11: Carceral Spaces, II. Visit from Nora Krinitsky, Project Director for the Carceral State Project and Lecturer in the Residential College**

**Read:** Heather Thompson, "Unmaking the Motor City in the Age of Mass Incarceration," HeinOnline, April 2015: [https://lsa.umich.edu/sid/detroiters-speak/detroiters-speak-archive/\\_jcr\\_content/par/download\\_1064782161/file.res/Unmaking%20The%20Motor%20City%20by%20Heather%20Thompson](https://lsa.umich.edu/sid/detroiters-speak/detroiters-speak-archive/_jcr_content/par/download_1064782161/file.res/Unmaking%20The%20Motor%20City%20by%20Heather%20Thompson) and under "Files" on Canvas

#### **Additional Resources:**

"Neighborhoods and Reentry in Detroit: Mapping Prison Data" from Data Driven Detroit: [http://skilledwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Data-Driven-Detroit\\_Mapping-Prison-Data.pdf](http://skilledwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Data-Driven-Detroit_Mapping-Prison-Data.pdf) and some of the research that the Detroit Justice Center has done on policing in Detroit:

<https://www.detroitjustice.org/highwayrobbery>

<https://www.detroitjustice.org/blog/endcashbailinwayne>

**Assignment #9 Second Major Essay:** “Green Spaces versus Carceral Space.” 3-5 pages in length completed either individually or as a group. More details to follow. **Due on Friday, March 19th by noon.** [10 points]

In this essay we want you to think about, reflect on and make an argument about what urban planners and community activists mean when they talk about “greening Detroit.” Your argument (aka your thesis) should address the history of discrimination that many Detroiters have endured based on race and ethnicity and consider the ways that urban residents continue to encounter (and fight against) mass incarceration/criminalization and/or environmental racism. Make sure that you take the time to fully define these terms -- write for a general audience and not for us -- and that you use concrete examples. We also want to see you working with the assigned materials from this course; please plan on using at least 4 to 5 different sources.

Most of you are upper division students and good writers, but you might want to review the basics. Good writers can also become better writers. The Sweetland Writing Center’s Writing Guides is a good place to start. Here is the link to their Writing Guides landing page: <https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduates/writing-guides.html>. The materials under creating a strong thesis, deciding what to argue, and creating a stronger analysis are especially useful. We also appreciated the advice under the tab on integrating evidence.

Given the nature of this assignment and the course overall we also want you to be attentive to the descriptive language you use, how you identify people (e.g., criminals and prisoners versus incarcerated people), and who you cite as an expert.

While we left open the possibility of doing this assignment individually we encourage you to work together in your groups.

#### **T. March 16:** Metropolitan Perspectives I: Equity in the Region

The classic study *Detroit Divided* (2000) by University of Michigan demographer Reynolds Farley and colleagues caught the Detroit region at or near its maximum of racial and economic segregation, with blacks comprising close to 90% of the city’s residents and the suburbs almost 100% white. As the authors show, racial segregation was matched by economic divisions equally deep. Twenty years later, we turn to more recent data to ask the question: what has changed? We’ll also want to think with questions of regional transportation here as well.

**Read:** Reynolds Farley et. al., *Detroit Divided*, chaps. 3 and 7.

Ebook available through the University of Michigan Library: <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/10.7758/9781610441988>

\*\* Chapters 3 and 7 available as pdfs under “Files” on Canvas

**View:** Go to the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center's Racial Dot Map based on the 2010 Census, with one dot = one person, color-coded according to race and ethnicity.

<https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap/>

Locate the Detroit region on the map and zoom down to explore the racial contours of our region, especially the city/suburban divide. What are some of the things that the map teaches us to see? Jot down some notes and come to class today ready to discuss.

## **TH. March 18:** Metropolitan Perspectives & Environmental Racisms: NIMBY-ism

“Struggling to breathe in 48217, Michigan’s most toxic ZIP code,” MetroTimes:

<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/struggling-to-breathe-in-48217-michigans-most-toxic-zip-code/Content?oid=23542211>

Great Lakes Environmental Justice (website):

<https://greatlakesenvironmentaljustice.wordpress.com/southwest-detroit/>

Detroiters Working For Environmental Justice (website): <https://detroitenvironmentaljustice.org/>

and the Delary Neighborhood Framework Plan: <https://detroitenvironmentaljustice.org/delray/>

---

### **Thinking Ahead: Final Project Prompt**

How could/would/should you intervene? You’ve been asked to form a team and enter the Egalitarian Metropolis Critical Humanities & Urban Design Competition, which offers a million dollar prize for the best submission. What issue(s) would you want to tackle and why; (2) how would you approach equity design solutions; (3) what outcomes would you seek. You can choose to redesign the entire city or focus on one neighborhood. Your final projects must incorporate at least three concrete proposals for change or transformation, and your written justifications must incorporate at least five of the assigned readings from this class.

---

### **T. March 23: Wellness Day**

Go for a walk

Do yoga

Meditate

Sleep In & Get to bed Early

Have a nutritious meal

Hit the gym

Catch up on laundry, chores, reading

### **TH. March 25: Peer Review/Team Meetings**

We’ll use the session today for you to meet in your teams to complete the peer review, and might squeeze in an in-class presentation on using StoryMaps.

Also for today take a look at "How Unfair Property Taxes Prevent Black Families from Gaining Wealth:"<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-09/racial-inequality-broken-property-tax-system-blocks-black-wealth-building>

We think this is a good example of powerful storytelling around an enormously complex set of issues. You might consider how this piece is put together -- the narrative arc, the research, the perspective, etc -- as an inspirational model that brings together many of the analytical threads we’ve been considering in this section of the course.

**Assignment #10:** Rough outlines due by noon on March 25th. [5 points]

This is a first pass at what your final projects will look like for your group projects. Use this exercise to review the prompt for the assignment and to begin to work through its various components. Your goal is to produce a rough outline.

Here is the prompt: How could/would/should you intervene? You've been asked to form a team and enter the Egalitarian Metropolis Critical Humanities & Urban Design Competition, which offers a million dollar prize for the best submission. What issue(s) would you want to tackle and why; (2) how would you approach equity design solutions; (3) what outcomes would you seek. You can choose to redesign the entire city or focus on one neighborhood. Your final projects must incorporate at least three concrete proposals for change or transformation, and your written justifications must incorporate at least five of the assigned readings from this class.

As a first step make sure that everyone understands the assignments -- don't assume, take the time to discuss it -- and then agree on an overarching set of issues that you want to collectively address. From there you can begin to sketch out a sense of the outcomes you want to achieve and how you might design (aka propose policies and/or practices) in order to achieve them. Your outlines can be done in narrative form or using bullet points.

To prime the pump, here are a couple of online guides. They both assume more traditional college-level essays but might prove useful nonetheless:

How Do I Decide What To Argue?: <https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduates/writing-guides/how-do-i-decide-what-i-should-argue-.html>

5 Steps to Create The Perfect Outline: <https://www.herzing.edu/blog/herzing/5-steps-create-perfect-outline>

### **Using StoryMaps:**

\*\* Hopefully we'll have an in-class presentation today on using StoryMaps -- even though you are not required to use this platform. In the meantime, for those of you who do plan on using it and for those of you who are curious, here are some recommended resources:

The main site for ArcGIS StoryMaps:

<https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/overview>

The U-M Gallery of Sites (for inspiration):

<https://umich.maps.arcgis.com/home/gallery.html?view=grid&sortOrder=desc&sortField=modified>

Quick Tips for Mastering StoryMaps (The ultimate collection of short, simple how-tos for your storytelling needs, featuring both text and video explanations):

<https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-storymaps/constituent-engagement/quick-tips-for-mastering-the-arcgis-storymaps-builder/>

Planning & Outlining Your Story (A guide to story-boarding your story map. Who is your audience? What do you want readers to takeaway? What content (maps, images, video, etc.) do you want to include? Make an outline!)

<https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-storymaps/sharing-collaboration/planning-and-outlining-your-story-map-how-to-set-yourself-up-for-success/>

We will use today's session for a peer review exercise of your rough outlines. Please use that feedback to complete the first draft of your project by Monday, March 29th.

**Assignment #11:** First Draft of Projects due by Monday, March 29th at noon. [10 points]  
First drafts are not necessarily pretty! The goal is to get as much on the page as possible so that we can give you feedback on the various component parts of the assignment. If you are using StoryMaps (or another platform) you can also include a storyboard of the layout. Please note that you are NOT required to use an online platform.

#### **Section Four: The Arts & Humanities of Detroit**

Urban humanities is an emerging field at the intersection of the humanities, urban planning, and design. It offers a new approach not only for understanding cities in a global context but for intervening in them, interpreting their histories, engaging with them in the present, and speculating about their futures. Urban humanities views the city through a lens of *spatial justice*, and its inquiries are often centered on the microsettings of everyday life. The urban humanities have also posed previously neglected questions about practice and intervention on top of, or alongside, questions of interpretation. Humanists rarely use the word "intervention," or have done so principally in the context of discursive engagements in response to a conference paper or lecture. By contrast, profession-oriented fields such as architecture and urban planning embrace questions about what can and might be done. The hovering question—what should be done?—demands a practical response to what is but also creates an opening for speculation about the possibilities of what might be. In the zone where environmental design intersects with the humanities, humanists are drawn to think in ways that are at once more practical and more imaginative than they are accustomed to. (Adapted from a couple of sources, including: "What Are the Urban Humanities?" Boom California, Nov 27, 2016:

<https://boomcalifornia.org/2016/11/27/what-are-the-urban-humanities/> )

#### **T. March 30: Motor City/Music City: Acoustic Histories of Detroit**

Presentation by EM course member Jillian Luciw, based on her senior thesis research.

Materials TBD/ Detroit Sound Conservancy (<http://detroitssound.org/>)

#### **TH. April 1: Arts for an Egalitarian Metropolis: from Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera to Afro-Futurism**

**Read:** "Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Detroit," from Terry Smith, *Making the Modern: industry, art, and design in America* (1993): 199-281.

**Watch:** <https://www.modeldmedia.com/features/afrofuturism-detroit-082117.aspx>

**Assignment #12:** Second Full Drafts of Team Projects due by Monday, April 5 by Noon [5 points]

**T. April 6: “Detroit Square:” A Visit with Anya Sirota**, associate professor of architecture at the U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and principal of Detroit-based studio Akoaki

**Read:**

“UM Faculty Win International Design Competition to Reimagine Detroit’s Arts and Cultural District.” <https://arts.umich.edu/news-features/u-m-faculty-win-international-design-competition-to-reimagine-detroits-arts-and-cultural-district/>

“Q&A: U-M Anya Sirota Shares Vision for Detroit Square:” <https://arts.umich.edu/news-features/qa-u-ms-anya-sirota-shares-vision-for-detroit-square-in-midtown/>

**Assignment #13 Reflect/Write:** Please submit one question of your own for Anya via the Canvas Discussion before today’s class by noon. [5 points]

**TH. April 8: Student Design Summit: Detroit Public Library**

<https://designcore.org/student-design-summit-2020/>

Conversation on doing project-oriented design work in Detroit with A. Paul Fontaine Program Director, Michigan Engaging Community through the Classroom Initiative  
pronouns: he, his, him

**T. April 13: Last Words. Open Session to Collaboratively Design**

**TH. April 15 Presentations of Projects**

**T. April 20 Presentation of Projects**

**Assignment #14: Final Projects due on Friday, April 23 by 5:00pm. [25 points]**