Designing the city requires knowing not only what it is, but also what it claims not to be. This is because its negations—country, nature, wildness, to name the most prominent—are not simple exclusions. They are ‘inclusions beyond the margins’ defined in the process of clarifying the city as an object of design. These ‘marginalized inclusions’ or ‘others’ eventually find a voice in the city. It is the way the city has evolved, namely, by growing deep roots beyond its margins in a process of ‘othering’ that has ensured its own survival and facilitated its remarkable spread and complex identity. Understanding this process as the way the city makes designing it a particularly challenging task, requiring as much intervention beyond its margins as within. It also requires foreseeing the city’s next ‘other’.

This seminar class will look at six ‘others’ that have eventually found a voice in the city primarily through design discourse: flows, country, space, nature, difference, and wetness. Each has had a profound impact on the experience, infrastructure, argument, imaging, and design of the city. We will cover each of these ‘others’ in two sessions. The first will look at how the city creates an ‘other’; the second will see how it absorbs, morphs, and even becomes the other.

Week 1: Introduction: The city and the ‘others’ it grows from

I. Flows and the city’s bid to be settled
Week 2: the alluvial roots of the city and the river
Week 3: settling flows: nomadic city, city of flows, . . .

II. Country and the city’s bid to be whole
Week 4: the urban roots of the city and nature
Week 5: cultivating country: the garden city, suburbs, edge city, . . .

III. Space and the city’s bid to be articulate
Week 6: the geometric roots of the city and the organic
Week 7: urbanizing space: informal city, planetary urbanism, . . .

IV. Nature and the city’s bid to be ecological
Week 8: the ecological roots of the city and the system
Week 9: including nature: eco city, new urbanism, landscape urbanism, . . .

V. Difference and the city’s bid to be universal
Week 10: the civilizational roots of the city and empire
Week 11: civilizing difference: postcolonial city, city of difference, . . .

VI. Wetness and the city’s bid to be dry
Week 12: the landcentric roots of the city and water
Week 13: accommodating wetness: soak, hold, seep, grow, transpire

Week 14 Conclusion: Othering and Design

Assignments

1. Project (60% grade)
   Students will investigate a city in the context of the river it is on and the watershed it is in. (A list of cities/rivers will be provided) They will construct a ‘plot’ that draws out the design language of this context. A plot uses images (maps, notations, photo-works), words, and numbers strategically. Unlike a chart where the meaning of the whole precedes or dictates the layout of the parts, a plot is emergent, open to ‘thickening’, ‘re-contextualizing’, and a multiplicity of readings. Students will share their work-in-progress with the class on a regular basis. 45 mins to an hour will be set aside every two weeks for project discussions.

2. Paper (25% grade)
   Students are required to write a 5-7-page critical paper on a topic from the class readings (to be discussed).

3. Class Participation (15% grade)
   Students are required to do the readings and participate in class discussions.
READINGS

Week 1: Introduction: The city and the ‘others’ it grows from

I. Flows and the city’s bid to be settled

Week 2: the alluvial roots of the city and the river

Lecture: critical inquiry and the phenomenon

Gordon Childe, “The Urban Revolution,” in The Town Planning Review, 21:1, April 1950, 3-17

Suggested reading

Week 3: settling flows: nomadic city, city of flows, . . .


Suggested reading
Michael Weinstock, System City: Infrastructure and the Space of Flows (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013)

II. Country and the city’s bid to be whole

Week 4: the urban roots of the city and nature

Lecture: geographic inquiry and the view from above

Raymond Williams, “Cities and Countries,” and Appendix in Country and City (Oxford University Press, 1975), 289-307
Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” The American Journal of Sociology 44:1 (July 1938), 1-24

Suggested reading

Week 5: cultivating country: the garden city, suburbs, edge city, . . .

Suggested reading
Robert A. M. Stern, David Fishman, and Jacob Tilove, Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City (Monacelli Press, 2013)

III. Space and the city’s bid to be articulate

Week 6: the geometric roots of the city and the organism

Lecture: dialectical inquiry and the other

Sergio Lopez-Pineiro, “The Whiteout Effect,” in A Glossary of Urban Voids (manuscript for publication)

Suggested reading

Week 7: urbanizing space: informal city, planetary urbanism, . . .


Suggested reading
Henri Lefebvre, The Urban Revolution (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

IV. Nature and the city’s bid to be ecological

Week 8: the ecological roots of the city and the system

Lecture: environmental inquiry and wilderness/ wildness

Kostas Vlassopoulos, Unthinking the Greek Polis: Ancient Greek History Beyond Eurocentrism (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 55-63, 156-189
Suggested reading
Melvin M. Webber, “The Post-City Age,” *Deadalus*, 1968

Week 9: including nature: eco-city, new urbanism, landscape urbanism. . .


Suggested reading

V. Difference and the city’s bid to be universal

Week 10: the civilizational roots of the city and empire

Lecture: urban inquiry and the maiden/void // temporal inquiry and notation


Suggested reading
Ania Loomba, *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2005)

Week 11: civilizing difference: postcolonial city, city of difference. . .


Suggested readings
VI. Wetness and the city’s bid to be dry

**Week 12: the landcentric roots of the city and water**

Lecture: hydrological inquiry and wetness


Suggested


**Week 13: accommodating wetness: soak, hold, seep, grow, transpire**

Ivan Illich, *H₂O and the Waters of Forgetfulness: Reflections on the Historicity of Stuff* (Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1985)


**Week 14: Conclusion: Othering and Design**