Course Syllabus

Urban Design Seminar I, Summer 2017:
Urban Theory and Design, 1945–2017
Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation
M.S. in Architecture and Urban Design
Professor: Noah Chasin [nbc3@columbia.edu]
Asst. Professor: Anthony Acciavatti [ara2150@columbia.edu]
TA: Amy Zhang [az2262@columbia.edu]
TA: Zarith Pineda [zarith.pineda@columbia.edu]
Avery 114, Tuesdays, 10am–12pm
Discussion Sections: T/W/R 12pm–1pm or 1pm–2pm
Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Urban Theory and Design is an introduction to the historiographical, theoretical, critical, and formal vocabularies of postwar urbanism throughout Europe, the U.S., and beyond. The class is arranged thematically and, in a larger context, chronologically. We will discuss the deployment of new urban design strategies against the backdrop of rapidly proliferating discursive and technological advances. From modernization leading to urbanization, from suburban sprawl to New Urbanism, from techno-utopian Megastructures to participatory and informal urbanism, we will measure the merits of various paradigms (and their critiques) against one another to begin to understand the processes that provide the structures and infrastructures for the world’s built environments. The course will build toward the present with an aim to measuring the ever-increasing influence of ecological paradigms of globalization on both theory and design. As an extension of the history and theory component, the course will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of writing as a key tool for urban designers through research-oriented essays.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Provide students with a base-line knowledge of key projects and texts pertaining to urban design history and theory since 1945.

2. Help students develop visual literacy regarding urban design—in other words, improving the way students write and speak to encourage “perceptual growth” as it pertains to discussions surrounding urban design.

3. Encourage critical thinking about historical projects and texts, and to help students develop subjective analytical skills so that they can write and speak effectively about questions and issues with a direct impact on urban contexts.

Requirements:

1. Attendance at all lectures is mandatory.

2. Completion of all assigned readings. While the class is designed as a lecture course, the actual experience will be interactive, and it will be assumed that all students are familiar with each week’s subject through the assigned readings. All readings in bold on the syllabus are required for class discussions & lectures, and will be found on CourseWorks/Canvas under “Files & Resources.” We suggest that you print out a copy of each week’s texts to bring to class with annotations and questions/comments.

3. Completion of the written research assignment, which will be comprised of several stages throughout the semester. The details of this assignment, printed below, will be discussed in class.

Written Assignments:

Students will undertake an iterative series of papers and peer responses centering on a self-chosen analysis of an urban design project (built or unbuilt) between 1945 and 1980. By making it a more iterative process of writing and feedback, they will go from a thick description of the formal aspects of the project to then “historicizing” the social, political, economic, and aesthetic contexts in which the project was developed in a 5-page paper.

Assignments:
5) Thick Description of the Project:
A formal analysis that focuses on part-to-whole relationships within the drawing...

**Due: Wednesday, July 12 by 10pm**

6) 350-word Peer Reviews of Thick Descriptions:
Peer Reviewers will give students 350-word responses on what is working well and what they have questions about in the paper.

**Due: Saturday, July 15 by 10pm**

7) Returned comments on Thick Description and Peer Review from Noah, Anthony, and Amy

**Date: Monday, July 17**

8) First Draft: Establishing Context Through Historiography:
Write a three-page literature review of the project, citing 2 primary sources and 3 secondary sources.

**Due: Monday, July 24 by 10pm**

9) Feedback on Context Through Historiography from Noah, Anthony, and Amy

**Date: Friday, July 28**

+++ July 31-August 4, Final Reviews in Studio+++ 

10) Final 5-Page Paper:
Synthesize the thick description and the historiography into an argument about the project.

**Due: Friday, August 11 by 5pm**
REVISED SYLLABUS:

4 July  NO CLASS

11 July  Public Works, Development, and the Myths of Self-Organization
[Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]

PROJECTS:

- Cautley, Ganges Canal
- Stampe, Himalayan Dreams
- Gerhard Richter, Atlas
- Reveille and Lakshminarayana, Ganges Water Machine
- Acciavatti, Dynamic Atlas
- OMA, Lagos + Beijing
- Tijuana, Mexico
- Tahrir Square, Cairo
- Allen, Logistical Activities Zone, Barcelona & Souks of Beirut
- MVRDV, Mainstreet/Almere, Empty scape, Datascape/Data Town

READINGS:

8. Teddy Cruz in conversation with Caleb Waldorf, “Learning from Tijuana” Triple Canopy, 19 Nov 2009)

18 July  Postmodernism
PROJECTS:

- Venturi & Scott Brown, Learning from Las Vegas
- Eisenman, Cannaregio, IBA
- Koolhaas/OMA, Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture
- Rossi, Modena Cemetery, IBA housing

READINGS:


25 July  

**Critical Utopias [Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]**

PROJECTS:

- Constant, New Babylon
- Tange, Plan for Tokyo
- Friedman, Spatial Urbanism
- Archigram, Plug-In City; Instant City
- Cedric Price, Potteries Thinkbelt

READINGS:

5. Metabolism, *Architectural Design* 34 (special issue) (October 1964)

**31 July – 4 Aug**  
**FINAL STUDIO REVIEW**

**1 August**  
New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and the Rural-Urban Transect [Lecture by Prof. Acciavatti]

**PROJECTS:**

- Seaside, FL
- Celebration, FL
- Euralille
- Pujiang New Town

**READINGS:**


**8 August**  
Urbanism in the Anthropocene

**READINGS:**


ASSIGNMENT DEADLINE 11 AUGUST—Final paper due

TBD: Systems and Supports

PROJECTS:

- Turner, Lima, Peru
- PREVI, Lima
- Doshi, Aranya Housing
- Fathy, New Gourna
- Habraken, Maarssenbroek Plan
- Lynch, City images of Boston, L.A.

READINGS:


Columbia Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the work of others. It comes from the Latin word plagiaries, meaning ‘kidnapper’.

Submitting work that does not acknowledge the complexity of influences and sources that contributed to your original synthesis and argumentation

- Denies readers the opportunity to fully engage with your work and appreciate your mastery of the materials you consulted.
- Diminishes the impact your work can contribute to, and undermines the ongoing conversation that is represented in, a body of scholarly work.
- Steals the intellectual property of other scholars.

Forms of plagiarism

- Verbatim copying without acknowledgement – copying a whole paragraph or larger sections; in effect, claiming that the writing is your own.
- Copying select phrases without acknowledgement – using your own words to pad the selectively copied words of others.
- Paraphrasing text without acknowledgement – rewriting text in your own words, but using the idea or argument as your own.
- Using data gathered by another, claiming it as your own – even if you submit an analysis of the data that is yours alone.

Fully acknowledging your sources not only avoids plagiarism but also enables you to:

- distinguish your original ideas while demonstrating your understanding of the existing literature;
- support your ideas and show how your work connects to and continues the work that has gone before;
- lay claim to credibility and authority for your work and your place in the intellectual community;
- enable your readers to understand more about your interpretation of the sources;
- enable your readers to learn more by consulting your sources.