

Spring 2018

A4045_001_2018_1 - QUESTIONS IN URBANISM

Design, Density and Delirium: The New York Alternatives Workshop

Open to a cap of 24 students from all programs.

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Fridays 11am-1pm

New York City today is governed by one of the most progressive mayoral administrations in its history, or so Mayor De Blasio would claim. However, the design and development policies of a very different administration, that of Michael R. Bloomberg, are only just coming to fruition across all five boroughs, embodied by Hudson Yards, Atlantic Yards, the neighborhood around the High Line, Hunters Point South, Essex Crossing, Brooklyn Bridge Park, the East River waterfront, Domino Sugar, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Cornell Tech, and innumerable individual development projects designed by some of the most famous architects in the world. These projects have already transformed the landscape of 21st Century New York, all for the good or the bad, depending on whom you ask.

Opinions vary significantly about the meaning and impact of Bloomberg-era design and development decisions; many feel that it grossly gentrified the city and that the emphasis on design was fundamentally elitist. De Blasio famously ran his successful 2012 campaign with “A Tale of Two Cities” narrative in which the poor had been ignored to serve the rich, with a particular focus on deeply problematic racial policies such as “Stop and Frisk.” Yet others contend that Bloomberg era policies rescued New York from a downward spiral after 9/11 and the Great Recession, pointing out that the City’s budget nearly doubled during Mayor Bloomberg’s tenure due to increased tax revenues that had resulted from development and growth, which has in turn allowed Mayor De Blasio to make generous investments in signature programs such as Universal Pre-K and a controversial citywide affordable housing program.

For students in the fields of architecture, planning, development and preservation studying in New York City, this workshop asks the fundamental question “What would you do?” If you disagree with that which is being built, what alternatives would you propose, under what policies, and for whom? Would you mandate affordable housing, as the Mayor recently did, in the weeks and months after 9/11 when housing production had come to a standstill? If you had to plan, design and develop Hudson Yards, what alternative project would you propose? Would you support eminent domain to design an award-winning new sports arena in downtown Brooklyn? Would you design a hyper-luxury condominium along the High Line as Zaha Hadid did just before her death? Would you rezone formerly manufacturing areas that still house some of New York’s waning subcultures in order to provide for more low-income and supportive housing? Would you allow an infamous Edward Durrell Stone building to be unrecognizably transformed to become a new Museum of Art and Design? In short, if you had to reimagine New York today, what design, development, planning and preservation approaches would you pursue to create a city reflective of its values. Would the “culture of congestion” lauded by Rem Koolhaas in [Delirious New York](#) still be operative in the city of your dreams?

These questions are equally about design, development, planning and preservation, which is why this new interdisciplinary course is open to all students in GSAPP with an enrollment limit of 24. By definition as a

workshop, **all work for the course will occur during class hours.** There will be no external assignments or readings. Attendance is therefore critical and mandatory, as is participation. Most assignments will consist of interdisciplinary group work, which will be informed by lectures from the instructors as well as guests who can speak to specific case studies.

The semester will be structured around four case studies, each of which will be examined for three weeks. Each three week sequence will be structured with a 90 minute presentation of a case followed by a 90 minute strategy session with your interdisciplinary group during the first class; the second class will be used for your group to establish your design/development/planning/preservation alternative; in the third and final class for each case, each group will present their alternatives. Computers and model making equipment will be provided in the workshop in order to ease the real time production that the class requires.

Potential Case Studies include:

Via Verde, the Bronx, green affordable and supportive housing
Jonathan Rose, Developer
Grimshaw, Architects

Two Columbus Circle, Manhattan, transformation of Edward Durrell Stone building into museum
Museum of Arts and Design, Client
Allied Works, Architect

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn, creation of parkland funded by housing development
Brooklyn Bridge Development Corporation, Client
Michael Van Valkenburgh, Landscape Architect
Various Architects and Developers

Cornell Tech, Roosevelt Island, creation of new "tech" campus for Cornell and Technion
New York City Economic Development Corporation, Client
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Master Planner
Morphosis, Weiss Manfredi, Handel Architects
Forest City Ratner, Developers

Hudson Yards, twelve million sf of mixed use development over rail yards
Related, Developer
City of New York and Cooper Robertson Partners, Master Plan
KPF, Diller Scofidio Renfro, David Childs, Norman Foster, Thomas Heatherwick, Architects
Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, Landscape