

Course Syllabus

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Urban Design Seminar I, Summer 2017:

Urban Theory and Design, 1945–2017

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

M.S. in Architecture and Urban Design

Professor: Noah Chasin [nbc3@columbia.edu]

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Avery 114, Tuesdays, 10am–12pm

Discussion Sections: T/W/R 12pm–1pm or 1pm–2pm

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Urban Theory and Design is an introduction to the historiographical, theoretical, critical, and formal vocabularies of postwar urbanism throughout Europe, the U.S., and beyond. The class is arranged thematically and, in a larger context, chronologically. We will discuss the deployment of new urban design strategies against the backdrop of rapidly proliferating discursive and technological advances. From modernization leading to urbanization, from suburban sprawl to New Urbanism, from techno-utopian Megastructures to participatory and informal urbanism, we will measure the merits of various paradigms (and their critiques) against one another to begin to understand the processes that provide the structures and infrastructures for the world's built environments. The course will build toward the present with an aim to measuring the ever-increasing influence of ecological paradigms of globalization on both theory and design. As an extension of the history and theory component, the course will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of writing as a key tool for urban designers through research-oriented essays.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide students with a base-line knowledge of key projects and texts pertaining to urban design history and theory since 1945.
2. Help students develop visual literacy regarding urban design—in other words, improving the way students write and speak to encourage “perceptual growth” as it pertains to discussions surrounding urban design
3. Encourage critical thinking about historical projects and texts, and to help students develop subjective analytical skills so that they can write and speak effectively about questions and issues with a direct impact on urban contexts.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance at all lectures is mandatory.
2. Completion of all assigned readings. While the class is designed as a lecture course, the actual experience will be interactive, and it will be assumed that all students are familiar with each week’s subject through the assigned readings. All readings in bold on the syllabus are required for class discussions & lectures, and will be found on CourseWorks/Canvas under “Files & Resources.” We suggest that you print out a copy of each week’s texts to bring to class with annotations and questions/comments.
3. Completion of the written research assignment, which will be comprised of several stages throughout the semester. The details of this assignment, printed below, will be discussed in class.

Written Assignments:

Students will undertake an iterative series of papers and peer responses centering on a self-chosen analysis of an urban design project (built or unbuilt) between 1945 and 1980. By making it a more iterative process of writing and feedback, they will go from a thick description of the formal aspects of the project to then “historicizing” the social, political, economic, and aesthetic contexts in which the project was developed in a 5-page paper.

ASSIGNMENTS:

5) Thick Description of the Project:

A formal analysis that focuses on part-to-whole relationships within the drawing...

Due: Wednesday, July 12 by 10pm

6) 350-word Peer Reviews of Thick Descriptions:

Peer Reviewers will give students 350-word responses on what is working well and what they have questions about in the paper.

Due: Saturday, July 15 by 10pm

7) Returned comments on Thick Description and Peer Review from Noah, Anthony, and Amy

Date: Monday, July 17

8) First Draft: Establishing Context Through Historiography:

Write a three-page literature review of the project, citing 2 primary sources and 3 secondary sources.

Due: Monday, July 24 by 10pm

9) Feedback on Context Through Historiography from Noah, Anthony, and Amy

Date: Friday, July 28

+++ July 31-August 4, Final Reviews in Studio+++

10) Final 5-Page Paper:

Synthesize the thick description and the historiography into an argument about the project.

Due: Friday, August 11 by 5pm

REVISED SYLLABUS:

4 July **NO CLASS**

11 July **Public Works, Development, and the Myths of Self-Organization**
[Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]

PROJECTS:

- Cautley, Ganges Canal
- Stampe, Himalayan Dreams
- Gerhard Richter, Atlas
- Revelle and Lakshminarayana, Ganges Water Machine
- Acciavatti, Dynamic Atlas
- OMA, Lagos + Beijing
- Tijuana, Mexico
- Tahrir Square, Cairo
- Allen, Logistical Activities Zone, Barcelona & Souks of Beirut
- MVRDV, Mainstreet/Almere, Emptyscape, Datascape/Data Town

READINGS:

1. Hilal, Petti, Weizman, "The Future Archaeology of Israel's Colonisation," *Afterall* 20 (Spring 2009: 16–26
2. Anthony Acciavatti, "The Ganges Water Crisis," *The New York Times* 17 June 2015
3. Anthony Acciavatti, *The Ganges Water Machine* (Novato, CA and Brooklyn, NY, Applied Research + Design, 2015), pp. 3–10
4. Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 178–99
5. Eric Cadora & Laura Kurgan/Spatial Information Design Lab, "Architecture and Justice: Million Dollar Blocks: Justice in the City" (2006-ongoing)
6. E. Somol, "Urbanism without Architecture," in *Stan Allen, Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), pp. 138–153
7. Paul Gilroy, "The Status of Difference: Multiculturalism and the Postcolonial City," *in post ex sub dis: Urban Fragmentations and Constructions* (Rotterdam: 010 Uitgeverij, 2002), pp. 198–209
8. Teddy Cruz in conversation with Caleb Waldorf, "Learning from Tijuana" *Triple Canopy*, 19 Nov 2009)
9. Wacquant, "The Rise of Advanced Marginality: Specifications and Implications," in *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp. 229-247

18 July **Postmodernism**

PROJECTS:

- Venturi & Scott Brown, Learning from Las Vegas
- Eisenman, Cannaregio, IBA
- Koolhaas/OMA, Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture
- Rossi, Modena Cemetery, IBA housing

READINGS:

1. Aldo Rossi, "The Urban Artifact as Work of Art," in *The Architecture of the City*(Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982)
2. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, "A Significance for A & P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas," in *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1972), pp. 3–72
3. Richard Ingersoll, "Postmodern Urbanism: Forward into the Past," *Design Book Review*17 (Winter 1989), pp. 21–5
4. Lars Lerup, "Stim & Dross: Rethinking the Metropolis," in *Assemblage* 25 (Dec. 1994): 82–101
5. Edward Soja, "Taking Los Angeles Apart: Towards a Postmodern Geography," in *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* [London: Verso, 1989], pp. 222-248

25 July Critical Utopias [Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]

PROJECTS:

- Constant, New Babylon
- Tange, Plan for Tokyo
- Friedman, Spatial Urbanism
- Archigram, Plug-In City; Instant City
- Cedric Price, Potteries Thinkbelt

READINGS:

1. Kenzo Tange, "A Plan for Tokyo, 1960: Toward a Structural Reorganization," in Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, pp. 325–334
2. Guy Debord, "Theses on Cultural Revolution," Constant, "A Different City for a Different Life," Raoul Vaneigem, "Comments Against Urbanism" in *October* 79 (1997), pp. 90–2, 109–12, 123–8
3. Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall, Cedric Price, "Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom," in *New Society* [20 March 1969]: pp. 435-443.

4. Sarah Deyong, "Memories of the Urban Future: The Rise and Fall of the Megastructure," in *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), pp. 23-35.
5. Metabolism, *Architectural Design* 34 (special issue) (October 1964)

31 July –4 Aug FINAL STUDIO REVIEW

1 August New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and the Rural-Urban Transect [Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]

PROJECTS:

- Seaside, FL
- Celebration, FL
- Euralille
- Pujiang New Town

READINGS:

1. Barnett, Calthorpe, Plater-Zyberk, Gindroz, Duany, Leccese, McCormick, eds. *Charter of the New Urbanism* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2000), selections
2. Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," in *S, M, L, XL* (NY: Monacelli Press, 1995), pp. 1248–64
3. Peter Calthorpe vs. Lars Lerup in *Michigan Debates on Urbanism III* (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 2005), pp. 16–18, 40–42
4. Robert Somol, "Indifferent Urbanism or Modernism Was Almost Right," in Ilka & Andreas Ruby, eds. *Urban Trans Formation* (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2008), pp. 326–31
5. Duany & Plater-Zyberk, "The Second Coming of the American Small Town," *The Wilson Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 19–48

8 August Urbanism in the Anthropocene

READINGS:

1. Wang, Wilfried, "Sustainability is a Cultural Problem," *Harvard Design Magazine* Spring/Summer 2003, no. 18: 1-3
2. Weisman, Alan, "Chap. 3 The City Without Us" in *The World Without Us* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin Press, 2007), pp. 24–46.

3. Sauerbruch, Matthias, "The Luxury of Reduction: On the Role of Architecture in Ecological Urbanism" in Mostafavi, Mohsen and Gareth Doherty, eds., *Ecological Urbanism* (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Lars Müller Publishers, 2010), pp. 578–587
4. McHarg, Ian L., "2. The Place of Nature in the City of Man (1964)" in Steiner, Frederick R. (ed.), *The Essential Ian McHarg: Writings on Design and Nature* (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2006), pp. 15–46.

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE 11 AUGUST—Final paper due

TBD: **Systems and Supports**

PROJECTS:

- Turner, Lima, Peru
- PREVI, Lima
- Doshi, Aranya Housing
- Fathy, New Gourna
- Habraken, Maarssenbroek Plan
- Lynch, City images of Boston, L.A.

READINGS:

1. J. Habraken, *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1972), pp. 59–91
2. Christopher Alexander, "A City is Not a Tree," parts 1 and 2, in *Architectural Forum* [April 1965]: 58–62 & [May 1965]: 58–61.
3. John F. C. Turner, *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments* (London: Marion Boyars, 1976), selections
4. Kevin Lynch, "The Visual Shape of the Shapeless Metropolis," in T. Banerjee and M. Southworth, eds., *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995], pp. 35–86
5. Françoise Choay, "Remarque à propos de sémiologie urbaine," and Roland Barthes, "Sémiologie et urbanisme," *Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 153 (December 1970); translated as "Semiology and the Urban" in N. Leach, ed. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* [London & NY: Routledge, 1997], pp. 166–72
6. Serge Chermayeff and Alexander Tzonis, *Shape of Community: Realization of Human Potential* (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc.), 1971, pp. 1–15, 51–74

Columbia Policy on Plagiarism

(<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/dishonesty-plagiarism>):

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the work of others. It comes from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning 'kidnapper'.

Submitting work that does not acknowledge the complexity of influences and sources that contributed to your original synthesis and argumentation

- Denies readers the opportunity to fully engage with your work and appreciate your mastery of the materials you consulted.
- Diminishes the impact your work can contribute to, and undermines the ongoing conversation that is represented in, a body of scholarly work.
- Steals the intellectual property of other scholars.

Forms of plagiarism

- Verbatim copying without acknowledgement – copying a whole paragraph or larger sections; in effect, claiming that the writing is your own.
- Copying select phrases without acknowledgement – using your own words to pad the selectively copied words of others.
- Paraphrasing text without acknowledgement – rewriting text in your own words, but using the idea or argument as your own.
- Using data gathered by another, claiming it as your own – even if you submit an analysis of the data that is yours alone.

Fully acknowledging your sources not only avoids plagiarism but also enables you to:

- distinguish your original ideas while demonstrating your understanding of the existing literature;
- support your ideas and show how your work connects to and continues the work that has gone before;
- lay claim to credibility and authority for your work and your place in the intellectual community;
- enable your readers to understand more about your interpretation of the sources;
- enable your readers to learn more by consulting your sources.