

# History and Culture of South Florida

## South Beach: an Urban History Perspective



**University of Miami, Coral Gables Campus**  
**Spring 2010, Wednesdays 3-5:30 pm**  
**James F. (Jeff) Donnelly**  
**AMS 350**

For some planners and historians, South Beach is a model for urban revitalization and redevelopment. For others, South Beach is a one-of-a-kind place, not easily replicated. This course addresses the question: is South Beach an answer to the challenges of urban redevelopment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

In the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cities as diverse as Miami Beach and Melbourne, Australia, began a process of recovery, renovation, and re-cycling. They used historic preservation to invite renewed investment in urban areas. This urban renaissance was a reaction against an earlier vision of urban renewal, which focused on slum clearance and new construction.

Large questions involving racial relations and public transportation, urban planning and public safety, de-industrialization and the new economy shaped the development of public policy and private investment in late 20<sup>th</sup> century cities. Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs, major figures in urban history, have become symbols of opposite approaches to these issues. The discussion continues today with the proponents and critics of the New Urbanism.

The course will include writings by these primary figures and their critics, readings from a developing literature of metropolitan history, and a first-hand look at South Beach as one example of urban renaissance.

Public historian and University of Miami lecturer Jeff Donnelly will bring to this inquiry his twenty years on South Beach as tour guide, Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board chair, activist, and author.

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