Course Syllabus

Conflict Urbanism

Course Number: ARCH A4890 - 3 Credits

Wednesday 9am-11am, 300 Buell South

Laura Kurgan, Professor of Architecture

Wednesday 1-3

CSR TA, Nadine Fatalleh

Office Hours by Appointment

Technical Assistance Hours TBD in CSR: 654 Schermerhorn Extension

Conflict Urbanism as a term designates not simply that conflict that take place in cities, but also that conflict is a structuring principle of cities, as a way of inhabiting and creating urban space. The theme is topical in light of the increasing urbanization of warfare and the policing and surveillance of everyday life, however, conflict is not limited to war and violence. Cities are not only destroyed but also built through conflict. Our seminar will look at the ways in which cities have long been arenas of friction, difference, and dissidence, as well as the ways in which their irreducibly conflictual character manifests itself in everything from neighborhood borders, to differences of opinion and status, to ordinary encounters on the street. Student work in *Conflict Urbanism* will take place through a single city or by comparing a series of cities examining the role conflicts of all sorts play in the making and remaking of cities around the world. Conflicts can (and should) be investigated with maps and data, but they often turn out to be propelled or propagated by them as well. Bringing humanistic inquiry together with spatial data and basic mapping techniques will allow us to produce powerful representations as well as challenge conventional narratives of cities and conflict today. Cities will be "seen" through a number of lenses including: mass incarceration, infrapolitics, urbanization of war, language ecology, migration(political, economic and climate), debt, algorithms and surveillance.

Methods and Course Requirements: Students will be required to read assigned texts and discuss these in seminars each week. For a semester long project, work will be multi-media. Each project will center around critical and counter cartographies: mapping as a creative and analytic research tool. For the final assignment, students will create a map(web-based or a series of static images) as well as written reflections, incorporating analogue as well as digital media. (see Mapping Labs below)

Midterm, Final, and Presentations: The midterm 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. a data collection or analysis plan. Near the end of the semester, students will present the results of their work and specific plans for their final projects. 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 qualitative and quantitative information about their chosen neighborhood.

Mapping Labs:

To support your work on your final projects for this course there are a number of resources available:

For students who have already taken Geographic Information Systems (or an equivalent course), there are tutorials on methods using open source QGIS software, and web-based mapping. Please familiarize yourself with the topics and methods in the tutorials listed below, especially tutorial 6.

If you have not taken Geographic Information Systems, then this class works in tandem with:

A4407-1, Methods in Spatial Research, Instructor Carsten Rodin

Note: You may enroll in this course for 1.5 credits, or you many audit the class.

This session A course will introduce key concepts related to work with geographic information systems, and critical mapping. It will meet for six sessions with the following topics. Each session has an associated tutorial to be completed outside of class:

1. Introduction to GIS concepts
2. Working with cartographic projections
3. Making spatial datasets through observation and sensing
4. Making spatial datasets through archival research
5. Cartographic design principles
6. Producing public work through interactive maps on the web (mandatory)

 Grading Breakdown – Graduate and Undergraduate

Technological skill is not factored into the grade

10% Participation

20% Midterm

20% Presentation

50% Final project

This course is part of a multi-year research theme in *Conflict Urbanism* being undertaken by the Center for Spatial Research(CSR). See past work at c4sr.columbia.edu.

WEEKLY PLAN

Week 1: January 22: Introduction

Week 2: January 29: Cities

Required Reading:

Neil Brenner, "Theses on Urbanization," *Public Culture* 25, no. 1 (January 2013): 85–114

Ananya Roy, "The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory," *Regional Studies* 43, no. 6 (July 2009): 819–830

David Wachsmuth, "City as Ideology: Reconciling the Explosion of the City Form with the Tenacity of the City Concept," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32, no. 1 (February 1, 2014): 87

Recommended Reading:

Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, "Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology: A Critique of Methodological Cityism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (January 2015): 16–27.

Tutorial 1

Week 3: February 05: Conflict

Required Reading**:**

Latour, Bruno. "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public." *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, 4-31. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005.

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 (Links to an external site.)](http://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city)

Recommended:

Rao, Vyjayanthi V. *Beneath the Tent of a Horizonless Sky,* in Conditions Series, e-flux architecture, November 05 2019*:*

https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/conditions/296455/beneath-the-tent-of-a-horizonless-sky/

Tutorial 2

Week 4: February 12 : **Maps and Data**

Required Reading**:**

Hall, Peter, *Critical Visualization*, Design and the Elastic Mind, MoMA, 2008. 120-133

Harley, J. B. "*Deconstructing the Map*." Cartographica; North York 26, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 1.

Kim, Annette. *"Looking Again: Power and Critical Cartography,"* Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Min City. University of Chicago Press, 2015 pp. 72-98

Kim, Annette. *"Mapping the Unmapped: Mixed Use Sidewalk Spaces,"* Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Min City. University of Chicago Press, 2015 pp. 100-169

Wilson, Mabel O., "*The Cartography of W.E.B. Du Bois's Color Line*," in W.E.B. Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America, Princeton Architectural Press, 2018 pp 37-51.

Wilson, Matthew W. (2011). *Data matter(s): legitimacy, coding, and qualifications-of-life.* Environment and Planning D: Society and Space no. 29 (5):857-872.

Tutorial 3

 Week 5: February 19: **Spatial Inequality | Mass Incarceration**

Required Reading:

Alexander, Michelle, *The New Jim Crow*, The New Press, 2010, pp 97-140

Kurgan, Laura, *Million Dollar Blocks*, in Close up at a Distance, Zone Books, 2013 pp 187-207

Tutorial 4

Week 6: Feb 26: Infrapolitics

Required Reading:

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

Scott, James, *InfraPolitics and Mobilizations: An Afterward*

Simone, A.M *"People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg."*

Public Culture, Volume 16, Number 3, Fall 2004, pp. 407-429

Tutorial 5

Week 7: March 04: Urbanization of Warfare.

MIDTERM DUE.

Required Reading:

Graham, Stephen (2003). *Lessons in Urbicide*. New Left Review, 19, 63–77.

Kurgan et el. *Patterns of Damage, Beyond Winning the War*, Ways of Knowing Cities, Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019, 94-120

Weizman, Eyal. "*Urban Warfare: Walking Through Walls*." In Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation, 185-218. London: Verso, 2007.

Recommended Reading:

Ramadan, Adam. "*Destroying Nahr el-Bared: Sovereignty and urbicide in the space of exception*." In Political Geography 28 (2009) 153–163

Tutorial 6

Week 8: March 11: Language Ecologies

Required Reading:

Liu, Lydia "*Scripts in Motion:Writing as ImperialTechnology, Past and Present*." PMLA 130:2 375-383

Nettle, D., & Romaine, S. (2000). Chapter 4 - *The Ecology of Language*. In Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages, 78-98.

Maffi, Luisa (2001). *Language, Knowledge, and Indigenous Heritage Rights*. In On Biocultural Diversity. Smithsonian Institution Press, 412-432.

Recommended Reading:

Nettle, D., & Romaine, S. (2000). Chapter 2 - *A World of Diversity*. In Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages. Oxford University Press on Demand, 26-49.

Week 9: March 18 - SPRING BREAK

 Week 10: Mar 25: Migration (Political, Climate)

Required Reading:

Heller, Charles, Pezzani, *Lorenzo, Left to Die Boat,* Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth Forensic Architecture, Sternberg Press, pp 637-695

Casas-Cortes, Maribel, Corbarrubias, Sebastian, *A War on Mobility: The Border Empire Strikes Back,* in Ways of Knowing Cities, Kurgan, Brawley eds. Pp 176-191

 Gemenne, Francois, *The Anthropocene and its Victims*, in Hamilton, Clive, ed. *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking modernity in a new epoch* Routledge Environmental Humanities, 2015 pp 168-175

Watch: Exit (20 minute flat rendition of 40 minute 360 immersive projection) Commissioned by Fondation Cartier, Paris. Authors, Virilio, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Mark Hansen, Laura Kurgan, Ben Rubin, in collaboration with Robert Gerard Pietrusko and Stewart Smith - 2008-2015

Project Description Link: http://c4sr.columbia.edu/projects/exitLinks to an external site.
Video Link:EXIT - Virilio, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Hansen, Kurgan, Rubin, Pietrusko,

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Smith - 2008-2015 (Links to an external site.)

Week 11: April 01: Migration (Economic, Remittances).

Required Reading:

Sending money home: Worldwide remittance flows to developing countries, IFAD Publication 2006. https://www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/mfg-en-paper-sending-money-home-worldwide-remittance-flows-to-developing-and-transition-countries-nov-2007.pdf (Links to an external site.)

Lopez, S. L. (2015). Migrant Metropolis: Remittance urbanism in the United States. In *The remittance landscape: spaces of migration in rural Mexico and urban USA*, (pp. 201-248). University of Chicago Press.

6pm: Wednesday (**optional**) Film Screening and Q&A with Film Director "Not in My Neighborhood, Wood Auditorium

Week 12: April 08: Algorithms and Surveillance

Required Reading:

Benjamin, Ruha, Race After Technology, Polity Press, 2019. Pp 77-97

Chun, Wendy, *Queerying Homophily*, in Apprich, Chun, Cramer, Steyerl, *"Pattern Discrimination,"* University of Minnesota Press, 2019. Pp 59-99

Crawford , Kate and Joler, Vladan, "[Anatomy of an AI (Links to an external site.)](#)" (2018)

Kim, Annette, *Satellite Images Can Harm the Poorest Citizens,* The Atlantic June 05, 2018.

[https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/06/satellite-images-can-harm-the-poorest-citizens/561920/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/06/satellite-images-can-harm-the-poorest-citizens/561920/)

Zuboff, Shoshana, *"Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization,"* in Journal of Information Technology (2015) 30, pp. 75–89

Other resources:

Zuboff, Shoshana, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Public Affairs, Perseus Books, 2019 pp.

Green, Ben: *The False Promise of Risk Assessments: Epistemic Reform and the Limits of Fairness*

Mike Ananny and Kate Crawford, "Seeing Without Knowing: Limitations of the Transparency Ideal and Its Applications to Algorithmic Accountability," *New Media & Society* (2016).

Week 13: April 15: Student Presentations

 Week 14: April 22: Student Presentations

 Week 15: April 29: Optional Class