



JR, *Migrants, Walking New York City*, 2015  
Snøhetta, *Times Square*, Michael Grimm, 2017  
Street Action, 2018  
*Jing's Troupe*, Shijiazhuang, June 2015

"Public space" is among the most widely used tropes in the spatial disciplines, shaping discussions about power, process, and experience in the city, as elsewhere. The term floats across drawings, images, plans, and policies yet is often vague or abstract – it might indicate a site of political speech and civic gathering, of surveillance and proscribed activities, of serendipity and programming, it might be exclusionary or inclusionary or, paradoxically, both. Is it possible for public space to be "for all"?

In another register, public space may take the form of green space, open space, plazas, parks, sidewalks, and streets, festivals, and innumerable "semi-public" spaces like atria, train stations, malls, or other institutions. All of these public spaces are shaped by the uneven interplay of economics and finance, social and political power, historic and ongoing land use and property decisions, cultures in tension, and changing expectations of function and performance. Given these complexities, it is no surprise that public space, though often represented as a "social good" is, in fact, contested, a site of struggle for a variety of publics.

Working through examples from the USA and across the globe, the class will chart the rhetorics and practices of public space – loosely, how public space is discussed and represented and how publicness is built and enacted. In particular, we will examine the specific ways in which projects or proposals for public space manage uneven power, ongoing social negotiations, compromised sites, alternative uses, or unrecognized users. Our goal is to document the variety of ways that public spaces are designed and used as well as the ways in which designs and uses have been challenged or resisted, redirected and remade. Examining site plans, dimensions, materials, plantings, lighting, signage, and ubiquitous items of furniture as well as overlapping legal, property, community, governance, and historical conventions, the class will examine public space to inform our design work and inescapably, our politics.

**Coursework:** The course will consist of weekly readings and written responses, weekly in-class workshops, and a mid-term *Primer* and a final *Catalog* both of which will include written and visual research and documentation. All readings and responses will be posted on Canvas.

**Weekly reading response:** in a concise 250-work (min) essay, ask: what ideas, practices, or processes that shape public space does each writer seek to convey? What debates about public space are explicit and/or implicit in the *combination* of readings? The response is not a summary but a critique, which does not mean "what is wrong here?" but instead means: "how do these readings enable me to think differently about public space and publicness?" Your essays should be submitted and shared in the Canvas Chat and each week, everyone must respond to at least two of your peers' responses, all of which we will discuss in class. All postings are required 24 hours before class. *You may skip two weeks during the semester.*

**Primer, Midterm.** The Primer is our introduction to the interpretation and analysis of public spaces. Ask how a particular project demonstrates the capacities, limits and aspirations of design and planning of public space. You should also inquire about alternatives to or blind spots in the project or the processes that shaped the project. The Primer is also intended for us to develop new ways of organizing and presenting images, plans, information and your observations.

For the Primer, we will utilize projects presented in Thomas Ermacora & Lucy Bullivant, eds., *Recoded City: Co-creating Urban Futures* (2016), available via CLIO. Part of each class will consist of workshops during which students will briefly present specific projects. In addition, you should research beyond the information provided by the book. We will discuss different ways of representing and interpreting projects for public space. You may work individually or in pairs. On Feb 21, each student or group will present their work.

**Catalog: Final,** The final project will continue the methods of the Primer and consist of public spaces (or projects for public spaces) of your own choosing. There are two options: 1) continue working with and expanding upon the work or firm for the project from *Recoded City* or, 2) examine a project or firm from your hometown, city or region. (This has proven to be very exciting in the past.) You will document the myriad ways in which specific sites or spaces demonstrate or challenge positions about public space.

The **Primer and Catalog** will show how particular public spaces intersect with and effect sites, and communities, an array of actors and a multitude of experiences.

**Participation** counts but is not the same for each person. Discussion, reading responses, and workshops are not tests but are tools to help us articulate ideas and learn how to construct arguments and take positions. Participation is not getting things right but being a part of the conversation – oral, written, and visual.

**Course Objectives:** Students should be able to:

1. Understand how so-called public space projects respond to and shape urban discourse.
2. Describe the variety of material, social and experiential ways that public space operates.
3. Explain urban policies, regulations and protocols implicated in the making of public spaces.

**Attendance** at all class meetings is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will result in automatic low pass; three absences will result in a failing grade. Notify the instructor *in advance* if you know that you will not attend class for any reason. You will be considered absent if you enter the room 15 minutes after the start of class.

### **Plagiarism**

Rule of thumb > ALWAYS, repeat, ALWAYS, show your sources for information and images.

Keep a running list of sources. Don't wait until the end of the semester.

GSAPP Plagiarism Policy: <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/plagiarism-policy>.

GSAPP Honor System: <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/honor-system>.

### **Grades**

GSAPP Grades: <https://www.arch.columbia.edu/grades>.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students seeking reasonable accommodations or support services from Disability Services (DS) are required to register with the disability office.

### **Learning Environment**

All participants are expected to show respect and tolerance of others, in all matters and at all times.

If you feel uncomfortable with any aspect of the learning environment, let's talk about it – my email and/or zoom awaits you; or, if you prefer, make an appointment with the Dean of Students, Danielle Smoller. If you are feeling severely stressed, help is available: make an appointment to talk with a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services.



## Schedule

### **Jan 17: Week 1: Introduction: Public as Struggle; ideals vs performance**

- \*Ali Madanipour, "Beyond Placing and Distancing: Public Spaces for Inclusive Cities," *Harvard Design Magazine* 49 Fall/Winter, 2021.
- Ash Amin, "Collective Culture and Urban Public Space," *CITY* 12, 1 (April 2008) 5-23.
- Zachary Neal, "Locating Public Space," in Anthony Orum & Zachary Neal, eds., *Common Ground? Readings and Reflections on Public Space* (2009) 1-10.

### **Jan 24: Week 2: Management and Difference**

- \*Matthew Carmona, "Contemporary Public Space: Critique and Classification," *Journal of Urban Design* 15: 1 (February 2010) 123–148.
  - \*Matthew Jordan-Miller Kenyatta, "Building a Black Public Realm and Public Culture: Learning From Leimert Park Village," in Kian Goh, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Vinit Mukhijais, eds., *Just Urban Design: The Struggle for a Public City* (MIT, 2022) 277-294.
  - John R. Parkinson, "How is Space Public? Implications for Spatial Policy and Democracy," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 31 (2013) 682–699.
  - David J. Madden, "Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park," *City & Community* 9:2 (June 2010) 186-206.
  - Laura Wolf-Powers, "Keeping Counterpublics Alive in Planning," in Connolly, et. al, eds., *Searching for the Just City: Debates in Urban Theory and Practice* (2009) 161-172.
- Assign projects for Primer*

### **Jan 31: Week 3. Neoliberalism and Urbanism**

- \*Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo Garcia, "What is Neoliberalism? A Brief Definition for Activists," National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (1997).
- \*Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho, "Thirteen Things You Need to Know About Neoliberalism," *Critical Sociology* 43: 4-5 (2017) 685–700 (excerpt)
- \*Erin DeMuynck, "The Reproduction of Neoliberal Urbanism Via an Idealized Cultural Amenity: The Farmers' Market," *Urbanities*, Vol. 9, No 2 (November 2019) 3-15.
- David J. Roberts & John Paul Catungal, "Neoliberalizing Social Justice in Infrastructure Revitalization Planning: Analyzing Toronto's More Moss Park Project," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* (2017) 1-9
- Raewyn Connell, "Understanding Neoliberalism," in Susan Braedley and Meg Luxton, eds., *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life* (2010) 22-36.
- Margit Mayer, "Contesting the Neoliberalization of Urban Governance," in *Contesting Neoliberalism* (2007) 90-110.

### **Feb 7: Week 4: Testing "Public"**

- \*Chelina Odbert, "Making "Public Space" Truly Public: Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Truly Inclusive And Equitable Spaces," in Kian Goh, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Vinit Mukhijais, eds., *Just Urban Design: The Struggle for a Public City* (MIT, 2022) 183-198.
  - \*Junxi Qian, "Towards Critical Urbanism: Urban Public Space in Modern China," in Mark Jayne, ed., *Chinese Urbanism: Critical Perspectives*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.
  - \*Paolo Genovese & Pengfei Li, "The Identity of Chinese Public Space from Ancient Times to Contemporary Society: The Sociology of Public Behaviors," *The Journal of the Scientific Society*, UNESCO Series #2, 87-125 (2017) (excerpts).
  - Pu Miao, "Brave New City: Three Problems in Chinese Urban Public Space since the 1980s," *Journal of Urban Design* 16, no. 2 (May 2011): 179–207.
  - Karin Bradley, "Open-Source Urbanism: Creating, Multiplying and Managing Urban Commons," *Footprint* 9: 1 (Spring 2015) 91-108.
- Primer Workshop 1*

**Feb 14: Week 5: Publics and Process**

- \*Basak Tanulku and Jens Kaae Fisker, "Alternative Spaces Emerging from the Gezi Protests: From Resistance to Alternatives," in Jens Kaae Fisker, et. al., eds., *The Production of Alternative Urban Spaces: An International Dialogue* (2019) 189-209.
  - \*Andre Sorensen & Lake Sagaris, "From Participation to the Right to the City: Democratic Place Management at the Neighbourhood Scale in Comparative Perspective," *Planning Practice & Research*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (June 2010) 297-316.
  - Karina Landman, "Gating the Streets: The Changing Shape of Public Spaces in South Africa" in A. Madanipour, ed., *Whose Public Space? International Case Studies in Urban Design and Development* (2010) 131-47.
  - Bjarke Skærlund Risager, "The Eventful Places of Occupy Wall Street and Tahrir Square: Cosmopolitan Imagination and Social Movements," *Globalizations* 14: 5 (2017) 714-729.
- Primer Workshop 2*

**Feb 21: Week 6: Primer Presentations, Catalog introduction**

**Feb 28: Week 7: Street Life (No class for UD Students)**

- \*Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, "Is there a Culture of the Indian Street?" *Streetscapes* (2012) 1-10.
- \*Margaret Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49: 1 (September 1995) 4-9.
- \*Maroš Krivý & Leonard Ma, "The Limits of the Livable City: From Homo Sapiens to Homo Cappuccino," *The Avery Review* 30 (March 2018) 1-10.
- Sally Roever and Caroline Skinner, "Street Vendors and Cities," *Environment and Urbanization* 28: 2 (2016) 359-374.

**March 7: Week 8: Street Life (Kinne Week for non-UD students).**

Same as week 7

**March 14: Week 9: Spring Break**

**March 21: Week 10: COVID Rule or Exception**

- \*Miodrag Mitrasinovic, "Agoraphobia: New York City Public Space in the Time of COVID-19," *Journal of Public Space* 5: 3 (2020) 83-90.
  - \*Barbora Melis, Jose Antonio Lara Hernandez, Yazid Mohammed Khemri, Alessandro Melis, "Shifting the Threshold of Public Space in UK, Algeria and Mexico during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Public Space* 5: 3 (2020)159-172.
  - Merlin Chowkwanyun and Adolph L. Reed, Jr., "Racial Health Disparities and Covid-19 — Caution and Context," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 383, 3 (July 16, 2020) 201-203.
  - Colin McFarlane, "Repopulating Density: COVID-19 and the Politics of Urban Value," *Urban Studies* (June 2021) 1-22.
  - Cheryl McEwan, Lucy Szablewska, Kate V. Lewis, Lilian M. Nabulime, "Public-making in a Pandemic: The Role of Street Art in East African Countries," *Political Geography* 98 (2022) 1-11.
- Workshop*

**March 28: Week 11: Civics and Society**

- \*Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and R. Ehrenfeucht, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011) 243-64. [Munis]
- \*Gregory Smithsimon, "A Stiff Clarifying Test Is in Order: *Occupy* and Negotiating Rights in Public Space," in Schiffman et. al., eds, *Beyond Zuccotti Park: (2012)* 34-47.
- Mariana Mogilevich, "Landscape and Participation in 1960s New York," in Kenny Cupers, ed., *Use Matters: An Alternative History of Architecture* (Routledge 2013) 202-214.
- R. T. Devlin, "Global Best Practice or Regulating Fiction? Street Vending, Zero Tolerance and Conflicts Over Public Space in New York, 1980–2000," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42.3 (2018) 517–32.

*Workshop*

**April 4: Week 12: Right to the City**

- \*Karen Abrams, "Hijinks in Harlem: The Whiteness of 'Place,'" *Avery Review* 24 (June 2017).
- \*Margit Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in Urban Social Movements," in Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer, eds., *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory & the RTTC* (2012) 63-85.
- \*Neil Brenner, "Is 'Tactical Urbanism' An Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism?" MoMA, April 2015.
- Bjarke Skærlund Risager, "The Eventful Places of Occupy Wall Street and Tahrir Square: Cosmopolitan Imagination and Social Movements," *Globalizations* 14: 5 (2017) 714–729.
- Burcu Yigit Turan, "Occupy Gezi Park: The Never-Ending Search for Democracy, Public Space, and Alternative City-Making," in Jeffrey Hou, Sabine Knierbein, eds., *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space in the Age of Shrinking Democracy* (Routledge, 2017) 83-92.

*Workshop*

**April 11: Week 13: Work Sessions with DS**

**April 18: Week 14: TBA**

**April 25: No Class**

**May 2: Week 15: Final Review**