

# HSS 404: The Brick City -- How Newark became Newark

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Office Hours: Monday: 10-11: 15 a.m.; Wednesday: 10-11:15 a.m.; and by appointment

## Course description:

This course is a journey into Newark's rich and complicated history. Students will engage in a semester-long research project where they will trace the history of a Newark site of their choosing by using historical maps and other primary and secondary sources. Students will gain the background they need for their project through readings, walking tours (all within a short distance from campus) and class conversations with people who are helping to shape Newark's future.

Our exploration begins in the year 1666 when a group of Puritans from Connecticut purchased the land that is now Newark from a group of Lenape Indians for a price that included four barrels of beer, 10 pairs of breeches, two ankers of liquor, 10 kettles, 20 axes, 20 coats, 50 double hands of powder, 100 bars of lead, 20 pistols, 10 swords, 40 blankets, 50 knives, 20 hoes, 850 fathoms of wampum, and three troopers' coats. From there, we will look at key issues that have impacted the city, including the (little known) history of slavery in Newark (and New Jersey overall), how rapid industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century turned Newark into an industrial powerhouse, and how the quest for racial equality as well as the closing of factories (and with it, the loss of jobs) ushered in new challenges in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

NOTE: The name of our course was inspired by Brad Tuttle's *How Newark Became Newark: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of an American City*. Notice that the book is on our reading list!

## AI Pilot Project

This course is part of a series of experimental pilot projects being organized this semester by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in partnership with Grammarly. Some may be previously familiar with this platform because of prior use as a writing assistant. However, today Grammarly also has generative AI capability and, functionally speaking, is similar to ChatGPT. All students enrolled in the course will receive free access to the full suite of Grammarly's tools.

Over the course of the semester, we will be engaging with Grammarly's suite of tools in order to reflect on the ways generative AI is changing how we interact with information and with each other. To quote the historian Yuval Noah Harari, "The rise of AI is arguably the biggest information revolution in history." In other words, AI is changing everything, so regardless of how you feel about AI, this is something we all must confront.

## AI Policy

Obviously, we will be engaging with AI tools as part of this pilot project. That does not mean you will have permission to use AI for every aspect of your work; instead, I will also outline specific guidelines about AI usage for each assignment. Integrity is crucial; always adhere to the guidance or ask questions if you are unsure. (Confusion is normal, so to repeat, please contact me if you are unsure about what AI tools you can use!) These conversations will enable us to work together to ensure that we are using these tools in productive and ethical ways.

## Course Goals

- Gain an understanding of the city's complex history as well as its physical and social geography.
- Hone research, writing, and critical thinking skills by evaluating evidence, formulating research questions, synthesizing primary and secondary sources, and generating arguments.
- Engage in dialogue with people who are helping to shape Newark's future.
- Reflect on how local history is a window into the history of the United States as a whole.

## Texts

- Tuttle, Brad. *How Newark Became Newark: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of an American City*. Rivergate Books, New Brunswick, NJ, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8135-4490-8.  
*This book will be available on the reserve shelf in the Van Houten Library, but I strongly recommend you purchase your own copy.*
- Safian, Gail. *Slavery in New Jersey: a Troubled History*. This short, and easy-to-read booklet was prepared for a 2019 exhibition by the same name at the Durrand-Hedden House and Garden Association in Maplewood. Free PDF can be downloaded [here](#); a hard-copy version can be purchased for \$4 [here](#).
- Videos tours of Newark by the late Rutgers historian Clement Price: [Once and Future Newark \(chapters 1-13\)](#)
- Selected readings from: Cummings Charles. [Knowing Newark: The Star-Ledger columns](#). The Newark Public Library, 2016. (Online & free)
- Other readings will be posted on Canvas.

## Assignments and grading:

- Participation and attendance: 10 percent
- Weekly journal entries: 20 percent -- your journal is a vehicle to respond to class readings and discussion and to reflect on how they apply to your semester-long research project. Entries should be a minimum of 250 words and will be due on Fridays at 11: 59 p.m
- Research project\*:
  - Paper #1 (3-5 pages) – “Site selection” essay & presentation: 20 percent
  - Site-over-time presentation: 20 percent

- Paper #2 (site-over-time; 5-8 pages): 30 percent

**Due dates are listed in the tentative schedule at the end of this syllabus. Please note:  
There is no final exam in this course!**

*\*The research project for this course was adapted from the work of Anne Whiston Spirn. The Once and Future City. Spring 2015. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: MIT OpenCourseWare, <https://ocw.mit.edu/>. License: Creative Commons BY-NC-SA.*

Final grades will be calculated according to the university's grading scale.

A = 100-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-80	C+ = 79-77	C = 76-70	D = 69-60	F = 59-0
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## Attendance

You may miss *two classes* without penalty. Every subsequent unexcused absence will result in a reduction of half of a letter grade on your final course grade. If you are absent for legitimate reasons (family emergency, illness) you must submit official and verifiable documentation to the Dean of Students related to the absence within two weeks. More than six unexcused absences (three weeks of the course) will result in the automatic failure of the course. (Please note: this means that excessive absences, even for legitimate reasons, can still result in failing the class.)

You are also expected to come to class on time. Chronic tardiness is disrespectful both to me and your fellow students, and it will hurt your grade. (Two lates = one absence).

Per university policy, students who expect to miss class for religious observances must submit to me a written list of dates that will be missed by the end of the second week of classes.

## Late work

Late work will automatically be downgraded by five points for each day past the due date. Assignments that are more than a week late will not be accepted.

## Incomplete grades

In accordance with the provost's directives, an incomplete will only be issued only in **rare instances** where a student, and for **documented (by the Dean of Students) reasons**, could not complete parts of the work of the course.

## Tying up loose ends at the end of the semester

All required work must be submitted prior to the date established for the uploading of final grades. In other words, when the course is over, the course is over. You cannot turn in outstanding work after the semester has ended for a post-semester grade adjustment.

## How to reach me

Email is my preferred method of communication. I will respond to your emails within 24-48 hours. Please remember to maintain an appropriate tone in all school-related correspondence and to include a SUBJECT line and your NAME in all emails.

## Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. **Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university.** If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at [dos@njit.edu](mailto:dos@njit.edu)

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

## Special Needs

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

## Resources and local events worth checking out:

- [TapintoNewark.com](http://TapintoNewark.com) is a hyperlocal news site dedicated to Newark. It's a good window into what's happening in town, and, because it generally only publishes one story a day, it's not overwhelming. Subscriptions are free.
- **Newark History Society's annual lecture series** (<https://www.newarkhistorysociety.org>). Presentations are held at the Newark Public Library, 5 Washington St., and streamed live. (contact [NewarkHistorySoc@gmail.com](mailto:NewarkHistorySoc@gmail.com) for Zoom link). Video recordings of past lectures can be found on the History Society's YouTube channel.

Two lectures are scheduled for this spring:

- Sodom on the Passaic: Excavating Early Queer Histories of Newark

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 6:00p  
Newark Public Library, James Brown African American Room, 2nd floor  
Presenter: Peter Savastano (Seton Hall) and Timothy Stewart-Winter (Rutgers-Newark)

- Newark's Great Migration: Stories from the Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 6:00pm  
Newark Public Library, James Brown African American Room, 2nd floor  
Presenter: Katie Singer

- **City-wide celebrations focusing on Banquante "Jack" Cudjo**

From April 27-May 4, there will be a series of events honoring the life of Banquante "Jack" Cudjo. Cudjo arrived in Newark as an enslaved man sometime in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and served in the Revolutionary War on behalf of his master, a Newark farmer named Benjamin Coe. After the war, Cudjo gained his freedom and operated his own horticulture business. He is believed to have been Newark's first businessman. For the full schedule of events, go [here](#).

## The Writing Center

The Writing Center (Central King Building, Ground Floor, Room G1) is available for 45-minute individual and group appointment with professional writing tutors online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. For more information, please visit <https://www5.njit.edu/writingcenter/>.

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## HSS 404 -- The Brick City: How Newark Became Newark\*

This class meets at 8:30 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays in room 222 of the Central King Building.

\*This is my best guess for how this course will unfold, but please note: the schedule is subject to change. Please rely on Canvas for the most up-to-date information about readings, assignments, and due dates!

Week 1	Course intro
Day 1: Jan. 20	Day 1: MLK DAY! No class

Day 2: Jan. 22	<p>Day 2: Class intro</p> <p>HW: Read brief bio of <a href="#">Charles Cummings on the home page</a> of the Newark Public Library's Knowing Newark collection + "<a href="#">Rollercoaster of City's History Rumbles On</a>" (Cummings) from the Knowing Newark collection</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Day 1: Jan. 27</p> <p>Day 2: Jan. 29</p>	<p><b>Topic: Getting the overview</b></p> <p>Day 1: In-class writing; Clement Price videos from the <a href="#">Once and Future Newark (chapters 1-13)</a></p> <p>Day 2: Maps 101: Understanding the boundaries of the original Puritan settlement</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Day. 1: Feb. 3</p> <p>Day 2: Feb. 5</p>	<p><b>Topic: Getting the overview</b></p> <p>Day 1: Walking tour of Downtown</p> <p>Day 2: Intro site-selection assignment</p> <p>Reading: Tuttle, pages 3-38 -- Prologue ("Pride in Newark: a 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a City on the Brink," "Rise, "Chapter 1 ("Corporation: Sheltered Puritan Village to Teeming Industrial Hub") + "A Tour of the City," pages from Bob Curvin's book <i>Inside Newark</i>.</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Day 1: Feb. 10</p> <p>Day 2: Feb. 12</p>	<p><b>Topic: Getting the Overview, continued!</b></p> <p>Day 1: TBD</p> <p>Day 2: Class cancelled so that students can use class time to visit their sites.</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Day 1: Feb. 17</p> <p>Day 2: Feb. 19</p>	<p><b>Topic: The Industrialization of Newark</b></p> <p>Day 1: Class visit -- John Prieto, archivist, Canal Society of NJ</p> <p>Day 2: In-class research workshop</p> <p>Reading, Tuttle chapter 3 ("Greater Newark: A Metropolis Blooms with the Dawn of the Twentieth Century"), pages 63-86 + <b>Cummings:</b> <a href="#">Leather Industry Branded the City with a Fine Reputation</a> + <a href="#">In a Glass Darkly: Beer Marks City's History Brewers Benefited from Workers, Water</a> + NYT: <a href="#">In Newark, wresting a fatal fire from oblivion</a></p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Day 1: Feb. 24</p> <p>Day 2: Feb. 26</p>	<p><b>Topic: Site selection paper is due &amp; presentations</b></p> <p>Day 1: Presentations</p> <p>Day 2: Presentations</p>

	Reading, Tuttle chapter 2 (“Politics to the Dogs: Southern Sympathy during the Civil War), pages 39-62
Week 7 Day 1: March 3 Day 2: March 5	<b>Topic: Intro: My-site-over-time paper</b> Day 1: Intro paper + Map workshop Day 2: Workshop
Week 8 Day 1: March 10 Day 2: March 12	<b>Film: Revolution 67</b> Screening takes place over both days.  Reading, Tuttle, chapter 6 (“Bound to Explode: Generations of Frustration Boil over in the Summer of 1967 ”), pages 142-170) + “The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration” (Isabel Wilkerson)
Week 9 Day 1: March 17 Day 2: March 19	SPRING BREAK!
Week 10 Day 1: March 24 Day 2: March 26	<b>Topic: urban renewal and its consequences</b>  Tuttle, chapter 5 (“The Slums of Ten years from now”) + “Urban Renewal Progress, City of Newark, 1972-73 (Newark Dept. of Planning, Engineering and Research)
Week 11 Day 1: March 31 Day 2: April 2	<b>Topic: Blacks in Newark</b>  Day 1: The little-known history of slavery in New Jersey Day 2: Resistance and activism in Newark’s 19 <sup>th</sup> century Black community  Readings, “ <a href="#"><i>A Brief History of African Americans in Newark, New Jersey: Their Presence, Their Institutions, and Their Struggle for Freedom from Colonial Times</i></a> ” (James Amemasor)
Week 12 Day 1: April 7 Day 2: April 9	TBD
Week 13 Day 1: April 14 Day 2: April 16	TBD
Week 14 Day 1: April 21	<b>Conferences</b>

Day 2: April 23	
Week 15	Presentations
Day 1: April 18	Day 1: Presentations
Day 2: April 30	Day 2: Presentations
Week 16	LAST DAY OF CLASS + paper due
Day 1: May 5	