HS 202 - Suburbia and the Rhetoric of Personal Freedom

Freedom of the open road, away from the bustle of the city; proximity to nature and the freedom to roam; freedom from history and family ties. These are images and themes related to American suburbanization. Yet twentieth century American suburbs were also decried for their conformity, their "cookie cutter" design, and oppressive gender norms. The purpose of this course is to interrogate the transformations of twentieth century American life through the ideologies of freedom and modernity as expressed in the suburbs. We do so by examining, first, the social, political, and economic processes of suburbanization; and second, emerging identities embodied in the architecture of the suburban home and the designed commodities that filled it. This upper-level seminar will require students to analyze critical and historical texts as well as domestic objects and architectural design. Students will also conduct primary research on the suburban environment of Worcester.

Prerequisites: N/A

Corequisites: N/A

Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) Designation: No

Anticipated Terms Offered: N/A