Course Syllabus

HISTORIES OF AMERICAN CITIES

Jennifer Gray   Fall 2019   Mondays 11-1   209 Fayerweather

This course surveys urbanism in the United States from the colonial era to the present. During these years, industrialization, urbanization, and mass migrations, all fueled by an expanding market economy, transformed the built environment. We will learn about ambitious urban plans, exceptional architects, and iconic buildings, but also about everyday spaces, such as shopping malls, suburbs, and highways. Questions about race, gender, inequality, and militarism as they relate to urban space will be explored. We will unpack the meaning of terms such as modernism, democracy, and American and consider them in a global context, especially the geopolitical relationship between North and South America. We also will engage topics in critical preservation, such as ecological conservation and curatorial practices. The class will be a mixture of lectures and discussions; walking tours in New York City; a film screening; as well as visits to museums and to special collections at Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, where students will have the opportunity to engage with original drawings, rare books, and archival materials relevant to the course.

Course Format

Weekly lectures provide the framework for the course. A portion of some classes will be devoted to discussion of contemporary architectural issues that relate to material in the course. The slides for each lecture will be made available on the course website. There will also be two visits to Avery Drawings & Archives, a museum visit and gallery talk, a film screening, and a walking tour of Lower Manhattan, during which we will explore modern and postmodern buildings and public spaces. Students are expected to attend all lectures and site visits and to participate in class discussions. Readings will be posted on the course website. There will be three short writing assignments – an exhibition review, one essay that uses archival materials, and one topic chosen by the students – throughout the semester. Details to be discussed the first week of class.

EXHIBITION REVIEW – 25%

DUE OCT 28

ARCHIVAL/FILM – 25%

DUE NOV 18

CHOICE – 25%

DUE DEC 13

CLASS PARTICIPATION – 25%

<u>Office Hours and Contact Information</u>

Prof. Jennifer Gray

Curator of Drawings and Archives

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By appointment (jlg2006@columbia.edu)

CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>Sep 9: Welcome</u>

Introduction to the course; American exceptionalism and transnational influences; questions of national identity, democracy, and modernism

Alex Krieger, "The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism," *Assemblage*3 (July 1987): 39-59.

Daniel Joseph Singal, "Modernist Culture in America: Introduction" and "Towards a Definition of American Modernism," in *American Quarterly*v. 39, n. 1 (Spring 1987): 5-26.

<u>Further Reading</u>

Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization," in *Concepts of Ethnicity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980; rept. 1982.)

Eric Foner, "Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World" (2002).

Sep 16: Colonial Origins and the Emergence of Industrial, Civic, and Commercial Culture

Cities as key to European colonization; authority and its breakdown; L'Enfant's Plan for Washington; Commissioner's Plan for New York; urban boosterism; dissemination of the grid, the town square and the great urban park; producing industrial space; the construction of wilderness and national identity; ecotourism and cities

Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 1-15.

Wolfgang Sonne, "The Capital City as a Microcosm of the State: The Case of Washington," *Thresholds* 30 (Summer 2005): 80-87.

Hilary Ballon, ed., *The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan*, 1811-2011 (New York, 2013): pp. TBD.

Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto* (New York, 1978): pp. 9-27.

Further Reading

William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992).

Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982).

Jay Kinsbruner, *The Colonial Spanish-American City: Urban Life in the Age of Atlantic Capitalism*(Austin, 2005).

Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America*(New York, 1992).

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*(New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850*(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: a History of Central Park*(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*(Cambridge, 1978).

Stephen V. Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities, 1850-2000*(London, 1998).

David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth Century America*(Baltimore, 1986).

Sep 23: New York: from Trinity Church to Occupy Wall Street

**Walking tours of Lower Manhattan – please sign up on CourseWorks

Skyscrapers and zoning laws; military urbanism; Ground Zero and target architecture; place annihilation; the politics of public space; terrorism and cities; architecture as social practice; Occupy Wall Street

Rem Koolhaas, "The Double Life of Utopia: the Skyscraper," from *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto*(New York, 1978): pp. 81-131.

Neil Smith and Setha Low, "Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space" and David Harvey, "The Political Economy of Public Space" in *The Politics of Public Space*, eds. Setha Low and Neil Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006): 1-34.

Jonathan Massey, "Occupying Wall Street: Places and Spaces of Political Action," *Places Journal*(September 2012).

Stephen Graham, "Cities as Strategic Sites: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics," in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*(Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 31-53.

Stephen Graham, Introduction to *Architecture of Fear: Terrorism and the Future of Urbanism in the West*(Barcelona, 2008): 7-14

Further Reading

Michael Sorkin, ed., *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State*(Routledge, 2008).

Michael Sorkin and Sharon Zukin, eds., *After the World Trade Center: Rethinking New York City*(New York: Routledge, 2002).

Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*(New York: The Guilford Press, 2003).

Stephen Graham, *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*(Verso, 2011).

Sep 30: Social Science and the City Beautiful

*Visit to Drawings & Archives, Avery Library

1893 World's Fair and the City Beautiful Movement; progressive social politics; impact of the social sciences on urban planning and architectural representation; race, ethnicity, and immigration; civic spaces and national identity; the play movement; the social center movement; public schools; municipal playgrounds; the neighborhood unit

Robert W. Rydell, "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: The Racist Underpinnings of a Utopian Artifact," *Journal of American Culture*1 (1978).

Mario Manieri-Elia, "The City Beautiful under Imperialism" and "The Plan of Chicago," in *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, Giorgio Ciucci, Francesco Dal Co, Mario Manieri-Elia, and Manfredo Tafuri (M.I.T., transl. 1979): 76-104.

Christine Macy and Sarah Bonnemaison, "Exhibiting Wilderness at the Columbia Exposition," in *Architecture and Nature: Creating the American Landscape*(New York, 2003): 12-69.

<u>Further Reading</u>

Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era*(Pennsylvania State University, 1998).

Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*(Cambridge, 1978), esp. part IV, "The Progressives and the City: Common Concerns, Divergent Strategies," 191-294.

Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*(Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

Hogan, David John. *Class and Reform: School and Society in Chicago, 1880-1930*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture*(Chicago, 1996).

William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*(New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991).

Oct 7 – NO CLASS

Oct 14 – Futurism, Fantasy, and Architecture

Fantasy spaces and leisure activities; "total experience design" in hotels; movie houses and theaters; Radio City and Rockefeller Center; 1933 Century of Progress; 1939 New York World's Fair; restoration of Colonial Williamsburg; shopping malls and festival marketplaces; brandscapes; analogous urbanisms; Disney urbanism

Rem Koolhaas, "How Perfect Perfection Can Be: The Creation of Rockefeller Center," in *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto*(New York, 2-ed. 1994), 161-233.

Anna Klingmann, "Architecture as Product," *Daidalos*69/70 (1998): 22-30.

Michael Sorkin, "See you in Disneyland," in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992): 205-232.

Margaret Crawford, "The World in a Shopping Mall," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, pp. TBD.

Christine Boyer, "Cities for Sale: Merchandising History at the South Street Seaport," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, pp. TBD.

Further Reading

Anna Klingmann, *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy*(MIT Press, 2007).

John Margolies, *Ticket to Paradise: American Movie Theaters and How We Had Fun*(Boston, 1991).

Roland Marchand, "The Designers go to the Fair, II: Norman Bell Geddes, The General Motors 'Futurama,' and the Visit to the Factory Transformed," in *The American Design Ethic*, ed. Arthur J. Pulos (Cambridge, 1983), 103-121.

Karen Ann Marling, ed. *Designing the Disney Theme Parks*(Montreal, 1997).

Hal Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the 21·Century*(New York, 2002).

William H. Jordy, "Rockefeller Center and Corporate Urbanism," in *American Buildings and Their Architects, v. 5: The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century*(New York and Oxford 1972), 1-35.

John Chase, *Glitter Stucco and Dumpster Diving: Reflections on Building Production in the Vernacular City*(New York, 2000).

Oct 21: Technological Sublime: Automobiles, Infrastructure, and Landscape

***Visit to Drawings & Archives, Avery Library**

Highways and infrastructure; model communities of the New Deal; Robert Moses as urban czar of New York; modernist planning; Tennessee Valley Authority; back-to-the-land movements

Christine Macy and Sarah Bonnemaison, "Putting Nature to Work with the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933," in *Architecture and Nature: Creating the American Landscape*(New York, 2003), 137-221.

Robert Fishman, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City," in Urban Utopias of the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier (MIT Press, 1982), pp. TBD.

Further Reading

David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime*(Cambridge, 1994).

Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture*(Cambridge, 1986).

Jean-Louis Cohen, *Scenes from the World to Come: European Architecture and the American Challenge, 1893-1960*(Paris and Montreal, 1995).

Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*(New York, 1999).

Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson, *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*(New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).

Oct 28: Military-Industrial-Architectural Complex: from Total War to Total Living

1940s-50s; defense industries and garden suburbs; military-industrial complex; 194X; Federal Highway Administration; Federal Housing Authority; suburban tract housing; race and gender politics of postwar domestic environment

**PAPER 1 DUE

David Monteyne, "Hypothetical Hiroshimas: City, Suburb, and Shelter in 1950s Civil Defense," in *Fallout Shelter: Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 1-34.

Tom Vanderbilt, "Survival City: This is Only a Test," in *Survival City: Adventures among the Ruins of Atomic America*(Princeton, 2002): 68-95.

Diane Harris, *Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America*(University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. TBD.

Further Reading

Donald Albrecht, ed., *World War II and the American Dream*(Cambridge, 1995).

Jean Louis-Cohen, *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War*(Montreal: Canadian Center for Architecture, 2011).

Barbara Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown*(New York, 1993).

Virginia Scott Jenkins, *Lawn: A History of an American Obsession*(Washington DC, 1994).

Ellen Lupton, *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*(Smithsonian Institution, 1993).

Andrew Hurly, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in Postwar Consumer Culture*(New York, 2010).

Andrew Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front*(Minneapolis, 2009).

Nov 4: NO CLASS – ELECTION HOLIDAY

Nov 11: Urban Renewal, Slum Clearance, and Housing Reform

Title I and slum clearance; urban renewal; successes and failures of public housing; zoning; "white flight"; defensible spaces; gated communities; New Towns; contemporary responses to low-income housing (e.g. Estudio Cruz,

privatization of affordable housing; demolition and replacement low-rise construction); rural poverty and housing (e.g. Rural Studio, Alabama); housing for homeless and displaced populations (e.g. Mad Hatter project, Atlanta)

Eric Mumford, "The 'Tower in a Park' in America: Theory and Practice, 1920-1960," *Planning Perspectives*10 (1995): 17-41.

David Harvey, "Spaces of Utopia," in *Spaces of Hope*(University of California, 2001): 133-181.

Michael Dear and Jurgen von Mahs, "Housing for the Homeless, by the Homeless, and of the Homeless," in*Architecture of Fear*, ed. Nan Ellin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997): 187-200.

Further Reading

Catherine G. Bristol, "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth,"*Journal of Architectural Education*94 (May 1991): 163-171.

Elizabeth Wood, *The Beautiful Beginnings, the Failure to Learn: Fifty Years of Public Housing in America*(Washington DC, 1992).

Scott Henderson, "Tarred with the Exceptional Image: Public Housing and Popular Discourse, 1950-1990," *American Studies*36 (Spring 1995): 31-52.

John F. Bauman, et. al, eds., *From the Tenements to the Taylor Homes: Urban Housing Policy in 20.Century America*(University Park, PA, 2000).

Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design*(New York: Macmillan, 1972).

Barry Bergdoll and Reinhold Martin, *Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream*(New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012).

Nov 18: Learning from Brasilia and Las Vegas: Modern and Postmodern Urbanism

CIAM planning; international style modernism; global vs. regional expression; structuralism and semiotics; phenomenology; the intellectualization of architecture; historic preservation as avant-garde; site sensitivity; regionalism

**PAPER 2 DUE

Paulo Tavares, "Modern Frontiers: Beyond Brasilia, the Amazon," in *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories*, eds. Patricio del Real and Helen Gyger (New York: Routledge, 2013): 191-212.

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*(Cambridge, 1977), 1-20.

James Marston Fitch, "Single-Point Perspective: Learning from Las Vegas, or The Critical Difference Between Looking at Pretty Pictures of Hell and Actually Having to Live There," *Architectural Forum*140, n.2 (March 1974): 89.

Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstruction," *Assemblage*8 (February 1989): 23-60.

Further Reading

Robert A.T. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*(New York, 1995).

Kenneth Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism (1983)," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (Princeton, 1996), 468-482.

Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*(London; New York, 1990).

Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*(Cambridge, 1994).

Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*(Cambridge, 1995).

John Dutton, *The New Urbanism*(Geneva, 2001).

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*(Cambridge, 1978).

Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*(New York, 1966).

Nov 25 – The Neoliberal City

Spatial manifestations of deregulation, privatization, and globalization (e.g. *favelas*, spontaneous communities, gated communities); archipelago urbanism; informal cities; self-build communities; capitalism and the production of space; private property vs. rights to the city; use-value vs. exchange value (real estate speculation); borders and extraterritoriality; tactical urbanisms vs. centralized planning; limitations of tactical urbanisms

Teddy Cruz, "Rethinking Uneven Growth: It's About Inequality, Stupid," in *Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities*(MoMA 2015): 48-55.

Teddy Cruz, "Border Tours: Strategies of Surveillance, Tactics of Encroachment," in *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State*, ed. Michael Sorkin (Routledge, 2008): 111-140.

Felipe Hernandez, Peter Kellett, and Lea K. Allen, eds., *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*(New York: Berghahn Books, 2010): xi-xiv; 1-38; 53-69.

Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, "Divided We Fall: Gated and Walled Communities in the United States," in *Architecture of Fear*, ed. Nan Ellin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997): 85-99.

Further Reading

Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*(London and New York: Verso, 2006).

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*(Verso, 2006).

Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*(Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1984; rept. 1990; rept. 2008).

David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*(New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

**DEC 13 - PAPER 3 DUE