

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

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Course description:

This course is a journey into Newark's rich and complicated history. 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, including the little-known history of slavery in Newark (and New Jersey overall), the rapid growth in the 19th century that turned Newark into an industrial powerhouse, and the racial justice issues that roiled the city in the 20th century. We'll also keep an eye on what is happening in Newark today and how the city is trying to reinvent itself for the 21st century.

Students will learn about Newark through readings, walking tours (all within a short distance from campus), and class conversations with people who are helping to shape Newark's future.

NOTE: The name of our course was inspired by Brad Tuttle's book, *How Newark Became Newark: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of an American City*, which I highly recommend.

AI Policy:

I take it as a given that all of you have experimented with A.I. and have probably incorporated it in your workflow in some way. In fact, the reality is, it's virtually impossible to avoid A.I.; the minute you step onto the Internet, it is embedded in even a simple Google search.

Which brings me to this class and what brought us all here: namely, to learn. That is why – at least initially -- I will be asking you to submit weekly, hand-written journal entries for this class in which you reflect on how our classwork relates to other texts and/or coursework as well as your own experiences, observations, and questions. The point here is to help you gain confidence in your own thinking and reading abilities, not to outsource these mental tasks to a machine.

Granted, this will be a bit of an experiment, and I don't know how well it will work. But at this point, I've read enough about the impact of A.I. on education to know that it is in everyone's interest to safeguard learning. To quote from a [recent op-ed by Clay Shirky](#), the vice provost at NYU: "A student who cuts and pastes a history paper is enrolled in a cutting and pasting class, not a history class. If the student's preferred working methods reduce mental effort, we have to

reintroduce that effort somehow.’’ The journal entries are designed to reintroduce effort and non-A.I.-assisted thinking.

That said, I also can’t deny that A.I. has become part of our world. And there are circumstances where it makes sense to use A.I. For example, I’ve found the Perplexity.ai search engine to be a very useful way to identify source materials for my research. (Do note: Once I’ve identified relevant sources, I read and annotate them myself -- because I know that is the only way to absorb what I am reading.)

Which brings me to the general principles in this class: you do NOT have permission to use AI for every aspect of your work. I will do my best to define guidelines for appropriate A.I. use for the various assignments, but you must also uphold your end of the bargain by asking questions and openly disclosing A.I. use with me and your peers. This will help 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 – Readings are a combination of full articles as well as excerpts from books that are designed to introduce you to a range of voices. They are listed below and will be posted on Canvas.

- Ali, Mussab et al. “The Other Cities: Migration and Gentrification in Jersey City, Paterson and Newark, NJ.’’ Rutgers Center on Law, Inequality and Metropolitan Equity, April 2025. (Excerpt)
- Carr, Nicholas. “The Myth of Automated Learning.’’ [Newcartographies@substack.com](mailto>Newcartographies@substack.com), 27 May 2025.
- Cummings Charles. *Knowing Newark: The Star-Ledger columns*. The Newark Public Library, 2016. (Selected readings)
- Foner, Eric et al. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 7th edition. W.W. Norton, 2023. (Excerpts)
- Galishoff, Stuart. *Newark: The Nation’s Unhealthiest City, 1832-1892*. Rutgers U. Press, 1988. (Excerpts)
- Newark360 Master Plan, Sept. 2022 (Excerpts)
- Pierson, B.T. “Historical Sketch of Newark.’’ Newark City Directory, 1836.

- Price, Clement. "The Beleaguered City as Promised Land: Blacks in Newark, 1917-1947. *A New Jersey Anthology*, edited by Maxine Lurie. New Jersey Historical Society, 1994, 443-461.
- Rappaport, Nina and Andrew Englehardt. *Industrial Palimpsest: The City of Newark, N.J.* Nina Rappaport/Vertical Urban Factory, 2021. (Excerpt)
- RiseUpNewark.com (Selections)
- Singer, Katie. Alien Soil: Oral Histories of Great Migration Newark. Rutgers U. Press, 2024. (Excerpt)
- Tibaldo-Bongiorno, Marylou, director. "Revolution '67" (film). Bongiorno Productions, 2007.

Assignments and grading:

- Participation and attendance: 10 percent
- Weekly journal entries: 30 percent -- your journal is a vehicle to respond to class readings and discussions and will be due at 11:59 p.m. on Fridays.
- Research project
 - Presentation: 30 percent
 - Reflective essay: 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!**

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: excessive absences, even for legitimate reasons, can still result in a failing grade.)

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"

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 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.
- JerseyDigs.com is an online news site that covers development in Newark and New Jersey as a whole. Required reading if you're interested in development in Newark. 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.

Here's what's scheduled for this fall:

- **Museum of the Old First Ward: Curator's Tour**
Saturday, September 13 at 10:30 a.m.
St. Lucy's Church, 118 Seventh Avenue, Newark (Visit to interior of St. Lucy's followed by tour of the adjacent Museum
Curator: Bob Cascella
- **Wards of Action: Black Women's Vision for A New Ark, 1966-1970**
Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
Newark Public Library, James Brown African American Room, 2nd floor
Presenter: Karolina Dos Santos
Contact NewarkHistorySoc@gmail.com for Zoom link

Video recordings of past lectures can be found on the History Society's YouTube channel.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center (Central King Building, Ground Floor, Room G1) is available for 45-minute individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can 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 11:30 a.m. on in room 111 of the Cullimore Hall

*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!

	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Week 1 Day 1: Mon., Sept. 1 Day 2: Wed., Sept. 3	TOPIC: Introductions Day 1: NO CLASS! Labor Day!	Day 2: Class intro; syllabus + introduce yourself to class + Newark as a microcosm America? HW to be completed by Monday: Read brief bio of Charles Cummings on the home page of the Newark Public Library's Knowing Newark collection + " Rollercoaster of City's History Rumbles On "(Cummings) from the Knowing Newark collection + timeline from the Newark Masterplan + excerpt from CLiMe report
Week 2 Day 1: Mon., Sept. 8 Day 2: Wed., Sept. 10	TOPIC: Methods Day 1: Letter to my instructor + discuss readings: who are the authors, when were the pieces published and for what purpose; what further questions do they raise; why did I choose them; how do the pieces interact with one another? HW: Readings to be completed by Mon., Sept. 15: selected background readings about the Puritan worldview and the African slave trade from <i>Give Me Liberty</i> (Foner, DuVal, and McGirr)	Day 2: A walk around campus: What do you see? What questions come to mind? Take pictures, take notes.

<p>Week 3</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Sept. 15</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Sept. 17</p>	<p>TOPIC: Why Newark?</p> <p>Day 1: How to write a journal entry: prep for field trip to Tubman Square: Discuss map of Newark's 1666 Puritan settlement (handout) + copy of deed of land sale.</p> <p>HW: reading to be completed by Mon., Sept. 22: B. T. Pierson's "Historical Sketch" of Newark from the 1836 Newark City Directory; "A Village becomes a city" excerpt from <i>Newark: The Nation's Unhealthiest City 1832-1895</i> (Galishoff), "The Morris Canal" (Ascarelli)</p>	<p>Day 2: Field trip to Tubman Square! Bring map with you!</p> <p>Journal entry #1 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday!</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Sept. 22</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Sept. 24</p>	<p>TOPIC: The Morris Canal</p> <p>Day 1: Tubman Square debrief + preview of Morris Canal</p> <p>HW: Readings to be completed by Mon., Sept. 29: excerpt from <i>Industrial Palimpsest: The City of Newark, NJ</i> (Rapaport and Englhardt) and prologue and chapter 1 from <i>Alien Soil: Oral Histories of Great Migration Newark</i> (Singer)</p>	<p>Day 2: John Prieto presentation</p> <p>Journal entry #2 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday!</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Sept. 29</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Oct. 1 (Wellness Day)</p>	<p>TOPIC: The many layers of MLK Jr. Blvd.</p> <p>Mapping workshop: How maps can help you visualize the growth of the city and begin imagining the lives of the people who lived here.</p>	<p>Day 2:</p> <p>Day 1: Visit Krueger Scott mansion</p> <p>Journal entry #3 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Oct. 6</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Oct. 8</p>	<p>TOPIC: Experience Newark</p> <p>Day 1: Discuss the Newark Arts Festival locations and how to match choices with your interests + discuss the Newark Arts mission statement and its strategic plan.</p>	<p>Day 2: class cancelled so that students can experience the Newark Arts Festival.</p> <p>No journal entry this week.</p>

<p>Week 7</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Oct. 13</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Oct. 15</p>	<p>TOPIC: Library research 101</p> <p>Day 1: Field trip to the Newark Public Library to learn about the library's many resources.</p> <p>HW to be completed by Mon. Oct. 20: Rise Up Newark: “African Americans, Pt. 3 (First Great Migration)” overview + related documents; “Community Hospital Helped Sustain Area that Became the Central Ward” (Cummings); “Books about the Third Ward written by former neighborhood dwellers” (Bodian)</p>	<p>Day 2: In-class: small group work to do some simple historical research about a person/place using the City Directory, the Knowing Newark columns in order to start developing a focus for your project</p> <p>Journal entry #4 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday: Reflections (and selfies) of your experience at The Newark Arts Festival</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Oct. 20</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Oct. 22</p>	<p>TOPIC: Newark in the mid-20th century</p> <p>Day 1: Film: “Revolution ‘67”</p> <p>HW: Reading to be completed by Mon., Oct. 27: “The beleaguered city as promised land” (Price)</p>	<p>Day 2: Finish watching “Revolution ‘67”</p> <p>Journal entry #5 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday (draft of project proposal)</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Oct. 27</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Oct. 29</p>	<p>TOPIC: Race in Newark in the 20th century</p> <p>Day 1: Speakers? (TBD)</p> <p>Reading to be completed by Tues., Nov. 4: TBD</p>	<p>Day 2: Discussion of redlining and urban renewal using city urban renewal maps and University of Richmond's “Mapping Inequality” project.</p> <p>Journal entry #6 due at 11:59 p.m. Friday</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Nov. 3</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Nov. 5</p>	<p>Day 1: Speakers? (TBD)?</p>	<p>Day 2: In-class workshop</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Nov. 10</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Nov. 12</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Nov. 17</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Nov. 19</p>	<p>Workshop/conferences</p>	<p>Workshop/conferences</p>
<p>THANKSGIVING WEEK!</p> <p>Week 13</p> <p>Day 1: Mon., Nov. 24</p> <p>Day 2: Wed., Nov. 26</p>	<p>Presentations begin!</p>	<p>NO CLASS THANKSGIVING! (Friday classes meet on Wednesday)</p>

Week 14 Day 1: Mon., Dec. 1 Day 2: Wed., Dec. 3	Presentations continued	Presentations, continued
Week 15 Day 1: Mon., Dec. 8 Day 2: Wed., Dec. 10 (last day of class) Classes end Thurs., Dec. 11	Reflection paper due	LAST DAY OF CLASS – tie up loose ends!