

Northwestern University
Sociology 376 - 0-20
Spring 2008
Univ. Hall 101 T Th 11-12:20

THE CAR

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The car is a central object in American social life. This seminar will explore a variety of topics looking at the past and future of the car with respect to its utilitarian function as a means of transportation; as a cultural icon & art form; as an economic product and status symbol, and its health and environmental impact, among others. Students will have the opportunity to pursue a topic of their choice with readings and research throughout the course, resulting in a final term paper.

Books

**John Heitmann, The Automobile in American Life. McFarland. 2009.
ISBN-10: 0786440139**

Hod Lipson, Melba Kurman, Driverless: Intelligent Cars and the Road Ahead MIT Press. 2017. ISBN-10: 0262534479

Additional articles on Canvas.

Grades:

Participation/Reading Response	20
2 article presentations/ critiques	30
Research paper	50

Topics / Readings:

PART I – THE HISTORY

Week 1 – Starting Up

Th 4/5 Heitmann Ch 1

Week 2 – Political Economy: Power & Money

Tue 4/10 Heitmann Ch 2-3

Thur 4/12 Heitmann Ch 4

Submit potential paper topics

Week 3 –Quality of Life: Pro & Con

Tue 4/17 Heitmann Ch 5- 6

Thur 4/19 Heitmann Ch 7

Individual Meetings to refine topic

Week 4 – Cultural Icon & Identity

Tue 4/24 Heitmann Ch 8-9

Thur 4/26 Heitmsnn Ch 10. Epilogue

PART II THE FUTURE

Week 5 - Technologies

Tue 5/1 L&K Ch 1,2

Thur 5/3 L&K Ch 3,4

Week 6 – The Synthesis

Tue 5/8 L&K Ch 5,6

Thur 5/10 L&K Ch 7,8

Week 7 – Social Change

Tue 5/15 L&K Ch 9,10

Thur 5/17 L&K Ch 11,12 Afterward

Week 8 - Independent Research for Final Paper

Tue 5/22

Thur 5/24

Week 9 – Final Paper Outlines & Discussion

Tue 5/29

Thur 5/31

Week 10 – LAST CLASS & READING WEEK

Tue 6/5

Week 11 – EXAM WEEK FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY 6/11

Mon 6/11