

# Myles Zhang

## Urban Historian and Artist from Newark, NJ

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As a native of Newark, New Jersey, [Myles grew up in an urban environment](#) with vacant lots, empty skyscrapers, [hundreds of acres of surface parking](#), and the mixed legacy of urban renewal. In an environment shaped by race, politics, and the memory of Newark's 1967 civil unrest, Myles gravitated toward history as a lens through which to examine today's divided landscape. Myles has a keen interest in the urban and spatial [history of the New York metropolitan region](#), in addition to his studies of how politics, race, and culture are imprinted on the urban form. Through [writing](#), art, [digital humanities](#), and [community engagement](#), he aims to introduce new audiences to history. In some form or another, all of his work reflects Winston Churchill's observation that "we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."

Myles is a current Ph.D. candidate, studying 20th-century American urban history. His dissertation examines the process of urban decline, in which state actors and market influences target specific urban neighborhoods and communities and subject them to displacement. Institutional powers created and profited from the "production of decline" in Newark and Newark-like regions. Using the tools of history and archives, this work challenges the popular misconception that particular urban neighborhoods are marginalized as a result of the work ethic of those who live there.

## Education

### University of Michigan

PhD Candidate – 2021-2026 (expected)

College of Architecture & Urban Planning, Ana Morcillo Pallarés and Robert Fishman

Architecture and urban history (major), U.S. history (minor)

Dissertation on the history of race, redlining, and urban renewal in Newark, NJ, [read abstract ⇒](#)

### University of Cambridge

History MPhil – Architecture & Urban Studies, 2019-20

Thesis: Architecture of Redemption? Contradictions of Solitary Confinement, [read ⇒](#)

### Columbia University

BA Honors – 2015-19 (3.8)

History & Theory of Architecture major, offered at Department of Art History

Honors history thesis: In Search of the Just City: Newark's Old Essex County Jail

### University of Oxford

Visiting Student – 2017-18 (3.8)

Classes in the History Faculty and in the Department of History of Art

### The Hudson School

2009-15 – High school valedictorian (4.0)

**Languages:** French, fluent speaking and writing

## Urban History Publications

\* peer reviewed

### 1. **\*Lost Newark Street View: A Visual Encyclopedia of Urban Renewal** – 2022-24

Newark Changing is a first-of-its-kind visual encyclopedia of 2,400 photo comparisons of almost every street corner, home, and building demolished by urban renewal in redlined neighborhoods. Through an interactive and text-searchable historic map, thousands of old street photos of historic Newark homes are brought to life with contemporary 360-degree panoramic photos of the same street scenes today. This is the most extensive collection of photo comparisons past and present ever assembled for any American city, [visit website](#) ⇒

### 2. **\*Ph.D. Student's Essay Explores the History of the Lorch Column** – 2022

The monumental column at the entrance to the University of Michigan's architecture school symbolizes architecture's own fraught relationship with capitalism and historic preservation, [read essay](#) ⇒

### 3. **\*"The State is Responsible" A History of Racial Segregation in Detroit** – 2021

Case study of school segregation in Royal Oak Township. This Black suburb just north of Detroit's city limits reveals the strategies used to enforce racial segregation and class inequality. The study and history of this one place mirrors the challenges of the larger metro region, [read research article](#) ⇒

### 4. **Historical Reconstruction of Ford Model T Assembly Line** – 2021

Digital models and film show the entire Model T production process as it was c.1913 when Ford's moving assembly first opened, [film](#) ⇒

### 5. **\*The Detroit Evolution Animation** – 2021

This film traces Detroit's evolution from its origins as a French trading post in the 1700s, to its explosion as a metropolis, followed by its precipitous decline as a symbol of America's post-industrial urban landscape. The film weaves in details about the city's politics, population, and technology – all of which influenced the city's geography and built environment. At each phase in urban history, the built environment grew and was modified in direct response to political events like racial segregation, population changes like the Great Migration, technology developments like the mass-produced car, and government interventions like urban renewal.

Old maps from over time were analyzed and layered to reveal the extent and speed of Detroit's urban growth, [film](#) ⇒

### 6. **A Drop of Water** – 2021

A brief history and analysis of Newark's water supply system, based on the experience of walking along the aqueduct from the forest origins of the water to its urban destination, [read essay](#) ⇒

### 7. **Homesteads to Homelots** – 2020

The history of New Jersey suburbs as told through five data visualizations. Analysis of US census data reveals the historical origins and trends of NJ's suburban sprawl. Essay uses data to dispute the claims that the suburban era is over and that there is a "back to the city" movement, [read analysis](#) ⇒

### 8. **Berlin Evolution Animation** – 2020

German language film production

Animates urban growth from 1415 to present day with historic maps, [film](#) ⇒

## 9. **\*St. Paul's Cathedral Dome: A Synthesis of Engineering and Art** – 2020

Construction sequence and essay analyzes ways the two forces of engineering and art merge in the unified structure of the cathedral. [animation and paper](#) ⇒

## 10. **California Waterscape** – 2019

Visualization of the extent of suburban sprawl and water supply infrastructure from 1913 to the present in California. Geo-referenced aqueduct route data, land use maps, and statistics on reservoir capacity based on datasets from the federal government and California Open Data, [film](#) ⇒

## 11. **Eiffel Tower Construction Sequence** – 2018

Illustrates construction over two years, [animation](#) ⇒

## New York City Publications

### 1. **\*Envisioning Seneca Village: An Interactive 3D Visualization** – 2024

Project with Gergely Baics, Meredith Linn, and Leah Meisterlin

Funded by the Central Park Conservancy and Mellon Foundation

Visualizes in virtual reality the geography of Manhattan's informal settlements and reconstructs Seneca Village, a majority-black neighborhood of some 100 buildings demolished to create what is now Central Park. Synthesizing the methods of archives, archaeology, and architectural reconstruction, this project presents a street-level snapshot of 19th-century Manhattan, [view website and interactive model](#) ⇒

As featured by:

[Barnard College, Columbia University Magazine](#) ⇒

[Central Park Conservancy website](#) ⇒

[Urban Omnibus, Architectural League of New York](#) ⇒ (forthcoming)

### 2. **Time-lapse Animation of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire** – 2023

This animation reconstructs the exact conditions of the workplace, the locations of each fallen body, and the progress of the 1911 fire minute by minute. It is in an accurate-to-the-inch virtual reality model based on trial records and primary sources, [view data visualization](#) ⇒

### 3. **\*Pedestrian Observations** – 2021-23

A project about mapping public and private space in Manhattan Chinatown

Co-created with Stephen Fan at City as Living Lab for an exhibit and 16-foot public installation mural in Manhattan Chinatown's Columbus Park, [view map](#) ⇒

### 4. **\*Columbia Built an Artificial Moon in Low Library** – 2022

Article in the *Columbia College Today* alumni magazine

Written in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the completion of the university's Low Library

### 5. **\*Architecture of Endurance in Manhattan's Chinatown** – 2021

Walking tour with observations of Chinatown's history and streetscape.

Illustrated with original watercolors for City as Living Laboratory, [walking tour](#) ⇒

### 6. **\*NYC Water Supply History** – 2020

Spatial history of NYC water supply and engineering from 1609 to present

Created with assistance from Wright Kennedy and Gergely Baics, [film](#) ⇒

## 7. **\*New York Penn Station: Past and Present** – 2020

Essay and analysis of old vs. new Penn Station as urban palimpsest, published in

[Heartbreaking Video Shows NYC's Old Penn Station](#), *Viewing NYC*, 15 May 2019 [Film and essay](#) ⇒

## 8. **\*Architecture of Exclusion in Manhattan Chinatown** – 2019

Essay on how Manhattan Chinatown's geography reflects the historic exclusion of the Chinese

Published in *Asia Pacific Affairs Council Journal* (Columbia Weatherhead East Asian Institute), [read](#) ⇒

## 9. **Manufacturing the Picturesque at Central Park** – 2019

Essay analyzes ways city planning produced a contrived image of natural beauty, [read essay](#) ⇒

## 10. **\*NYC Subway Ridership** – 2018

GIS analysis of subway ridership patterns over time, created with info from the MTA, featured in

*Columbia College Alumni Magazine* and *Gothamist* in 2019. [Read essay and analysis](#) ⇒

## 11. **A History of Historic Preservation in New York City** – 2018

Data analysis of NYC landmarks since 1965 reveals trends and biases in the landmarks preservation movement. Developed with Kenneth Jackson. [Read essay](#) ⇒

## 12. **\*Here Grows New York** – 2018-19

Supervised by Gergely Baics and Kenneth Jackson

*Here Grows New York* animates the development of the city's street grid and environment from 1609 to the present day using geo-referenced road network data, historic maps, and geological surveys. The short film presents a series of "cartographic snapshots" of the built-up environment at intervals of every 20 to 30 years in history. This process highlights the organic spurts of growth and movement that typify New York's and most cities' development through time. The result is an abstract representation of urbanism.

Animation had [five million YouTube views](#), earned recognition from the Library of Congress and Columbia Data Science Institute, and was used as teaching aid in urban studies courses at Harvard, Columbia, The New School, Indiana University, Washington University in St. Louis, and others. [Research and methodology](#) ⇒

### Published in:

1. [Animated map illustrates growth of New York City since 1609](#), *Daily Mail*, 6 June 2019
2. [Watch New York City Grow from 1609 to Today](#), *6sqft*, 13 May 2019
3. [Inquiring Minds: Watching New York City Grow, Block by Block](#), *Library of Congress*, 2 May 2019
4. [Here Grows New York](#), *Kottke: Home of Fine Hypertext Products*, 6 May 2019
5. [New Amsterdam History Center](#), 1 December 2020
6. [Wikipedia entry](#)
7. Twig Education's digital platform to instruct middle and high school school STEM students, part of the "Next Generation Science Standards"
8. *Camden Town*, an English language textbook for German audiences by Westermann Group, 2023
9. [Explore as an interactive map on ArcGIS. Search for any address at any year in urban history.](#)

## Publications about the Carceral State

### 1. **\*Setting Up Sex Offenders for Failure** – 2024

How the intersection of law and city planning increases the recidivism of sex offenders. Analysis of how home address residency restrictions and surveillance of sex offenders in New York City counterintuitively increases the chances they will reoffend and be rearrested for new crimes.

Published in the spring 2024 issue of *Agora: The Urban Planning and Design Journal at the University of Michigan*, [read analysis](#) ⇒

### 2. **\*The Slave Trader Turned Banker: Slavery and the Origins of a Modern Bank** – 2023

Selling slaves equipped Liverpool merchant Thomas Leyland with the money to create what is now the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank of China. Based on primary sources and archival records of the slave trade. Written for Rebecca Scott's legal history seminar: "The Law in Slavery and Freedom." [Read essay](#) ⇒

### 3. **\*"Where Evil Dwells": The Old Essex County Jail** – 2021

Article in the winter 2021 issue of *The Newarker* traces the history of the old Essex County Jail and the ways this institution mirrors the larger history of the city. [Read essay on the Newarker website](#) ⇒

### 4. **\*A Medieval Mask on a Modern Prison: Eastern State Penitentiary** – 2020

Paper written with Max Sternberg at Cambridge, analyzes the fortress-like and medieval appearance of Eastern State Penitentiary. More than a purely random choice, the qualities of Gothic attempt to reflect, or fall short of reflecting, the practices of detention and isolation within. [Read](#) ⇒

### 5. **\*Architecture of Redemption? Contradictions of Solitary Confinement** – 2019-20

Master's thesis at University of Cambridge about Eastern State Penitentiary, [abstract](#) and [video](#) ⇒

Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of Utilitarianism influenced the design and operations of Eastern State in the 1820s. This prison, in turn, preempted Michel Foucault's later ideas about the surveillance state. Beyond architectural analysis, the thesis incorporated nineteenth-century newspaper accounts and visitor descriptions to understand how the prison's location and appearance reflected urbanism and citizenship in Philadelphia.

### 6. **\*Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon** – 2019

Digital reconstruction of Bentham's famous (though unbuilt) proposal for a panopticon

Featured by:

1. [UCL Special Collections](#) and based on Bentham's drawings, [animation and paper](#) ⇒
2. Arts and education platform *Open Culture*, [link](#) ⇒
3. Digital magazine of ideas, philosophy and culture *Aeon*, [link](#) ⇒
4. The urbanism and urban studies news source *Tomorrow City*, [link](#) ⇒

## Medieval History Publications

### 1. **\*Beauvais Cathedral Construction Sequence** – 2021-22

Time-lapse visualization with Stephen Murray illustrates the building process and mechanisms behind the largest structural failure of a building in the medieval era, [view film](#) ⇒

As featured by the *Association Beauvais Cathédrale*, [link](#) ⇒

## 2. \*Notre-Dame of Paris Construction Sequence – 2020-21

Time-lapse visualization created with Stephen Murray reconstructs the phases of cathedral construction from c.1160 to present, [view film](#) ⇒

### Featured in:

1. [Notre Dame's official website](#) ⇒
2. Notre-Dame de Paris : Rebuilding a Legacy, hosted in April 2021 by the French Embassy in Washington D.C., [view recording](#) ⇒
3. Notre-Dame de Paris: Restoring a Gothic Masterpiece, hosted in May 2021 by the Los Angeles World Affairs Council and Town Hall, [view recording](#) ⇒
4. (Re)births at Notre-Dame, hosted in June 2022 by the *Alliance Française de Singapour*
5. On permanent display at the Cathédraloscope museum in Dol-de-Bretagne
6. Conferences series on the great churches of Paris, Alliance Française of Chicago, 2022
7. Catholic news source *Aleteia*, [July 2023 update](#) on cathedral reconstruction.
8. Léa Bello et al., “Incendie de Notre-Dame de Paris: comment la cathédrale est passée à quelques minutes d’une destruction complète,” *Le Monde*, November 2024, [view video](#) ⇒

## 3. \*Senior Thesis on Gothic Architecture – 2018-19

Supervised by Stephen Murray in the art history department, [thesis and presentation](#) ⇒

Thesis examined the origins and stylistic features of the earliest known French Gothic buildings. The story surrounding the twelfth-century construction of Saint-Denis near Paris reveals a tendency to tell history – particularly architectural history – in terms of individual structures when, in fact, the origins of the Gothic style are more complex. By abandoning a Paris and Saint-Denis centric origins story, we can better appreciate the range of local sources from which medieval masons drew inspiration.

## 4. \*Amiens Cathedral – 2015-18

Supervised by Stephen Murray with Work Exemption Program grant (\$2,000)

Amiens Cathedral is introduced each semester to Columbia undergraduates as representative of Gothic architecture, and as a lens through which to teach skills of visual analysis. This digital humanities project and history film instructs over 1,300 students per year.

The objective was to digitize and re-imagine Amiens, “to restore the building to a state of completeness that may have never existed” to quote Viollet-le-Duc. In the model, awkward walls, ugly later additions, and anachronistic features are all removed in order to reveal how masons envisioned their cathedral in the thirteenth century.

[Construction sequence](#) (60K views), [animated glossary](#), and [computer model](#) (4K downloads)

### Published in:

1. Stephen Murray. *Notre-Dame of Amiens: life of the Gothic cathedral*. Columbia University Press. Pp. 244-47.
2. Columbia University, Art Humanities website
3. *Grundkurs Kunst: Basic Course On Fine Arts* (Vol.3), German language textbook
4. Amiens Cathedral visitor mobile app, French Ministry of Culture
5. [Read on my website](#) ⇒
6. On permanent display at the Cathédraloscope museum in Dol-de-Bretagne

## 4. \*Burford Church Construction Sequence – 2018

Reconstruction of an English parish church's construction from 1175 to 1475 , [animation](#) ⇒

## Curatorial Experience

### 1. \*Jersey City: Urban Planning in Historical Perspective – 2023-24

Digital exhibit, interactive map, and public facing booklet for digital exhibit about the evolution of Jersey City's urban form and city planning. Created with 2K funding from the Jersey City Free Public Library.

Supplemented with a building-level interactive map of the entire city in 1873, 1919, and today. Created for the New Jersey Room history branch of the Jersey City Free Public Library.

[Read publication and explore historical map ⇒](#)

### 2. \*In Search of the Just City: Rethinking the old Essex County Jail – 2018-19

Six-month exhibit with \$22,000 funding documents Newark's abandoned old Essex County Jail

[View exhibit photos](#) and listen to [curator interview ⇒](#)

- + Exhibit in collaboration with 11 students and 2 professors at Columbia architecture school (Belmont Freeman & Bryony Roberts) became the basis for a 2019 undergraduate studio at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.
- + Interviewed Newark mayor Ras Baraka and former guards for an oral history of this jail, [view recording ⇒](#)
- + Collaborated with NJ Appleseed and PLANewark to organize discussion panels about the history of incarceration and criminal justice, [event ⇒](#)
- + Content of the exhibit was adapted and modified into a 20-minute documentary for broadcast on Discovery Channel's series *Mysteries of the Abandoned*, airing December 2024

In response to the public pressure generated from this exhibit and its thousands of visitors, the New Jersey Institute of Technology is requesting a \$6.5 million grant from the Essex County government to stabilize and reuse the site, ideally as a memorial park to those who suffered there.

### 3. \*Newark Metamorphosis: A Pictorial History – 2016-17

Postcard comparisons of the city's decay and urban renewal from 1916 vs. 2016

Historic images are selected from the Newark Public Library's postcard collection. All new photos were taken in 2016 from the same angles of view. A visual analysis of the changes shown accompanies each comparison. Exhibited by the [Newark Public Library](#) and accessible as [interactive map and exhibit ⇒](#)

## Classes Taught

### 1. Introduction to Writing, English 125 – Undergraduates

Sole instructor, fall 2025

First year writing seminar, themed as "writing about the built environment"

University of Michigan: Department of English / Sweetland Center for Writing

### 2. History of the Urban Form – Master's of Urban Planning students

Sole instructor, fall 2024

University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning



3. **Architectural History: Imperialism, Revolution, Colonialism, Nationalism** – Undergraduates  
Teaching assistant (TA) for Anna Mascorella, winter 2024  
University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
[Student evaluations of my teaching](#) ⇒
4. **Theories and Methods: Introduction to Architectural Thinking** – Undergraduates  
TA for Ana Morcillo Pallarés and Joy Knoblauch, winter 2023  
University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
[Student evaluations of my teaching](#) ⇒
5. **City as Thesis: Urban Research Methods** – Master’s students in urban design  
TA for John McMorrough, fall 2022  
University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
[Student evaluations of my teaching](#) ⇒
6. **Introduction to Architecture II** – Undergraduates in architecture  
A People’s History of Architecture  
TA for Andrew Herscher, winter 2022  
University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
[Student evaluations of my teaching](#) ⇒
7. **Medieval Modernisms** – Master’s students  
TA for Max Sternberg, winter 2020  
University of Cambridge: Faculty of Architecture and History of Art
8. **Gothic Architecture** – Master’s students in art history  
TA for Stephen Murray, spring/summer 2017  
Columbia University: Department of Art History and Archaeology

## Collaborative Research Projects

1. **Racializing Space** – 2021-2023
  - + Worked with American urban historian Robert Fishman on an exhibit and series of publications about the spatial history of racial segregation in Detroit
  - + Funded by a Mellon Foundation grant for the Egalitarian Metropolis
2. **City as Living Laboratory** – 2021-present
  - + Worked with architect and urbanist Stephen Fan on brochure about the intersection of private uses and public spaces in the streets of Manhattan Chinatown
  - + Funded with \$8,000 grant from the University of Michigan’s Program in Public Scholarship
  - + Wrote and illustrated walking tour of Chinatown for the Jane’s Walks program hosted by the Municipal Art Society of NY, [link](#) ⇒
3. **Friends of Notre-Dame de Paris** – 2020-21
  - + Created open source computer model and cathedral construction sequence spanning the medieval era to present-day with historian Stephen Murray
  - + Posted to the cathedral’s official website, [presentation](#) ⇒



4. **Teaching Assistant at University of Cambridge: Department of Architecture** – 2020  
Undergraduate supervision in Max Sternberg’s “Modern Medieval” history class, [presentation](#) ⇒
5. **Graduate Representative on Faculty Board** – 2019-20 (elected)  
University of Cambridge: Department of Art History & Architecture  
Relayed graduate student concerns to faculty
6. **Center for Spatial Research at Columbia University Department of History** – 2018-19  
Geocoded census records to visually reconstruct NYC’s demographic shifts from 1850 to 1920  
*Mapping Historical NYC* project with Wright Kennedy, Mae Ngai, and Gergely Baics
7. **Archival Assistant at Newark Public Library** – 2017-19  
Restored and digitized 600 historic maps spanning 250 years [for library’s digital collections](#) ⇒  
\$12,000 spent toward map digitization grant  
Organized *Newark Evening News* photo archive
8. **Research Assistant at Columbia University: Dep’t of Art History & Archaeology** – 2016-19  
[Construction sequence](#), [animated glossary](#), and [computer model](#), supervised by Stephen Murray  
Work Exemption Program grant (\$4,000), [project](#) ⇒
10. **Media Center for Art History** – 2018  
Worked at the Media Center for Art History on public humanities initiatives to introduce new audiences to art history through emerging technologies, [work sample](#) ⇒
11. **Intern at International WELL Building Institute** – 2016
12. **Intern at Studio for Urban Architecture & Design** – 2016  
Surveyed historic varnish factory in Newark for adaptive reuse  
Work Exemption Program (\$3,000), [report](#) ⇒

## Fellowships and Awards

1. **Graduate Student** – 2021-present  
College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
Full scholarship for six years (~250K value)  
Stipend (~140K over 4 years)
2. **Sweetland Writing Fellow** – 2025  
Sweetland Center for Writing at the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts  
Winter 2025 course development mentorship, plus \$5,000 summer stipend to develop syllabus
3. **Conference Travel Grant** – 2024  
\$1,200 grant to support participation in Social Science History Association annual conference  
Presentation on [Seneca Village: An Interactive 3D Visualization](#) ⇒
4. **Professional Development Grant** – 2024  
\$900 grant to support participation in the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) at the University of Victoria in British Columbia  
Awarded by the Rackham Graduate School and Institute for the Humanities

**5. Public Scholarship Grant Recipient – 2022-2023**

\$8,000 grant to support research into the intersection of public and private spaces in Manhattan Chinatown

Made possible by the Rackham Program in Public Scholarship and the University of Michigan Office of Research.

[Read press release](#) ⇒

**6. Dr. James C. Egbert Memorial Scholarship Fund – 2016-19**

Named scholarships awarded to top 15% of undergraduates at Columbia University

**7. Meyer Schapiro Book Prize for Excellence in Art History – 2019**

Columbia University: Department of Art History & Archaeology

Awarded by Stephen Murray and Barry Bergdoll

**8. Data Art Contest Winner – 2019**

Data Science Institute at Columbia University

Best data visualization in computer science department for 2018-19 year

[View submission](#) ⇒

**9. Work Exemption Program – 2016-18**

Grants for architectural history research, ~\$9,000 over three years

- Construction sequence and computer model of Amiens Cathedral for use on the Art Humanities curriculum
- Computer model of ancient Greek architecture and Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater
- Summer internet at the Newark-based Studio for Urban Architecture + Design

**10. Oxbridge Scholarship – 2017-18**

One of 15 students per year Columbia sends to Oxford or Cambridge University

Financial aid and \$4,000 travel grant

**11. The Hudson School, high school valedictorian – 2015**

**12. New Jersey Scholars Program – 2014**

One of 39 selected from 300 applicants (declined due to a scheduling conflict with below)

**13. Telluride Association Summer Program – 2014**

One of 64 selected from 1,200 applicants worldwide

All-expenses-paid six-week humanities program at Cornell and the University of Michigan

## **Invited Talks, Panels, and Conference Presentations**

**1. Social Science History Association – October 2024**

Presentation on research methods behind the [Envisioning Seneca Village project](#)

Gergely Baics, Meredith Linn, Leah Meisterlin, Myles Zhang

For the conference session on Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

- 2. Digital Humanities Summer Institute – June 2024**  
Weeklong conversation and seminar class on the public and digital humanities  
Held at the University of Victoria in British Columbia
- 3. Introduction to Urban History – March 2024**  
Lecture to students in Gergely Baics' urban studies and NYC history class at Barnard College
- 4. Homeownership and the Racial Wealth Gap – March 2024**  
A book proposal that evolved into my book-length PhD dissertation  
Hour-long presentation at the Newark Public Library for the Newark History Society  
Examined the history of redlining in Newark from its 1920s origins to its ongoing effects decades later on the homes, families, and health outcomes of Newark residents, [lecture slides](#) ⇒
- 5. Housing and the American Dream – March 2024**  
Presented about the history of suburbs, homeownership, and redlining to students in Anna Mascorella's class on Architecture History: Imperialism, Revolution, Colonialism, Nationalism.
- 6. The Egalitarian Metropolis & Beyond . . . Where do we go from here? – March 2023**  
Invited presenter with Robert Fishman and June Manning Thomas  
Reflection on how Detroit must be crafted as an egalitarian metropolis  
And how the work of activist academics and the tools of digital humanities will support Detroit residents in their fight
- 7. Mapping Displacement in Historical Detroit: Black Bottom & Paradise Valley – March 2023**  
Collaborative Research with the Crafting Democratic Futures Project  
With co-authors Daniel Jin and Maya Sudarkasa for a history PhD seminar with Rita Chin  
Historian Earl Lewis's class: "PolicySeminar: History, Reparations, and Policy," [view recording](#) ⇒
- 8. Egalitarian Metropolis: Urban Studies & Social Justice in Detroit – January 2023**  
Invited lecturer to students In Anna Mascorella and Vince Carducci  
Topic on redlining: "Detroit Divided: Racialization of Space Project"
- 9. Our Planet Crisis: Organizing & Hacking for Survival – October 2022**  
Invited speaker to students In Jack Tchen's graduate seminar at Rutgers Newark  
History of Newark's watershed and water supply, ecosystems and ecojustice
- 10. Jane Jacobs and the City – October 2022**  
2-hour multimedia presentation and discussion section about Jane Jacobs, public housing, and "slum" clearance in 20th-century American urban history  
For John McMorrough's class on City as Thesis at the College of Architecture & Urban Planning  
For Ana Morcillo Pallarés's class on the Politics of Balance
- 11. Ethics of Sustainable Development – April 2022**  
75-minute multimedia presentation on the historic preservation of Notre-Dame, the history of Detroit, and the evolution New York City's urban form  
With Adela Gondek at Columbia University: Earth Institute

**12. Racializing Space** – March 2022

Why does the American city remain so spatially and racially divided? [view recording](#) ⇒  
Three panelists Robert Fishman (history), Karyn Lacy (sociology), and LaDale Winling (history and planning) reflected on America's divided urban landscape  
University of Michigan: College of Architecture and Urban Planning

**13. Suburban and Urban Forms in Detroit** – March 2022

Invited lecture in Deepa Ramaswamy's class "Three Urbanisms," [lecture topic](#) ⇒  
University of Houston: College of Architecture and Design

**14. Historic Preservation and Cultural Assets** – February 2022

Invited panelist and technical advisor for the Newark360 master plan, [view recording](#) ⇒  
City of Newark: Office of Planning and Zoning

**15. Branch Brook Park History** – July 2021 and March 2022, July 2023

History walking tour about park development and changes to the landscape over time  
Branch Brook Park Alliance, [explore interactive map](#) ⇒

**16. Common Ground Studio** – December 2021

Invited external critic to Kevin Hofmann's final studio review  
Focus on inclusive redevelopment of James Street Commons Historic District  
New Jersey Institute of Technology: College of Architecture and Design

**17. Notre-Dame de Paris: Restoring a Gothic Masterpiece** – May 2021

Co-created with Stephen Murray, [view recording](#) ⇒  
Los Angeles World Affairs Council and Town Hall

**18. Notre-Dame de Paris : Rebuilding a Legacy** – April 2021

Screening of history animation co-created with Stephen Murray, [view recording](#) ⇒  
French Embassy in the US

**19. Old Essex County Jail** – May 2019

Exhibition opening event and lecture series  
Newark Landmarks and Preservation Committee

## **Community Engagements & Memberships**

[View more online](#)⇒

**1. Newark Landmarks & Historic Preservation Commission** – 2023-present

Appointed by Newark Mayor Ras Baraka as one of nine city commissioners  
Reviews and votes to approve or deny all construction, renovation, or demolition applications  
Affecting several thousand landmarked buildings across Newark's six historic districts and some 75 landmarked buildings, parks, cemeteries, and statues citywide

**2. Graduate Employees Organization** – 2022-24

Organize and collaborate with graduate students on strike for a living wage, department steward

**3. James Street Commons Historic District** – 2009-present

Activist and historic preservationist in Newark  
Nominated district to list of 10 most endangered in the state, [link](#) ⇒

4. **New Jersey Appleseed Public Interest Law Center** – 2014-present  
Website admin, design, and newsletter communications at pro bono law firm in Newark
5. **Coordinator of Planning and Architecture Research Group** – 2021-24  
Organize student events, invite speakers, plan research field trips and meetings for students in the University of Michigan’s PhD programs in architecture and urban planning, [link](#) ⇒  
Distributed \$17,500 budget for student programming over four years
6. **Advisory Board Member** – 2021-2024 (appointed term)  
Essex County Arts and History Advisory Board meeting  
Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs
7. **Digitization Committee at Branch Brook Park Alliance** – 2020-22  
Redesigned official digital map of Newark’s Branch Brook Park, [link](#) ⇒  
Collaborated with park ambassadors to produce historical walking tours, videos, and photo documentation of park landscapes over a century of urban change
8. **Director of Community Service: National Residence Hall Honorary** – 2016-19  
Elected to organize community-service events for Columbia undergraduates
9. **Newark Water Group** – 2011-19  
Opposed privatization of city’s public water system, [activism](#) ⇒  
Collected signatures for referendum against privatization and spoke at Newark City Council

## Invited Studio Critic:

New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Columbia University  
University of Michigan

Morgan State University  
Hampton University  
University of Virginia

## Interviews and articles about my research

1. [A Collaborative Reenvisioning of Seneca Village](#)  
A team of scholars has created a historical virtual visualization of the once-thriving community that was destroyed to build Central Park.  
Columbia University: Barnard College Magazine, November 11, 2024
2. [TV Documentary: “Mysteries of the Abandoned at Newark’s Old Essex County Jail”](#)  
*Discovery Channel*, coming summer 2024  
Season 13, episode 6, “Jailhouse Rebellion”  
Translated in some 20 languages and internationally broadcast, [view here](#) ⇒
3. [Myles Zhang Biography and Interview](#)  
*City as Living Lab*, February 14, 2024
4. [A deep dive into the architecture and planning of the UMich campus](#)  
*The Michigan Daily*, 5 December 2023
5. [Jeremy Bentham was consumed by creating a perfect prison. Here’s the result](#)  
*Aeon: A World of Ideas*, 6 March 2023
6. [A 3D Computer Animation of the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham’s 18th Century Prison Design](#)  
*Open Culture*, 16 February 2023

7. [Detroit's Path to Inclusive Recovery: a fairer future requires untangling legacies of segregation](#)  
*Portico: Taubman College Magazine*, 9 November 2022
8. [New Jersey Young Preservationists Awards](#)  
*Preservation New Jersey*, 19 January 2022
9. [Myles Zhang Found His Calling in Architectural History](#)  
*Columbia University Alumni Magazine*, 19 November 2021
10. [After Warren Street School Demolished, James Street Named 'Most Endangered'](#)  
*Jersey Digs*, 19 May 2021
11. [Old Jail Could Inspire Youth to Stay Out of Prison – but Only If It Survives](#)  
*Jersey Digs*, 24 July 2020
12. [Profile Article of Myles Zhang](#)  
*Jerseyology*, 2 October 2019
13. ["You can't recreate history": the preservation of the old Essex County Jail with Myles Zhang](#)  
*Pod & Market*, 13 September 2019
14. [Architectural models: engaging with space](#)  
*Central Auction News*, 23 August 2019
15. [Featured Artist](#)  
*Ratrock Magazine*, 5 March 2019
16. [When a Student Blogger Enters the World](#)  
*The Edublogger*, 18 August 2018
17. [Architect and Artist Myles Zhang Imagines the Buildings Around him in Watercolor](#)  
*Study Breaks*, 5 April 2017
18. [Sketching the Streets: Columbia's Own Flâneur](#)  
*The Columbia Daily Spectator*, 20 September 2016
19. [Myles Zhang Puts Columbia University in a Box](#)  
*Bwog*, 10 April 2016