Military Urbanism in the Early Modern Era

The technology of gunpowder artillery caused a military revolution in Early Modern Europe (ca. 1450-1800). Innovations in warfare created a new type of fortification, bastioned, more geometrical and solid, dense and efficient infrastructure and building typologies, and shifted and vastly expanded Europe’s border networks.

France was arguably the most important European military and political force of the latter part of this period. Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707), engineer to King Louis XIV, crystallized and catalyzed military engineering and planning trends in all European cities that had been developing since the mid-fifteenth century. Vauban was a master of the art of attacking and defending bastioned fortifications. Yet he approached his projects as multi-faceted, posited on demographic, political and economic surveys. From positioning strongholds along the border to planning civilian buildings to redesigning barracks including the placement of individual beds, he aspired to total spatial mastery. The scale of his oeuvre is vast: nine new towns and one hundred sixty cities in total. UNESCO World Heritage status was granted to a network of twelve exemplary sites in 20008. Ten years later, classification challenges us to understand a border that is both open and closed built by a figure who is a national hero yet little known outside France today.

The seventeenth century military practices of Vauban were widely influential until the late nineteenth century. His practices were taught at West Point, his treatise translated into Russian and Turkish. Rationalized border fortification gave rise to the open city inside the territory, beginning with the pioneering de-fortification of Paris in 1670. Even when urban walls began to be dismantled and were often absent in plans for new Enlightenment cities such as Washington DC, cities continued to be places of surveillance, while, on a larger scale, fortifications were still a part of their design, implicitly or explicitly. Napoleon favored field battles supported by his conquests in a Europe-wide network of fortresses, arsenals and military cities. In the second half of the
nineteenth century, Viollet-le-Duc underscored the ever-growing scale and costs of warfare between nation states in the Industrial era, looking ahead to World War I. Throughout we will make trans-historical comparisons and find how the past impacted the present. We will make spatial and philosophical comparisons with forms of current urban design, warfare and surveillance such as the use of drones, and cyber warfare.

The structure of each seminar session will be part lecture and part reading discussion. It is hoped that the sessions will be lively and that students will bring their own viewpoints as historians and contemporary designers to the table. Readings have been selected both for their informational content, their historical importance and their methodological diversity. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having done the readings. Unless indicated, all assigned readings are available on the class Courseworks/Canvas site.

Grading

- Class participation and attendance. 10%
- Lead 1 response session in a group. Write a reading response (2-3 pages each) on the readings from the week you present. Your group will read excerpts from your responses in class and prepare questions for the class to answer (sign up will be posted on Canvas, Sept. 11). You may work alone or in a group. Your texts are your visual material. This is a writing exercise. Due the week you present. 20%
- Paper or project topic, outline and preliminary bibliography. Due November 6. 15%
- In-class presentation: November 12, 19, 26. 15%
- Paper: Due Dec. 14 (extensions for Dec. 16 upon request), 12-15 pages or the visual equivalent. Visual submissions must include bibliography and written explanation of methods: 40%

Class Schedule and Readings

1. Sept. 3: Military space in history
2. **Sept. 10: Technology of siege warfare**

3. **Sept. 17: Military city, civilian city.**

   **Reading presentation: Katinka, Maini, Zhibin**

4. **Sept. 24: Military urbanism in Early Modern Europe**

   **Reading presentation Hyung, Yanni, Becky, Andrew, Sanggyu, Tim**

5. **Oct. 1: Intra-mural Protection: policing and the panopticon**

   **Reading presentation: Gabriel, Jack, Morgan, Luiza**

6. **Oct. 8: Military Strategy**

**Reading presentation: Dalton, Julia, Kate**

  o Carl Von Clausewitz, Excerpts, *On War*, 1832,

7. **Oct. 15: Open City/Closed City. Walls, nationalism and UNESCO World Heritage.**

**Reading presentation: Stone, Michael, Tianyu**


OR
• David Bruce, Oliver Creighton, "Contested Identities: the Dissonant Heritage of European Town Walls and Walled Towns," *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12:3, 234-254, 2006. -- choose this reading or the above by Sahlins

8. **Oct. 22:** Eighteenth Century and American Fortifications

**Reading presentation: Daniel, Jacob, Yoonwon**

• Coast Defense Study Group website http://cdsg.org
• National Park Service, Governors Island Website http://www.gov/gois/learn/historyculture/index.htm

9. **Oct 29:** Field trip to lower Manhattan and Governor's Island. **Subway: line 1 South Ferry.** First meeting point: 12:30 at Castle Clinton (AKA “The Battery). Second meeting point 1:45 ferry terminal for Governor’s Island, one building north of the Staten Island terminal. Ferry at 2pm to Governor’s Island. Return ferry returns to Manhattan at 3:45.

**November 5 (No class, Election Day): paper and project topic, outline and preliminary bibliography due November 6**

10. **Nov. 12:** Student presentations

11. **Nov. 19:** Student presentations.

12. **Nov. 26:** Student presentations.
Dec. 13: Papers Due.

Additional Bibliography

- André Charbonneau, Yvon Desloges, Marc LaFrance, *Québec, the Fortified City: from the 17th to the 19th century*, Ottawa, Parks Canada, 1982
Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, English Series Editor: Arnold I. Davidson, translated by Graham Burchell.

- Quentin Hughes, Military architecture: the art of defence from earliest times to the Atlantic Wall, Liphook, Hants, Beaufort, 1991.
- Emilie d’Orgeix, Au pied du mur. Bâtir le vide autour des villes (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle), Brussels, Mardaga, 2019
• ____, dir., La ville et la guerre, Editions de l’imprimeur, 1996.
  o Eyal Weizman, Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation, Verso, 2007
Primary Sources

- Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, *De l’attaque et de la defense des places: par Mr. de Vauban*, La Haye, P. de Hondt, 1737, Google Books, Avery Classics, AA490 V46