

Course Syllabus

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Conflict Urbanism: InfraPolitics

Course Numbers:

ARCH A4890

CPLS GU4890

Friday 11.00-1.00pm, Ware Lounge, Avery Hall

TUTORIALS [MEET@208](#) BUTLER 6-8PM, TUESDAYS

3 Credits

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TA, TBD

Office Hours by Appointment

Tutorial Assistance by Appointment

This is the third in a series of multidisciplinary Mellon seminars on the topic of Conflict Urbanism, as part of a multi-university initiative in Architecture, Urbanism and the Humanities. This year, we will focus on how infrastructure is a major force in shaping cities, as well as a medium through which the politics of urbanization is visible. Our work will take place through a theoretical lens and with comparative mapping across three cities and three continents – Mumbai, Johannesburg and Medellin.

Conflict Urbanism is a term that designates that cities are not only destroyed but also made (and remade) through conflict, and the organization of social difference.

Infra Politics is thus a way of thinking about with the infrastructure of environment, material culture, social structure, and ideas of order and design intersect to produce urban space across diverse historical contexts.

Conflict Urbanism: Infra Politics

This spring, the seminar will focus on infrastructure as a structuring principle of cities, highlighting the ways that urban spaces are physically shaped and ordered by a range

of governing interventions—from natural resource extraction, to urban planning, and the economics of real estate. The course focuses on exploring cities in the Global South whose historical emergence points to a range of social conflicts manifest in urban policy and design, that challenges the adequacy (and efficacy) of dominant paradigms of infrastructural development derived from the history of American and European cities.

For this work we will use three cities as our case studies. The cities have been chosen because they offer important ways to think about how infrastructure organizes social life, and its ongoing political effects. By exploring different histories of how space is governed, segregated, or utilized as a key economic resource, we want students to think about the significance of space and spatial regulation in structuring social relations.

The case studies are organized around a set of keywords: informality (Mumbai), apartheid (Johannesburg), and populism (Medellin)--that are entry points for thinking about the infrastructure of inequality. Each of the case studies uses a critical event as a point of entry for asking how how land, capital, government, and the social relations of daily life structure, and are in turn structured by spatial order.

Visualizing and mapping thus form key techniques for linking urban history with contemporary urbanism, and for thinking about the materiality of spatial politics.

Meeting Times: Please note that seminar meets on Fridays. Tutorials are scheduled weekly Tuesdays 6-8PM. On occasion we will have a speaker on Tuesday in which case Tutorials will meet Friday.

Methods and Course Requirements: Our work will be, by necessity, multidisciplinary across history, architecture, urban planning, politics, law, literature and anthropology as related to the topic of Conflict Urbanism. Our work will also be multi-media. Students will create a web-based map as well as written reflections, incorporating analogue as well as digital media. We will use a flipped classroom method in the technical workshops where students will develop mapping and visual storytelling skills. Each student is responsible for completing a minimum of four tutorials, and an optional maximum of eight tutorials. No previous technical skills are necessary for registration; students will not be graded on technical expertise, but on the quality of their individual work. Professors will set individual guidelines for each student based on their disciplinary expertise.

Midterm, Final, and Presentations: Students in the class are expected to complete a minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 mapping tutorials as well as weekly readings in order to complete the assignment for the semester, which involve the creation of online maps. The midterm evaluation will be in the form of a written project proposal where students will have an opportunity to get feedback on their a. The project idea, b. methodology, c. maps created, d. written text. Students will present the results of their work in a seminar on a selected date based on which city they choose to research and map. These presentations are an integral component of the course as they give students an opportunity to share their findings and explain the decisions they made both in data collection and presentation. This is also an opportunity for students give and receive feedback before the final project is submitted. The final project will be submitted

after the presentations, and be a combination of writing and maps in which students share and compare the city they have selected.

Note: Students will not be graded on their technical proficiency with the tools, but their work in the seminar as a whole. Teamwork and collaboration will be encouraged, especially in creating data or analytic layers of maps, but students will be evaluated on their individual contribution to the work.

Grading Breakdown - Graduate

Technical skill is not factored into the grade

10% Participation

20% Tutorials (completion)

20% Presentation

50% Final project

Grading Breakdown - Undergraduate

Technical skill is not factored into the grade

10% Participation

20% Tutorials (completion)

15% Midterm

15% Presentation

40% Final project

Academic integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism or dishonesty and unethical behavior is unacceptable and you will face punitive measures. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Barnard, or Columbia.

Classroom Etiquette constitutes best practices of your academic and social lives: be considerate in class; listen well; interact with respect and compassion; turn off your phone; and turn off your computing devices.

Disability-Related Accommodations:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). Faculty must be notified of registered students' accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion. Emails: <http://barnard.edu/disabilityservices> (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site. OR disability@columbia.edu.

Weekly Plan

Week 1

September 8 Introduction: The Public/Political Life of Infrastructure

Reading:

Larkin, Brian. "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol 32 (2013)

Look at these three websites and bring questions, observations to the first class about them:

1. <http://www.urbanobservatory.org> (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site. (launch compare map app)
2. <http://www.atlasofurbanexpansion.org/> (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site.

The Atlas of Urban Expansion collects and analyzes data on the quantity and quality of urban expansion in a stratified global sample of 200 cities.

1. <https://urbanage.lsecities.net/#cities> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

“The Urban Age project explores how the physical, and social are interconnected in cities.” “The Urban Age project charts the diverse spatial, social, economic and political dynamics of global cities in different regions of the world.”

Recommended reading:

<http://www.lincolninst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/atlas-of-urban-expansion-2016-volume-1-full.pdf> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Burdett Ricky, *The Endless City: The Urban Age Project*, Phaidon Press, 2007(on reserve)

Richard Plunz, *City Riffs, Urbanism, Ecology, Place*, Columbia Books on Architecture, Lars Muller Publishers, 2017 (on reserve)

Week 2

September 12 Tutorial 1 - Intro QGIS

September 15 Conflict Urbanism: Infra Politics

Harvey, David. Right to the City, *New Left Review* 53, September-October, 2008.
<http://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>

Mouffe, Chantal, “The End of Politics and the Challenge of Right-Wing Populism” in Panizza, ed., *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, pp. 50-71

James Scott, *InfraPolitics and Mobilizations: An Afterward*

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-francaise-d-etudes-americaines-2012-1-page-112.htm> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Recommended:

Jan-Werner Müller, *What is Populism*

Laclau, Ernesto, “Populism: What’s in a Name?” in Francisco Panizza, ed., *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*(London: Verso, 2005), pp. 32-40

Kurgan, Laura. Million Dollar Blocks.” In *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology and Politics*, 187-206. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2013.

Solnit, Rebecca. Introduction: Centers and Edges. In *Non Stop Metropolis*, 1-20. University of California Press, 2016.

Weizman, E. (2014). Introduction: Forensis. *Forensis. The Architecture of Public Truth*, 9-32.

Week 3

September 19 **Tutorial 2 - Georeferencing Mumbai**

September 22 **Mumbai - The Infrastructure of Informality**

Prashant Kidambi, *Making of an Indian Metropolis* [excerpts]

On the Bombay Improvement Trust, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd8CpjR0lak> (Links to an external site.)Links to an



external site.

Radha Kumar, "City Lives: Workers' Rent and Housing in Bombay 1911-1947, *Economic and Political Weekly*, [Vol. 22, Issue No. 30, 25 Jul, 1987 \[find via CLIO, journal search\]](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Recommended:

Miriam Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities* [Chapters 2, 3, 6 from *Theatre of Conflict, City of Hope*] *See PDF*

Gyan Prakash, *Mumbai Fables*. *See PDF*

Week 4

September 26 **Tutorial 3 - Annotating Mumbai**

September 29 **Mumbai - The Infrastructure of Informality**

Navtej Nainan, "Building Boomers and Fragmentation of Space in Mumbai," *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 24, 2008: 29-34 [find via journal search on CLIO]

Lisa Weinstein, Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organized Crime and Land Development, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 32, Issue 1, March 2008: 22-39. [find via journal search on CLIO]

Volume 32, Issue 1, March 2008: 22-39.

Saskia Sassen, "The Return of Primitive Accumulation"

http://saskiasassen.com/PDFs/SS_return_of_primitive_accumulation.pdf (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Recommended:

Adiga, Arvind, *Last Man in Tower*

([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)

Week 5

October 3 Tutorial 4 - Webscraping Johannesburg

October 06 Urbanisation as Infrastructure

Reading:

Brenner, Neil, *Theses on Urbanisation, Public Culture*, vol 25, no. 1, 2013, pp 85 - 114.

Easterling, Keller, "Extrastatecraft: *The Power of Infrastructure Space*," Verso books, 2013, *Introduction*, pp.11-25, and *Dispositions*, pp. 72-95

Recommended:

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang "The Railway Journey: The Industrialization and Perception of Time and Space" pp. 1-69

Hughes, Thomas P. , "Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930," Johns Hopkins Press, 1988. *Introduction*, pp. 1-18, *Planned Systems*, pp. 324-363

Week 6

October 10 Tutorial 5 - Analyzing Johannesburg

October 13 Johannesburg and The Infrastructure of Apartheid

Reading:

Mbembe, Achille, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp 373-405

Murray, Martin J, "Spatial Politics in the Precarious City" *City of Extremes: The Spatial Politics of Johannesburg*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, pp 1-22

Harrison, Phil, Gotz, Graeme, Todes, Alison and Wray, Chris eds. "Changing Space, Changing City: Johannesburg after apartheid," Witz University Press, 2014, pp 42-83

Recommended Reading:

blank, *Architecture, apartheid and after*, Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavic, Editors, NAI Publishers, 1998

Bremner, Lindsay, "Crime and the Emerging Landscape of Post-Apartheid South Africa, in Writing the City into Being:Essays on Johannesburg, 1998-2008, Fourthwall Books, 2012, pp. 207-231

Christopher, A.J. "The Atlas of Apartheid," Routledge, 1998

Nuttall, Sarah and Mbembe, Achille, eds. "Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis," a Public Culture Book, 2008, All essays

Week 7

October 17 Tutorial 6 Analyzing Medellín

October 20 Johannesburg and The Infrastructure of Apartheid

Reading:

Simone, A. M. "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg." Public Culture, Volume 16, Number 3, Fall 2004, pp. 407-429

Matsipa, Mpho, "Woza! Sweetheart! On Braiding Epistemologies on Bree Street. Thesis Eleven, Vol. 1 (1) pp. 31- 48

Morris, Rosalind C, "The Miner's Ear," Transition, Issue 98, 2008, pp. 96-114

<https://mg.co.za/article/2013-07-05-jason-larkin-up-and-down-in-the-dumps> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Josephy, Sven, "Acropolis Now: Ponte City as 'Portrait of City'" Thesis Eleven, Vol. 1 (1) pp. 67 - 85

Recommended Reading:

Enwezor, Okwui, "Introduction", in Under Siege: Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos, Documenta11, Platform 4

Larkin, Jason and Kardas-Nelson, Mara, "After the Mines," Fourthwall Books, 2013

Mbembe, Achille, Dlamini, Nsizwa, and Khunou, Grace , "Soweto Now," Public Culture, vol. 16, no. 3, pp 499-506

Vladislavic, Ivan, "Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked," WW Norton and Co. 2006

Week 8

October 24 Tutorial 7 Webmapping Medellín

October 27 Medellín: The Infrastructure of Populism

Reading:

Rozema, Ralph, "Medellín", in *Societies of fear: the legacy of civil war, violence and terror in Latin America*, 1999.

Gutiérrez Sanín, Francisco, Jaramillo, Ana María, Crime, "(counter-)insurgency and the privatization of security – the case of Medellín, Colombia", *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2004

Doyle, Caroline, "Explaining Patterns of Urban Violence in Medellín, Colombia", *Laws*, 2016

Highly recommended:

Dalton, Scott, Martínez, Margarita, "La Sierra", Documentary (<https://vimeo.com/134420331> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.), 2005. ****Warning: Extremely graphic content****

Recommended Reading:

Duran-Martinez, Angelica, "To kill and tell? State power, criminal competition and drug violence", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59(8), 2015

Grupo de Memoria Histórica, chapter 2, "The origins, dynamics and growth of the armed conflict," in *Basta ya!*, 2016

(<http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2016/basta-ya-ingles/BASTA-YA-ingles.pdf> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.)

Ceballos Melguizo, Ramiro, Cronshaw, Francine, "The Evolution of Armed Conflict in Medellín: An Analysis of the Major Actors", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2001

Thibert, Joel, Osorio, Giselle A., "Urban segregation and metropolitics in Latin America: the case of Bogotá, Colombia", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 38.4, 2014

Week 9

October 31 Tutorial 8 - HTML

November 03 Medellín: Transitional justice, post-conflict, and contemporary

Guest Speaker

Readings:

Nussio, Enzo, Rettberg, Angelika, Ugarriza, Juan E., "Victims, nonvictims and their opinions on transitional justice: findings from the Colombian case", *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 9, 2015.

Rettberg, Angelika, "Victims of the Colombian armed conflict: the birth of a political actor", manuscript.

Drummond, Holli, Dizgun, John, Keeling, David J., "Medellín: a city reborn?", Focus on Geography, Winter 2012

Recommended readings:

Grupo de Memoria Histórica, chapter 5, "Memories: the voice of the survivors", in Basta ya!, 2016 (<http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2016/basta-ya-ingles/BASTA-YA-ingles.pdf> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.)

Castro, Lorenzo, Echeverri, Alejandro, "Bogotá and Medellín, architecture and politics", Architectural Design, April 2011

Riaño-Alcalá, Pilar, "Remembering place: memory and violence in Medellín, Colombia", Journal of Latin American Anthropology.

Project Proposals Due (This counts as Mid-Term paper for undergraduates)

Week 10

November 10 Student Presentations: Mumbai

Week 11

November 17 Student Presentations: Johannesburg

November 24 – Thanksgiving Break

Week 12

December 01 Student Presentations: Medellín

Week 13

December 08 Final Review