Walking the Global City: Spatial Practice, Cultural Production  
FYSEM-UA 718  
Fall 2019

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Office: TBD  
Office hours: Mondays 11:30 - 1:30, or by appointment.

Seminar meets:  
Mondays  
2:00 - 4:30  
25 West 4th, Room C-7

Course Description

New York, the city that never sleeps, is also a city that never stops walking. The mundane, automatic act of putting one foot in front of the other is a vital activity of urban experience, determining our relationship with the city and with our fellow city-dwellers. Pedestrianism propels us into the vibrant dynamism and diversity of the metropolis, navigating us through its streets and enabling our observations, encounters, and interactions with a dizzying accumulation of people and objects. Walking enables chance encounters and discoveries of the new and unexpected, facilitating our participation in and perception of the theater of the street.

In this course, students will investigate walking in literature, film, and art produced in and about New York, Paris, and London from the nineteenth century to the present. Immersing ourselves in the work of peripatetic artists, writers, and thinkers from a range of epochs and cultural backgrounds, we will treat walking as a framework for cultural and social analysis. Tracing the itineraries of urban walkers from the Parisian flâneur to the London “streethaunter” to the migrant wanderer of New York, we will view the city as a space that is both bordered and borderless, as a site of community, connection, and belonging as well as one of alienation, exclusion, and marginalization. Throughout our study, walking will be a lens through which we investigate human experience; the culture of cities and their inhabitants; the evolving dynamics of race, gender, and sexuality in modern society; and the relationship between urban experience and creative production. This exploration will allow us to see the city as a zone that is constantly evolving and being reinvented.
Overview

This course is designed to serve as an introduction to intellectual life as an undergraduate student in the liberal arts. Together with your classmates, you will discover a wide range of works of art as well as intellectual movements in a transnational context, which you will read/view/study with a critical eye. In our class discussions, we will interrogate what the materials we study reveal about cities, community, exclusion, identity, and the human condition.

In tandem with our study of these works of art, this course is also designed to provide you the context to explore and discover New York City by foot, and to allow you to connect the themes of the class to your own lives. Class presentations and assignments are designed to help you hone your ability to read critically, develop analytical skills, refine your writing, and foster a stronger connection to your city and your classmates.

Course Materials to Purchase:

The books below are available at the NYU Bookstore. If you choose to buy them elsewhere, please make sure to purchase the version listed below. All other readings are on NYU Classes.

- Sophie Calle. *Suite Vénitienne*. Siglio Press, 2015. [*Also available on NYU Classes.*]
- Roland Barthes. *Incidents*. Seagull Books, 2010. [*Also available on NYU Classes.*]

Course Assessment

Participation (15%)
The success of this seminar rests on your attentive reading of assigned texts and materials, and your active, informed contribution to class discussion. Read with a pen in hand and come to class prepared with questions and topics you would like to discuss.

Homework Assignments (15%)
Before class each week, you will choose one passage (1-2 paragraphs max.) from one of the readings for the week, then write a brief response and a question to pose to the class which indicates a theme or subject that interests you and that you think will be generative for class
discussion. You will post your citation, response, and question to the Forum page on NYU Classes by 11pm Sunday (the day before class). Select posts will be used during class discussion.

**Short Paper (15%)**
You will write one short paper on a topic given to you in advance. Papers should be 4-5 pages in length and will be due at class time on October 7.

**Walking Project (20%)**
Over the course of the semester, each student will engage in his/her own project of walking the metropolitan landscape of New York City. The objective of this project is not only to build your writing and observational skills, but also to foster an in-depth exploration of the city that will serve as your home during your years at NYU. You will choose a neighborhood (the NYU area is not an option) and explore it on foot -- on your own time -- on two separate occasions over the course of the semester. You will catalogue each walk with:

- a reflective journal entry (minimum 2 pages typed and double-spaced), which you will post to the Assignments page on NYU Classes.
- a post to our class blog (address forthcoming) -- a site that will serve as a visual representation of our collective experiences of walking New York. Your post will include select photographs (3 minimum) you took along with captions and a brief description of your walk.

Detailed guidelines and expectations for the First and Second Walk will be distributed in advance. The due dates for the journal entry and blog post for each walk are:

- First Walk: October 15.
- Second Walk: November 18.

**For safety reasons, all walks should take place in the light of day and in a peopled area**

**Oral Presentation (10%)**
Each student will give a brief, 5-8 minute presentation of their walking project to the class, using their blog post as a visual aid.

**Final Paper (25%)**
Your walking project will culminate in your final paper. Drawing from your journal entries, in your paper you will connect your observations and reflections on walking to one or more of the course readings/materials. Your paper should also explain how walking informs your own relationship to New York. A good paper will demonstrate sound knowledge of the themes, figures, readings, and movements we have studied throughout the semester, and will show a strong capacity for literary and historical analysis as well as critical thinking. Papers should be approx. 10-12 pages in length and will be due on December 9.
** All written assignments should have a heading, be double spaced with 12 pt. font, and have 1-inch margins. Please post all written work to NYU Classes on the Assignments page in Word or PDF format, and bring a hard copy to class on their due dates. Late work will suffer from incremental grade deductions. **

Classroom Policies

- Please arrive at class on time and prepared with all readings, notes, and assignments.
- Absences will negatively affect your participation grade. If you must miss class for any reason, you are expected to email me with an explanation.
- Be prepared to remain in the classroom for the duration of the session (there will be a short break halfway through class).
- Please refrain from eating aromatic and/or noisy foods during class. Such food should be consumed during the break. Snacks and beverages are fine.
- The use of electronic devices such as cellphones, laptops, and tablets for anything other than consulting course materials will not permitted in class. Students who use electronic devices inappropriately will be asked to leave.

Additional Information

- Please take the time to read the NYU Honor Code and information on Academic Integrity: [https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/ewp/writing-resources/statement-on-academic-integrity.html](https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/ewp/writing-resources/statement-on-academic-integrity.html). Read carefully the parts on plagiarism.

In accordance with university policies, all work must be your own. If you use a source, you must cite it. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment, and the dean will be notified.

- Disability Disclosure Statement: Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

- You may find the NYU Writing Center to be a valuable resource. Information about hours and how to set up an appointment is available here: [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html)

- The College Learning Center provides tutoring, academic skills workshops, and help with specific classes, paper writing, study skills, as well as review for exams. All sessions are offered on a walk-in basis and feature tutoring by experienced upper-level students: [https://www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/undergraduate-advisement/academic-resource-center/tutoring-and-learning.html](https://www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/undergraduate-advisement/academic-resource-center/tutoring-and-learning.html)

- The Wellness Exchange: Support for personal and health-related issues. (212) 443-9999 (24/7 confidential calls): [www.nyu.edu/999](http://www.nyu.edu/999)
Course Schedule

Wk. One – 9/9  Introduction I

Wk. Two – 9/16  Introduction II – Experiences of Walking
Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-13) + Ch. 11 (pp. 171-195).
Frederic Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-9) + Ch. 4-5 (pp. 31-38) + Ch. 9 (pp. 65-80).
Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Ch. VII: “Walking in the City” (pp. 91-103).

Wk. Three – 9/23  Peripatetic Romantics – Walking in Nature
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, First Walk (pp. 3-10) + Second Walk (pp. 11-19) + Fifth Walk (pp. 49-58) + Seventh Walk (pp. 69-82). [Introduction (pp. ix-xxviii) optional.]
Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, Ch. 2 (pp. 14-26 only) + Ch. 7 (pp. 104-117).
Mary Oliver, from *Thirst*: “When I Am Among the Trees.”

Wk. Four – 9/30  *Le Flâneur* – Walking the Streets, Wandering Among the Crowds
Frederic Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, Ch. 21 (pp. 175-181).
Charles Baudelaire, from *The Flowers of Evil*: “To a Passerby,” “The Swan.”
Charles Baudelaire, from *Paris Spleen: Little poems in prose*: “Crowds.”

Wk. Five – 10/7  The Invisible *Flâneur*
Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse* (pp. 3-23).

*SHORT PAPER DUE*
10/14 – FALL BREAK / NO CLASS. (Class meets Tuesday 10/15 / Legislative Day.)

Wk. Six – 10/15  Women Walking I
Virginia Woolf, “Street Haunting” (pp. 20-36).
Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (pp. 3-64).
Lauren Elkin, Flâneuse (pp. 69-93).

*1ST JOURNAL ENTRY + BLOG POST DUE*

Wk. Seven – 10/21  Women Walking II
Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (pp. 64-194).

Wk. Eight – 10/28  Walking on Film
Agnès Varda, Cléo from 5 to 7 (film, available for online streaming via Bobst).
Lauren Elkin, Flâneuse (pp. 211-243).

Wk. Nine – 11/4  Walking While Black
James Baldwin, “Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem” from Nobody Knows My Name (pp. 170-179).
Teju Cole, Open City (pp. 3-85). [optional reading: pp. 86-146.]

Wk. Ten – 11/11  Immigrants Walking
Teju Cole, Open City (pp. 147-259).

*CLASS MEETS AT THE MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NY*

Wk. Eleven – 11/18  Cruising – Walking and Sexuality
Roland Barthes, Incidents.
David Wojnarowicz, “Being Queer in America” from Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration (pp. 64-83).

*2ND JOURNAL ENTRY + BLOG POST DUE*

Wk. Twelve – 11/25  Marching – Walking as Activism and Protest
Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: A History of Walking, Ch. 13 (pp. 214-231).
Richard Burton, March to Aldermaston: March Against Nuclear Death (film, available on reserve at Bobst).
Wk. Thirteen – 12/2 Walking and Art – Street Photography
*CLASS MEETS AT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM for a tour of the “Garry Winogrand: Color” Exhibition.*

Wk. Fourteen – 12/9 Performative Walking

*FINAL PAPER DUE*