

Leslie Fishbein
American Studies Department
F.A.S., Rutgers University

Summer 2006
Ruth Adams 104
M, W: 6:00 P.M. – 9:45 P.M.

**AMERICAN STUDIES 01:050:308: B6: 81218:
NEW YORK CITY: THE CULTURE OF METROPOLIS**

BOOKS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE:

1. William L. Riordon, ed., *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*, With a new introduction by Peter Quinn. New York: A Signet Classic, The Penguin Group, 1995. \$5.95 new.
2. Abraham Cahan, *Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto*. With a new introduction by Bernard G. Richards. 1896, 1898; reprinted New York: Dover Books, Inc., 1970. \$8.95 new.
3. Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*. With an introduction by Regina Barreca. 1920; reprinted New York: A Signet Classic, The Penguin Group, 1996. \$5.95 new.
4. E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*. 1975; reprinted New York: A Plume Book, The Penguin Group, 1997. \$15.00 new.
5. Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*. 1967; reprinted New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1997. \$12.95 new.
6. University Publishing Solutions course packet available for purchase first day of class and then from American Studies office. \$18.00. If additional copies needed, contact University Publishing Solutions: (732) 220-1211.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance is required at all class sessions. Unexcused absences will lower your grade. More than two unexcused absences will result in failure in the course.

4-5 page critical paper due on assigned reading and film on date specified in syllabus. Outside reading is not required, but all reading and film needs to be cited properly in footnotes and bibliography.

Wednesday, July 5th: final examination

GRADING

10%	Class participation (counted only positively)
40%	Critical paper
50%	Final examination

OFFICE: Ruth Adams Building 024C

OFFICE HOURS: By arrangement

OFFICE TELEPHONE: (732) 932-8650

E-MAIL: fishbei@rci.rutgers.edu

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FILMS SHOWN IN CLASS:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>FILM</u>
Wednesday, May 31 st	<i>Manhattan</i> (1979)
Monday, June 5 th	<i>Manhatta</i> (1921) <i>Working Girls</i> (1987)
Wednesday, June 7 th	<i>The Musketeers of Pig Alley</i> (1912)
Monday, June 12 th	<i>The Imported Bridegroom</i> (1989)
Wednesday, June 14 th	<i>Dancing Mothers</i> (1926)
Monday, June 19 th	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> (1993)
Wednesday, June 21 st	<i>I Remember Harlem</i> (1991) <i>St. Louis Blues</i> (1933)
Monday, June 26 th	<i>The Jazz Singer</i> (1926)
Wednesday, June 28 th	<i>Paris Is Burning</i> (1992)
Monday, July 3 rd	<i>Do the Right Thing</i> (1992)

FILMS ON RESERVE AT THE KILMER AREA LIBRARY

DATES:	FILM
Wednesday, May 31 st - Wednesday, June 14 th	<i>City Hall</i> (1996)
Wednesday, June 7 th - Wednesday, June 21 st	<i>Hester Street</i> (1974)

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CRITICAL PAPER TOPICS:

CITY HALL (1996) PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY JUNE 14TH. Compare and contrast the attitude toward political corruption in William L. Riordon's *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* and the film *City Hall*. On what grounds does George Washington Plunkitt justify political corruption? Does he view "honest graft" as providing a genuine service to his political constituency and to the community in general? How well does Plunkitt's brand of politics actually serve his ethnic community and the city at large? Has the nature of political corruption changed in the twentieth-century urban environment depicted in *City Hall*? What role does politics play in urban life? Has that role been altered substantially since Plunkitt's era? Does political corruption serve any socially redeeming function in either era? How would you account for its persistence and continued viability and for the difficulty of instituting political reform in both eras?

HESTER STREET (1974) PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21ST. Compare and contrast the gendered nature of the acculturation process for Jewish men and women respectively in Abraham Cahan's *Yekl* (1896) and *The Imported Bridegroom* (1898) and Joan Micklin Silver's 1974 film *Hester Street* (if you wish, you may include the 1989 film *The Imported Bridegroom* in your analysis). How are male roles transformed by the presence of sports, dancing academies, and alternatives to a life of religious study in the New World? What impact does the New York urban environment have on the stability of family life? How do notions of love and romance alter the nature of Jewish existence? How are women transformed by the new environment? How well does their shtetl experience prepare them for the expectations of their life in New York City? Which gender is better adapted to success in a cosmopolitan urban world?

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Except for collaborative assignments officially approved by the instructor in advance, all work a student submits must be his/her own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in preparing written assignments. Students should review the university policy on Academic Integrity (see the website for the Teaching Excellence Center: <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>). The Writing Program maintains a website that defines and discusses plagiarism: http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/. This site clarifies many issues regarding the University's policy on academic integrity. Failure to comply with this policy can result in failure of the course.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in the text or in a footnote.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, CONTINUED:

Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment ..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member. For information on proper documentation, consult Acknowledging Sources, the guide prepared by the Rutgers American Studies Department, which will be distributed in class and which is available on the departmental web site: <http://amerstudies.rutgers.edu/documents/AkcnowldgingSources.pdf>.

ASSIGNMENTS:

No. Date: Readings (all on reserve at Mabel Smith Douglass Library and online)

I. May 31st (W) Introduction

MANHATTAN (1970) SHOWN IN CLASS

**CITY HALL (1996) ON RESERVE AT KILMER
AREA LIBRARY, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2ND -
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16TH**

II. June 5th (M) Timothy Gilfoyle, "The Moral Origins of Political Surveillance:
The Preventive Society in New York City, 1867-1918," *American
Quarterly*, 38 (Fall, 1986): 637-652.

MANHATTA (1921) SHOWN IN CLASS

WORKING GIRLS (1987) SHOWN IN CLASS

**HESTER STREET (1974) ON RESERVE AT
KILMER AREA LIBRARY, WEDNESDAY, JUNE
9TH - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23RD**

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ASSIGNMENTS:

No. Date: Readings (all on reserve at Mabel Smith Douglass Library and online)

- III. June 7th (W) William L. Riordon, ed., *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*. With a new introduction by Peter Quinn. New York: A Signet Classic, 1995. Introduction by Peter Quinn, pp. vii-xxii; Preface by William L. Riordon, pp. xxiii-xxv; A Tribute to Plunkitt by the Leader of Tammany Hall Charles F. Murphy; pp. 3-98.

**THE MUSKETEERS OF PIG ALLEY (1912)
SHOWN IN CLASS**

- IV. June 12th (M) Abraham Cahan, *The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto*. With a new introduction by Bernard G. Richards. 1896, 1898; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970. Introduction by Bernard G. Richards, pp. iii-vii; *Yekl*, pp. 1-89; "The Imported Bridegroom, P pp. 93-162; "A Providential Match," pp. 163-187; "A Sweatshop Romance," pp. 188-202; "Circumstances," pp. 203-223; "A Ghetto Wedding," pp. 224-240.

**THE IMPORTED BRIDEGROOM (1989) SHOWN
IN CLASS**

- IV. June 14th (W) Lewis Erenberg, Chapter 8: "Into the Jazz Age," in Lewis Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and*
CITY HALL (1996) *the Transformation of American Culture*. Chicago: The University
PAPER DUE of Chicago Press, 1981. pp. 233-263.

DANCING MOTHERS (1926) SHOWN IN CLASS

- VI. June 19th (M) Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*. With an introduction by Regina Barreca. 1920; reprinted New York: A Signet Classic, 1996. Note on Edith Jones Wharton and Regina Barreca. Introduction by Regina Barreca, pp. vii-xx; pp. 1-313.

**THE AGE OF INNOCENCE (1993) SHOWN IN
CLASS**

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ASSIGNMENTS:

- No. Date:** **Readings (all on reserve at Mabel Smith Douglass Library and online)**
- VII. June 21st (W) Alain Locke, "The New Negro," in Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro*. 1925; reprinted New York: Atheneum, 1970. pp. 3-16.

HESTER STREET

(1974) PAPER DUE *I REMEMBER HARLEM* (1991) SHOWN IN CLASS

***ST. LOUIS BLUES* (1933) SHOWN IN CLASS**

- VIII. June 26th (M) E. L. *Doctorow*, *Ragtime*. 1975; reprinted New York: A Plume Book, The Penguin Group, 1997. Quotation from Scott Joplin, pp. 3-270.

***THE JAZZ SINGER* (1926) SHOWN IN CLASS**

- IX. June 28th (W) George Chauncey, "Building Gay Neighborhood Enclaves: The Village and Harlem," in George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World*. New York: Harper/Collins, 1994. pp. 227-247, 430-437.

Lawrence Senelick, "Private Parts in Public Places," in William R. Taylor, ed., *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991. pp. 329-253, 420-423.

Begin reading Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*. 1967; reprinted New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1991. Author's Acknowledgments, pp. vii-viii; Prologue, pp. ix-xi; pp. 1-331; About the Author.

***PARIS IS BURNING* (1992) SHOWN IN CLASS**

- X. July 3rd (M) Complete reading Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*.

***DO THE RIGHT THING* (1989) SHOWN IN CLASS**

- XI. July 5th (W) **CONCLUDING LECTURE**

FINAL EXAMINATION