

# A6849 Urban Design Studio I: THE 5 BOROUGH STUDIO

Columbia University GSAPP

MSAUD Summer 2018

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Faculty: Kaja Kühn (Coordinator),

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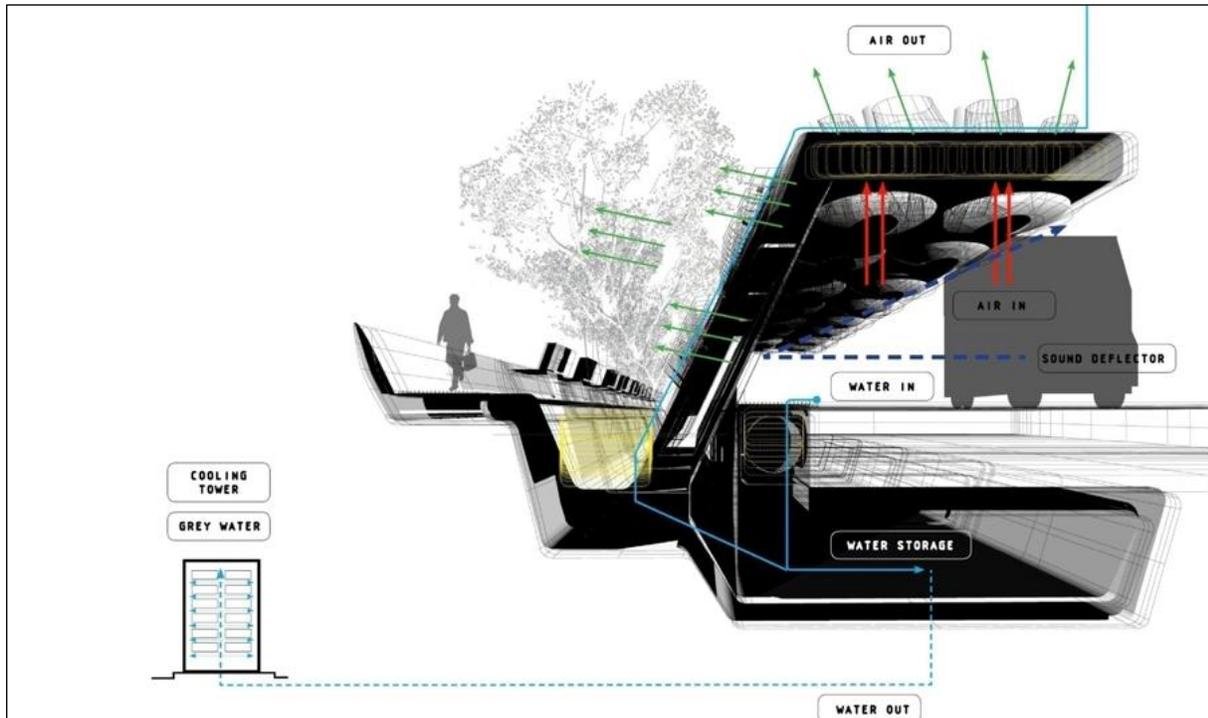


## ABSTRACT

This first semester will introduce you to an urban design process, **where site and program are not a given, but are treated as principal variables of urban design thinking.** Working in multiple scales and across different time frames will be an integral part of this process to design an intervention that follows a speculative argument for the future of the City.

New York City will be your laboratory for experimenting with this process that re-thinks, re-shapes, and re-generates the city in the 21st century. Working in a post-industrial city requires **the critical interrogation and re-definition of many layers of existing and past urban fabric and infrastructure** to shape the city to the needs of its future inhabitants.

## TRANSFORMATIVE URBAN SYSTEMS



Jamie Fajardo, Dongsei Kim, pUMp, Summer 2008

Thinking about the city as a series of systems of hard and soft infrastructure and the people that live, work and benefit from these systems in New York City requires a multi-scalar approach to urban design in which we recognize global and regional forces on human-scale sites and spaces.

In this studio, we want to explore and experiment with tools, techniques, and strategies to develop a design methodology, where research and spatial investigation inform an argument for a design proposal.

Some questions you will be confronted with during the semester:

- **How do we develop a productive way of working that incorporates the complex realities of multiple voices, scales, and fields of expertise?**
- **What is the agency of the urban designer?**
- **How do we design the process by which change happens together with its outcome?**
- **How do we provide visual evidence for our design decisions?**
- **Who are we designing for? Who are the actors in a given urban design project?**

## NEW YORK CITY AS A LABORATORY

New York City, the most populous and the most urban of America's cities will serve as a laboratory for these investigations. As a post-industrial city it offers a multitude of areas for transforming the urban environment in order to support the city to face the challenges of the 21st century.

## STRUCTURE

Urban Design is teamwork. Practicing how to communicate in teams, how to negotiate different interests, challenges and strengths, both visually and verbally is an important aspect of urban design. For each of the distinct parts of this semester you will be asked to work in teams of different size and constellation. Similarly, the faculty will work as team. You will meet and discuss your progress with each faculty member throughout the semester.



*Urban Systems Charette, Summer 2012*

### **Part I** **Urban Drift**

Individual

1 Week

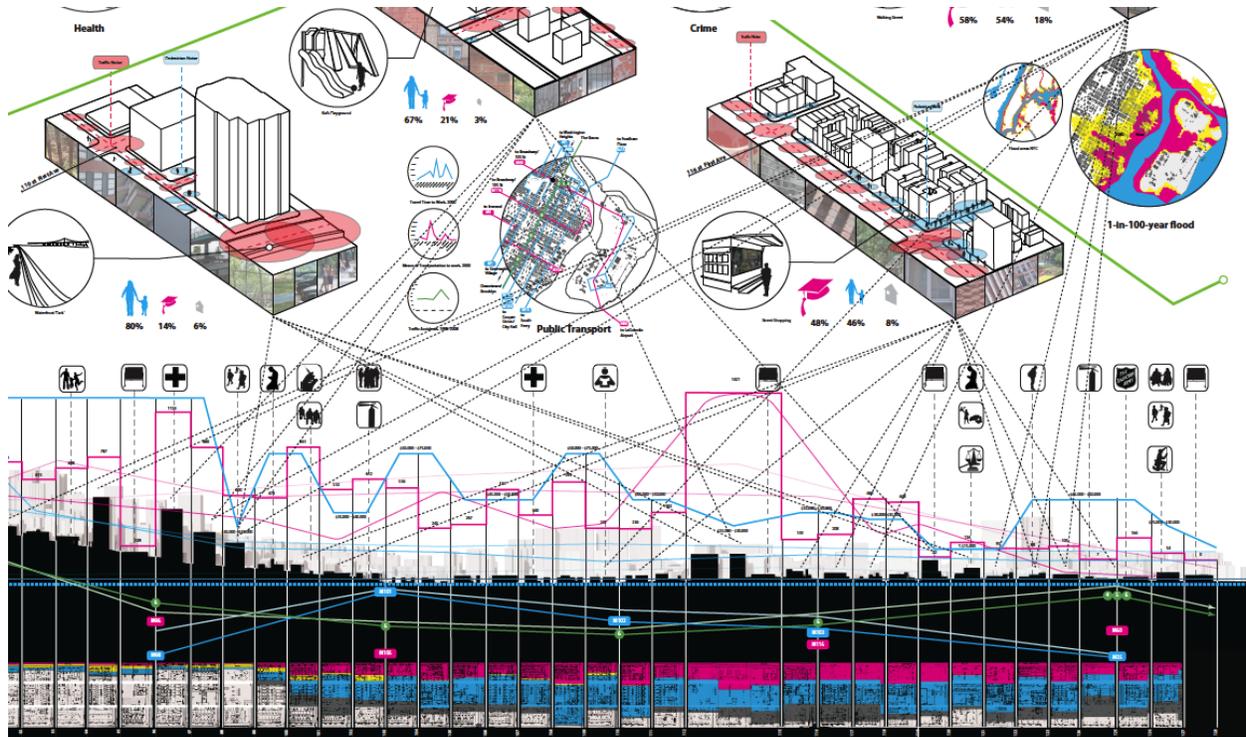
Introductory exercise to explore, interpret and represent your observation in the five boroughs of New York City in a series of postcards.

## Urban Sites & Scenarios

Groups of 3 or 4

3 Weeks

Working in one of the five neighborhoods, you begin with constructing your site. In urban design, “site” is not a given. Designers must identify and investigate the complex, layered contexts, operating at multiple scales, within which urban places are embedded. Similarly, the construction of “program” is within the urban designer’s purview; opportunities exist to extend and expand the field for human action and interaction. Using scenarios, student teams will speculate with programmatic interventions that operate on several spatial and temporal scales.



Johannes Pointl, Gilmar Campos, Minyoung Kim, Lowell Day, *Pocket Urbanism*, Summer 2011

### **Learning Objective: Making Knowledge**

The techniques of investigating a site, its physical and non-physical context, –its geographic, historical, or socioeconomic aspects, its boundaries and networks, its areas of influence and impact create knowledge about the site. They establish the horizon for a design project, a reference and means of communication between the different disciplines involved in the design process.

In this studio, we treat drawings, diagrams and models not as final representations of a proposal, but as material evidence for a process of “thinking through making”. You will be introduced to a variety of different techniques throughout the semester and we encourage you to test, refine, and sharpen your skills of representation as a means of thinking and communicating your ideas.

## Part II

### Urban Systems

Groups of 5 or 6 (One from each site)

3 Weeks

Working in large city-wide “think tanks” students will examine one of many infrastructural systems and visualize its extent, performance, and ownership. Students will then work across sites to understand and experiment with systemic linkages between sites and systems to identify potentials for innovation at the scale of the system as well as the scale of the neighborhood.

#### **Learning Objective: Thinking in Systems**

Systems thinking in urban design requires attention to the interconnectedness of multiple scales, the connections between components of the system and the relationship of hard and soft components in the system.

The design of the bus stop, and the bus map are inextricably linked to understanding user patterns, timetables or the larger systems of CO2 emissions, climate change and public health. What role does technology play in updating or replacing aging infrastructure? How do soft (seemingly non-physical) systems and hard systems interact? In this studio we are interested in an expanded understanding of public infrastructure to explore synergies across different systems within the city.

## Part III

### Urban Spaces

Groups of 3 or 4

3 Weeks

Students will develop spatial proposition for their original site of investigation. Building on the original site construction, the speculative scenarios as well as an understanding of city-wide systems, students will focus on implementation strategies that have the potential to transform the city at the neighborhood scale as well as the city-wide scale.

#### **Learning Objective: Designing Process**

A core challenge in developing an urban design project is the concurrent development of a democratic process by which we imagine a project being implemented. Who are the actors with agency in the project? Who would advocate, pay for or benefit from it? What is the timeframe in which it is envisioned and who does what? In this studio we are interested in a creative process in which speculative answers to these questions inform the physical form of the urban design project.

## ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

In each of the five neighborhoods, you will encounter people, who live, or work or use the spaces in the neighborhood in a number of ways. Some are organized in community-based organizations, each with their own local expertise.

As part of the studio you will have the opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist in the site and your ideas for intervention. These meetings with local stakeholders offer valuable insights and knowledge into the lived experience of a neighborhood, its public spaces, its infrastructure.

It is our obligation to not only “take” time and knowledge from these groups, but offer something in return. Over the course of the summer, we will discuss in more detail, the content and format of the way in which we can contribute to the community in each of the five neighborhoods.



*Community Design Fellow Meeting with East Harlem residents, 2018*

As you encounter local youth, residents, workers and community-based organizations, remember to:

- Be humble and open to the opinions, expertise and insights into their lives that these stakeholders offer.
- Be encouraged to seek out additional voices throughout the summer to contribute to your understanding of the site
- Be prepared: Bring visual material such as maps, drawings and models to facilitate your conversation about places. (Be mindful that many community members are no experts in reading drawings and prepare your drawings accordingly)
- Go back often!

## READING URBAN DESIGN

Every Monday for the first hour of studio, we will discuss readings, projects or short lectures pertinent to your design process. These sessions will split the studio into five small groups and are an opportunity to reflect on your studio work and develop your own attitude towards urban design. You will find assigned readings on the studio *canvas* site.

As a response to each week's reading, you will bring an example of an urban space or project (realized or speculative) that relates to the reading. Format: 1 letter-size page (landscape) with one image and no more than 280 characters to describe your example. Add location, name of project and name of designers, if applicable (not included in the character limit). Be prepared to present your choice and participate in the discussion.

### **Seminar 1: Defining Site**

Mon, June 11

Kahn, Andrea. "Defining Urban Sites," in Carol J. Burns and Andrea Kahn, eds. *Site Matters* (New York: Routledge, 2005)

Corner, James, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," in *Mappings*, Cosgrove, Dennis, ed. (Reaktion Books: 1999)

### **Seminar 2: Public Space**

Mon, June 18

Harvey, David, "The Political Economy of Public Space." in *The Politics of Public Space*, edited by Low, Setha M., and Smith, Neil. (London, Routledge 2006)

Rory Stewart, "Maidan-e-Pompa Kabul: Resisting the Square" in Catie Marron, ed. *City Squares: Eighteen Writers on the Spirit and Significance of Squares Around the World*, (Harper NY, 2016)

### **Seminar 3: Urban Systems**

Mon, June 25

For this seminar, we will read projects. Each student will select a case study to present to the seminar group. Case studies should investigate your assigned system in your home country/city and be presented on one 11x17 sheet.

### **Seminar 4: Synergies**

Mon, July 9

Rosamond Fletcher, Caroline Bauer, ed., *Under The Elevated: Reclaiming Space, Connecting Communities*, (page 14-55), Design Trust for Public Space, 2015

### **Seminar 5: Agency**

Monday, July 16

Kate Orff, "Engage" in *Towards an Urban Ecology* (Monacelli Press, 2016)

Francesca Miazzo and Tris Kee, ed. "Introduction" in *We Own the City* (Transcity, 2014)

### **Seminar 6: Scale**

Monday July 23

John Bela, "Hacking Public Space With the Designers Who Invented Park(ing) Day" in *Transit Evolved*, Zipcar, 2015

### **Seminar 7: Argument**

Monday July 30

In this final seminar, you will prepare a brief description and one image of your final project and present it to your seminar group.

## STUDIO LOGISTICS

### Attendance

Attendance is expected for all studio events. The studio curriculum includes class sessions, lectures, seminars, site tours, pin-ups and reviews. Studio meets M/W/Th 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**You are expected to utilize this time to work with your team on your studio project.**

Attendance is mandatory for all reviews.

**This studio is team-taught. Students will work with all seven faculty members** throughout the semester-long project, but may be affiliated with particular critics at different points in the process.

### Grading

Studio work is done in groups, but all grading is based on each individual student's design product, process and progress, and their contribution to the group effort. Assessment in these areas will be evaluated by how you demonstrate and communicate design thinking through drawings, models, and presentations, and your participation in group discussions, seminar sessions and desk crits. To PASS the course you must engage the studio agenda; consistently contribute to group work; articulate clear design goals; develop coherent design proposals; demonstrate verbal and graphic communication skills and a willingness to explore and test new modes of design research. HIGH PASS grades reflect a concerted effort to consistently exceed basic course requirements. Failure to meet basic course requirements will result in a LOW PASS or FAIL.

Any student considered at risk of receiving a “fail” grade will receive a formal notification by email. Receipt of final grades depends on submission of full project documentation. (See Archive below)

### Office Hours

To schedule meetings regarding administrative issues, contact the studio coordinator:

Kaja Kühl [kk730@columbia.edu](mailto:kk730@columbia.edu) (+1 917 916 5478 for emergency only)

Faculty contact information:

Brian Baldor: [bab2203@columbia.edu](mailto:bab2203@columbia.edu), Hayley Eber: [hayleyeber@gmail.com](mailto:hayleyeber@gmail.com)

Sagi Golan: [golansagi83@gmail.com](mailto:golansagi83@gmail.com), Tricia Martin: [tmartin@wedesign-nyc.com](mailto:tmartin@wedesign-nyc.com), Shachi

Pandey: [shachi@mudworkshop.com](mailto:shachi@mudworkshop.com), Austin Sakong: [sakong@gmail.com](mailto:sakong@gmail.com)

Teaching Assistant: Marnfah Kanavajanit [mk4003@columbia.edu](mailto:mk4003@columbia.edu)

### Material

While much of the work will be digital (each student will have a computer), students are responsible to have legible print material of their design process ready for use in each studio session. Physical model making also plays a key role in the studio working process, and the studio will have working space to facilitate their production. Familiarize yourself with equipment and facilities available.

### Citing Work and Ideas

In producing a professional body of research, you are required to acknowledge and cite sources for **ALL material referenced** in your graphic as well as textual work.

## STUDIO ARCHIVE

You are responsible for archiving your work after each review. Please make sure to include the final product (PDF of boards, slideshow or movie, etc) as well as **all original editable files included therein** (for example the InDesign package). For every archive submission, please **take time between review and due date to correct spelling mistakes or similar errors**. Please make sure that no files are corrupt and that they are downsized to the extent possible without losing quality.

Please refer to the archiving section in each assignment for naming conventions and folder structure on the studio server.

### Studio Archive Schedule

Archive of your work is due for each of the four parts on the following days. Please submit all archive work on the due date to the studio TAs on a CD or USB drive or place them in the appropriate folder on the studio server.

1. Urban Drift Review June 4	Archive due June 8
3. Urban Sites Review June 22	Archive due June 29
3. Urban Systems Review July 12	Archive due July 20
4. Final Review Aug 02	Archive due Aug 10

You will not receive a final grade unless your complete semester work is archived.

## SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	URBAN MATERIAL	
Wed May 30	2:30 PM	Introduction to Studio
	6:30 PM	Welcome Drinks on Avery 400
Thu May 31	2:00 PM	no class/Students to explore 5 Boroughs
WEEK 2	URBAN SITES	
<b>Mon June 4</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Review: Urban Material (Avery 114)</b>
Wed June 6	2:00 PM	Studio: Site visits
Thu June 7	2:00 PM	Studio
WEEK 3	URBAN SITES	
Mon June 11	2:00 PM	Seminar 1: Defining Site
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: Dongsei Kim</b>
Wed June 13	2:00 PM	Studio: Site workshops
<b>Thu June 14</b>	<b>2:00 pm</b>	<b>Pin-up</b>
WEEK 4	URBAN SITES	
Mon June 18	2:00 PM	Seminar 2: Public Space
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: Department of City Planning (offsite)</b>
Wed June 20	2:00 PM	Studio
<b>Fri June 22</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Review: Constructing Site</b>
WEEK 5	URBAN SYSTEMS	
Mon June 25	2:00 PM	Seminar 3: Urban Systems
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: Bill Kenworthy (offsite)</b>
Wed June 27	2:00 PM	Studio
Thu June 28	2:00 PM	Studio
WEEK 6	URBAN SYSTEMS	
Mon July 2	2:00 PM	Studio (Systems Charette)
Wed July 4	HOLIDAY	no class
Thu July 5	2:00 PM	Studio

WEEK 7	URBAN SYSTEMS	
Mon July 9	2:00 PM	Seminar 5: Synergies
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: FXCollaborative (offsite)</b>
Wed July 11	2:00 PM	Studio
<b>Thu July 12</b>	<b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>Urban Systems Review</b>

WEEK 8	URBAN SPACES	
Mon July 16	2:00 PM	Seminar 6: Design Strategies
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: Kirk Finkel</b>
Wed July 18	2:00 PM	Studio: Site Workshops
<b>Thu July 19</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Pin-up</b>

WEEK 9	URBAN SPACES	
Mon July 23	2:00 PM	Seminar 7: Agency
	3:00 PM	Studio
	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Lecture: tbd</b>
Wed July 25	2:00 PM	Studio
<b>Thu July 26</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Pin-up</b>

WEEK 10	URBAN SPACES	
Mon July 30	2:00 PM	Seminar 8: Argument
	3:00 PM	Studio
Wed Aug 1	9:00 PM	Deadline: Final review material will be collected
<b>Thu Aug 2</b>	<b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>Final Review</b>

**August 3 - August 10th: Presentations to community partners in the communities (exact time and dates vary)**

WEEK 11	URBAN SPACES	
<b>Fri August 10</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Archive Due</b>

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Following is a list of book recommendations by faculty in the urban design program. They are not required reading for studio, but what you would find on our bookshelves –and hopefully on yours soon. They do provide helpful context for urban design and New York City.

### **Mapping and Site Construction**

- Burns, Carol J. and Andrea Kahn, eds. *Site Matters*. (New York: Routledge, 2005)  
Tufte, Edward. *Envisioning Information*. (Cheshire, Conn.: Graphics Press, 1990)  
Mireilles, Isabel. *Design for Information*. (Rockport, 2013)

### **New York City**

- Ascher, Kate. *The Works: Anatomy of a City*. (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005)  
Jackson, Kenneth T. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995)  
Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1978)  
Nordenson, Guy, Catherine Seavitt, and Adam Yarinsky: *On the Water: Palisade Bay*. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art. 2010)  
Steinberg, Ted. *Gotham Unbound: The Ecological History of Greater New York*. (Simon & Schuster, 2015)  
Stern, Robert A.M., David Fishman, and Jacob Tilove. *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*. (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995.)  
Keith Revell Building Gotham: Civic Culture and Public Policy, 1898-1938 (John Hopkins University Press, 2002)

### **Design of Cities**

- Gehl, Jan and Svarre, Birgitte: *How to Study Public Life*, Island Press, 2013  
Mostafavi, Mohsen and Gareth Doherty, eds. *Ecological Urbanism*. Lars Müller Publishers,  
Work A.C. *49 Cities* (Inventory Press; 3rd Revised edition, 2016)  
Manuel DeLanda *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History*, (Zone Books, 2000)  
R. El-Khoury and E. Robbins *Shaping the City* (2nd edition, 2013)  
F. Miazzo and T. Kee, *We Own the City*, (2014)

### **Urban Systems**

- Hauck, Thomas, Keller, Regine, Kleinekort, Volker, ed. *Infrastructural Urbanism: Addressing the In-between*, (DOM Publishers, 2011)  
Orff, Kate. *Towards an Urban Ecology* (The Monacelli Press, 2016)  
Reed, Chris and Lister, Nina-Marie: *Projective Ecologies*, Actar Publishers, 2014