

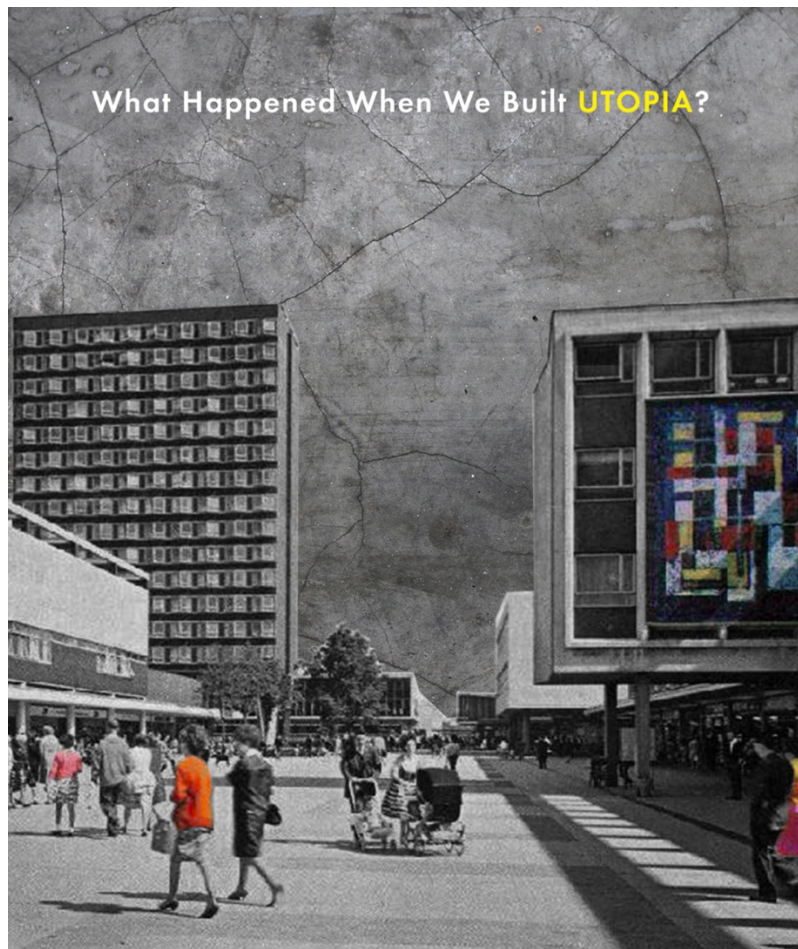
Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

A6814: New Towns and/or Smart Cities

Fall 2025, T: 11-1, Avery 412

David Smiley, ds210@columbia.edu

The attached syllabus is not the final syllabus. Revisions likely.

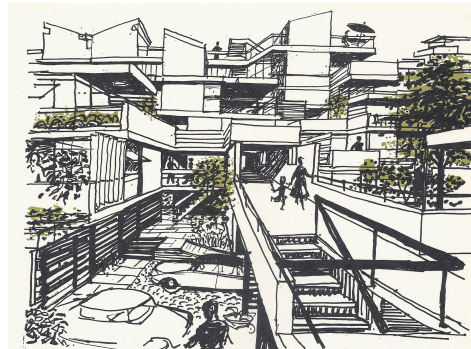
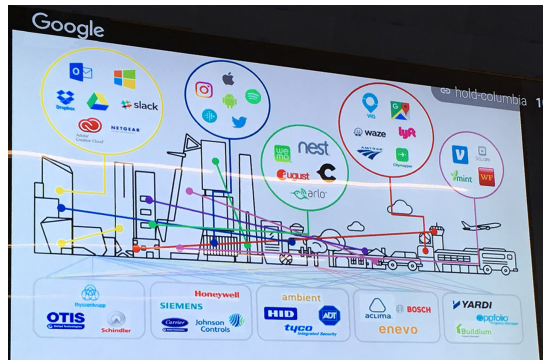


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How do different settlement patterns and ideals respond to and shape the process of urbanization?

In recent years, Smart Cities have challenged urban discourse. Their ostensible intelligence derives from digital infrastructures – data collection, algorithmic calculation, socio-technical platforms – and they promise a world of efficiency, health, environmental management and continuous connectivity. The Smart City provides smoother social and physical interactions, at local and global scales. Yet, Smart City sceptics interpret the monitoring of humans, materials and environments as biased and intrusive surveillance, privileging global financial and political elites. Nevertheless, others argue that “smartness” offers a vision of collective good, a new kind of happiness

Earlier, across the second half of the 20th century, settlements called New Towns ostensibly offered improved community life. They deployed new modes of governance, new delineations of land, property, and site, new forms of neighborhood and social interaction, new scales of housing, commerce and industry, and the expansion of transportation and infrastructural systems. They took on a variety of forms under very different economic and political regimes, confronting industrialization, regionalization and colonization. Shaped by Garden City, Regionalist and Modernist (CIAM) principles of legible social order, the New Towns also offered happiness.

Smart Cities and New Towns are/were planetary in scope, with ideas and techniques exported, imported, and transformed. Both are/were adopted and interpreted by professional organizations, international academic and financial institutions, political leaders and government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Both are strangely undergirded by utopian socialism and liberal/neoliberal developmentalism, driven by extraction and growth. Both are linked to technologies of control, particular and shifting economic relations, and both are a little boring.

The criteria of New Towns and Smart Cities have blurred. Many older New Towns thrive, and many have adopted new immigrants, informal economies and new political systems. In Asia, New Towns in recent decades are undergirded by Smart City technologies.

In this seminar, we will examine New Town and Smart City theories and practices and conduct case study and comparative analyses to understand. We seek not to map the success or failure of any particular enterprise but understand New Towns and Smart Cities have grappled with the “perfectibility” of human settlement and the provision of happiness.

Coursework

The course will consist of weekly readings and written responses, weekly in-class discussion, a mid-term paper/project proposal and a final paper/project both of which will include written and visual research and documentation. *All readings will be posted on Canvas/Courseworks.*

Weekly reading response and peer response: in a 250-word (min) essay, ask: what does the author(s) ask you to know or learn about collective life? What criteria, evidence or examples do they deploy? In

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other words, what do we learn from the group of readings? Your response should avoid summaries and instead engage in critique, asking, how do these readings reveal, or not, masked or uncomfortable social or spatial process in thinking about the design and occupation of collective spaces.

In addition, three times during the semester, each student will read and comment on another student's essay to expand discussion in class. Details of posting on Courseworks will follow.

Semester Project

The semester project will consist of a report, with text and images/plans, which documents and analyzes a New Town or Smart City (or other form of collective social living). There will be three delivery points: a proposal, a developed piece of analytical work, and a final submission. The report should be no less than of 3000 words (not including footnotes and a bibliography). Requirements and formats will be discussed and in class we will discuss ways to research and to use various search engines and indexes. The report can be done singly or in pairs.

Participation counts but is not the same for each person. Discussion and reading responses entail different forms of interaction. Participation is not a test, but an effort help everyone to learn collaboratively, construct arguments and take a position. Participation means being a part of a conversation – oral, written, and visual.

Course Objectives: Students should be able to:

- 1) Describe the design and planning terms of various settlement patterns or organizations, including New Towns and Smart Cities (and variants)
- 2) Demonstrate how cities, regions, territories, suburbs, villages or slums result from and reshape the decisions and knowledge made by human and institutional actors.
- 3) Demonstrate how cities, regions, territories, suburbs, villages or slums are intertwined with landscapes, ecologies, topographies, watersheds.
- 4) Understand social infrastructures, political systems, and economic and development protocols.
- 5) Demonstrate the physical and perceived experience of collective spaces and uses.

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will result in automatic low pass; three such absences will result in a failing grade. Notify the instructor *in advance* if you know that you will not attend class for any reason. Arriving within the first few minutes of the scheduled class time is expected – please be courteous and arrive on time.

Learning Environment

At all times, participants are expected to show respect and tolerance of others. 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. Students seeking accommodations or support services from Disability Services (DS) are required to register with the disability office.

Citations and Sourcing (aka plagiarism): ALWAYS show your sources. Keep a running list of sources as you read, research, take notes, do screen grabs, etc. If you cannot source something, you cannot use it. Start immediately, do not wait. If you do not properly source something, you cannot use it. We will discuss proper citation formats. Whatever you do, be consistent. In fact, footnotes are fun, and good sourcing demonstrates the scope and depth of your research.

The use of AI generative tools is permitted for all assignments in this class, but all such uses must be acknowledged and cited. AI tools are useful for many reasons: fine tuning; brainstorming ideas; drafting an outline to clarify your thoughts; check grammar, rigor, and style; help you find an expression to catch your meaning. If you use AI tools to write whole sentences or paragraphs, such texts **MUST** be within "quotation marks" and *cited as you would do with any source*. Your format is less important than

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demonstrating you have made your best effort to show the emergence and shaping of your ideas and work. Please note that the information produced by AI tools may be unreliable, inaccurate or biased.

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

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

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

SCHEDULE

Small type is recommended reading

1) Sept 2: Introduction: Genealogies of “Smartness” and Utopia

2) Sept 9: Smart

Carlo Ratti and Matthew Claudel, "Wiki City" in *The City of Tomorrow: Sensors, Networks, Hackers, and the Future of Urban Life* (Yale, 2016) 25-39.

Andres Luque-Ayala and Simon Marvin, "Developing a Critical Understanding of Smart Urbanism?" *Urban Studies* 52: 12 (2015) 2105–2116.

Neil Brenner with Christian Schmid, "Planetary Urbanization," in *Critique of Urbanization* (Birkhäuser, 2017) 186-190.

Rob Kitchin, Tracey P. Lauricault and Gavin McArdle, "Smart Cities and the Politics of Urban Data," in Simon Marvin, Andres Luque-Ayala and Colin McFarlane, eds., *Smart Urbanism: Utopian Vision or False Dawn?* (2016) 16-31.

David Pinder, "In Defense of Utopian Urbanism: Imagining Cities After the 'End Of Utopia,'" *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 84, no. 3/4 (2002) 229-239.

3) Sept 16: After Smart?

Robert G. Hollands, "Beyond the Corporate Smart City" Glimpses of Other Possibilities of Smartness," in Marvin, Luque-Ayala, McFarlane, eds., *Smart Urbanism: Utopian Vision or False Dawn?* (Routledge, 2016) 168-184.

Federico Caprotti, I.-Chun Catherine Chang and Simon Joss, "Beyond the Smart City: A Typology of Platform Urbanism," *Urban Transformations* 4: 4 (2022) 1-18.

Jathan Sadowski, "Who Owns the Future City? Phases of Technological Urbanism and Shifts in Sovereignty," *Urban Studies* 58:8 (2021) 1732–1744.

Nick Dunn and Paul Cureton, "Frictionless Futures: The Vision of Smartness and the Occlusion of Alternatives," in Sergio M. Figueiredo, Sukanya Krishnamurthy, Torsten Schroedery, eds., *Architecture and the Smart City* (Routledge, 2019) 17-27.

4) Sept 23: Metropolis and Its Discontents

Georg Simmel, "Metropolis and Mental Life," 1908, excerpt.

R. K. Home, "Town Planning and Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire, 1910-1940," *Planning Perspectives* 5 (1990) 23-37.

Konstanze Sylva Domhard, "The Garden City Idea in the CIAM Discourse on Urbanism: A Path to Comprehensive Planning," *Planning Perspectives* 27 (2012) 173–197.

Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (London, 1902) excerpt.

5) Sept 30: Discourse and Experience

Mark Llewellyn, "Producing and Experiencing Harlow: Neighborhood Units and Narratives of New Town Life 1947–53," *Planning Perspectives* 19 (2004) 155–174.

Sanjeev Vidyarthi, "Reimagining the American Neighborhood Unit for India," in Healey and Upton, eds., *Crossing Borders: International Exchange & Planning Practices* (Routledge, 2010) 73-93.

Andrew Homer, "Creating New Communities: The Role of the Neighborhood Unit in Post-War British Planning," *Contemporary British History* 14:1 (2000) 63-80.

Frank Schaffer, "The New Town Movement in Britain," in Golany, ed., *International Urban Growth Policies: New Town Contributions* (1978) 13-22.

Clarence A. Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit, a Scheme of Arrangement for the Family-Life Community," in *Neighborhood & Community Planning* (New York: Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, 1929), excerpt.

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6) Oct 7. Districts and Neighborhoods

Lidwine Spoormans, Daniel Navas-Carrillo, Hielkje Zijlstra, Teresa Pérez-Cano, "Planning History of a Dutch New Town: Analyzing Lelystad through Its Residential Neighborhoods," *Urban Planning* 4: 3 (2019) 102–116.

Juliana Maxim, "Mass Housing and Collective Experience: On the Notion of *Microraiion* in Romania in the 1950s and 1960s," *The Journal of Architecture* 14: 1 (2009) 7-26.

Iain Jackson, "Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew's Early Housing and Neighborhood Planning in Sector-22, Chandigarh," *Planning Perspectives* 28:1 (2013) 1-26.

Annapurna Shaw, "Town Planning in Postcolonial India, 1947-65: Chandigarh Re-examined," *Urban Geography* 30:8 (2009) 857-878.

7) Oct 14. Other classifications

Ayala Levin, "The Village Within: An Alternative Genealogy of the Urban Village," *Journal of Architecture* 23: 3 (2018) 392-417

Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall, Cedric Price, "Non-Plan Experiment in Freedom," *New Society* (March 20, 1969) 435-443

Kenny Cupers, "Mapping & Making Community in the Postwar European City," *Journal of Urban History* 42: 6 (2016) 1009–28.

Arturo Almandoz, "Towards Brasilia & Ciudad Guayana: Development, Urbanization & Regional Planning in Latin America, 1940s–1960s," *Planning Perspectives* 31: 1 (2016) 31–53.

Johanna Conterio, "Controlling Land, Controlling People: Urban Greening and the Territorial Turn in Theories of Urban Planning in the Soviet Union, 1931-1932," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 48: 3 (2022) 479–503.

8) Oct 21 TBD

9) Oct 28: Smart City interlude

Nancy Odendaal, "Smart Innovation at the Margins: Learning from Cape Town and Kibera," in Andrew Karvonen, Federico Cugurullo and Federico Caprotti, eds., *Inside Smart Cities: Place, Politics and Urban Innovation* (Routledge, 2018) 243-55.

Hug March and Ramon Ribera-Fumaz, "Barcelona: From Corporate Smart City to Technological Sovereignty," in Andrew Karvonen, Federico Cugurullo and Federico Caprotti, eds., *Inside Smart Cities: Place, Politics & Urban Innovation* (Routledge, 2018) 229-40.

10) Nov 4: ELECTION DAY

11) Nov 11: New Town Shifts

Kerry Cupers, "Programming the *Villes Nouvelles*," *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France* (2014) 183-222.

Wouter Vanstiphout, "Ideology as an Achilles Heel: Visionary Urban Planning in Amsterdam and Teheran," in Provoost, ed., *New Towns for the 21st Century*, 46-57.

12) Nov 18: Made in the USA

Alan Hess, "Discovering Irvine: A Radical Alternative to Suburban Design and a Boldly Rationalized Refinement," *Places Journal* (October 2014). <https://placesjournal.org/article/discovering-irvine/>

J. Mark Souther, "Suburban Swamp: The Rise and Fall of Planned New Town Communities in New Orleans East," *Planning Perspectives*, 23 (April 2008) 197–219.

12) Nov 25: Blur

Rachel Keaton, "Songjiang New City, China" & "Tin Shui Wai, Hong Kong," in *Rising in the East: Contemporary New Towns in China* (International New Town Institute, 2011) 354-403.

Xiangming Chen et. al., "Localizing the Production of Global Cities: A Comparison of New Town Developments Around Shanghai and Kolkata," *City & Community* 8:4 (2009) 433-63.

FINAL TBD