

**ARCH UN3312\_02****SPECIAL TOPICS: CURATING ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Monday and Wednesday 4:10 – 6:00pm / Location: Barnard Hall 406

Professor: Irina Verona / verona@praxisjournal.net; iverona@barnard.edu



This class starts from the premise that architectural theory and practice are closely aligned with the practice of curating architecture. Through the vehicle(s) of exhibitions and publications, images are made, messages framed or reframed, and ideas consolidated and disseminated. Curating involves the active production of ideas, discourse and disciplinary boundaries and has been an integral part of architectural theory and practice since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We will use the sites and methods of curation as the basis of an exploration of ideas about habitation and sustainability. The current rapid urbanization and corresponding environmental transformation – if not crisis – point to the need to rethink the physical and philosophical foundations of our society. As tensions between development and available resources escalate, we must re-examine the ways we construct space, place and identity today as well as the role and responsibility of design.

Through the critical lens of exhibitions and publications, we will examine the dynamic between architecture and the environment and interrogate their constructed and contested boundaries. We will study historical and contemporary examples that seek to redraw the line between nature and technology, organic and digital, human and nonhuman. We will analyze case studies not only for their content but also for their intellectual, social, political assumptions and implications. Working individually and in groups, students will become familiar with projects, manifestoes, provocations, codes and interventions across multiple scales (the body, the city, the world) and across several key historical moments.

The first goal of the class is to develop ways of thinking critically about what we may call “hazardous” concepts. In the words of historian Leo Marx, technology is an example of a “hazardous” concept – a term that connotes not physical danger but rather an ideological one. Endowed with agency and historical determinism, the term technology is often used in ways that appear to subsume human decisions and intentions. Extending Marx’s definition, we can say that nature, green buildings, and sustainability are also “hazardous” concepts – at once disarmingly obvious yet veiled, changing and charged in their implications. We will explore the conceptual ramifications of these terms and hope to understand, challenge and reconfigure assumptions that shape the relationship of architecture and environment.

The second goal of the class is to develop critical ways of synthesizing, representing, and communicating multi-dimensional information. Through active research projects, we will explore graphic techniques using the Adobe Suite programs, with a focus on InDesign. The semester will culminate in the production of a printed publication organized around a thematic issue.

## CLASS FORMAT:

This class will combine a research-based seminar and a hands-on workshop. As in a seminar, students are expected to present their research to other students, complete readings, and contribute to group discussion. As in a studio, students are expected to produce works of original research and analysis, and receive feedback through desk crits, pin-ups and reviews.

In the seminar, we will study primary and secondary texts, as well as projects. In the workshop, we will undertake active research projects and develop critical ways of synthesizing, representing, and communicating multi-dimensional information. We will focus and expand on graphic techniques using the Adobe Suite programs, among others. We will also host several invited guest speakers.

## CLASS SUMMARY:

### Part 1: Concepts

Week 01: Introduction  
Week 02: On Curation  
Week 03: Hazardous Concepts

### Part 1: Sites and Scales

Week 04: Dwellings  
Week 05: Bodies and Objects  
Week 06: Invisible Environments  
Week 07: Land, Air, Water

### Part 2: Flows and Exchanges

Week 08: Ecologies  
Week 09: Networks  
Week 10: Forgotten Spaces

### Part 3: The Future

Week 11: Metrics, Codes, Regulations  
Week 12: Change  
Week 13: Work session  
Week 14: Work session  
Week 15: Work session

The assignments will be as follows:

- Project 1: Case Studies
  - Group or individual research project into exhibition case studies, 1968-present
- Project 2: Anthology
  - Book project (graphic layout and position paper)

## GRADING:

Attendance / Class Participation	15 %
Project 1	35 %
Project 2	50 % (Paper = 50%; Layout / Graphics: 40%; Editorial work: 5%; Process: 5%)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Readings and Assignments:** You are required to complete the assigned readings and projects, in advance of each class session. All readings and information will be posted on Canvas. Each assignment will outline requirements for submission and deadlines. With the exception of prior approval due to extenuating circumstances, no late assignments will be accepted without a late penalty (1 letter grade drop per each 24 hrs).

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled classes. Please be on time, as late arrivals will be disruptive. The only excused absences are those for reasons of documented health or crisis issues and must be approved in advance. Unexcused absences, late arrivals, or early departures from class will reduce your course grade. Students with excessive unexcused absences will see a reduction in their final grade (one third letter grade for each unexcused absence, starting with the third one). Please let me know ahead of time if you know you will have to miss class.

**Class Participation:** Thoughtful class participation is essential. If you are not comfortable with speaking in class, please come to see me and discuss other ways to contribute.

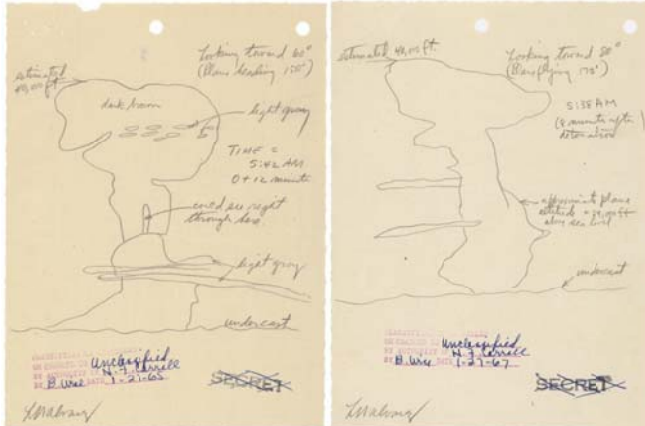
**COURSE PREREQUISITES:** Students should have some experience with Adobe Photoshop and InDesign and should have taken at least one architectural studio prior to taking this course.

**REQUIRED BOOKS AND BUDGET:** There are no required textbooks for this course.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday, 3:00pm-4:00pm (229, The LeFrak Center, Barnard Hall), by appointment

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Visually communicate architectural concepts and research using discipline-specific techniques
2. Work independently and in collaborative groups on design research projects
3. Verbally and visually communicate architectural concepts in multiple media formats
4. Understand historical and theoretical context for the curation of architectural content
5. Utilize multimedia techniques, at an advanced level, to present research and a final project on a concise thesis



*Hardscape* by Coop Himmelb(l)au, 1970 (top left); *Cloudscapes* by Transolar and Tetsuo Kondo, 2010 Venice Biennale (top right); *Atlas*, 2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale (bottom left); *E Cloud Drawing*, 1945 at Broken Nature, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Milan Design Triennale, 2019 (bottom right); *Where the City Can't See*, by Liam Young (page 1).

## **POLICIES AND STATEMENTS**

### **HONOR CODE**

The Barnard Honor Code applies to all students in this class regardless of academic affiliation. Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states:

*We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.*

The Columbia College Honor Code and the Columbia College Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be viewed here:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/honorcode>

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/faculty/resourcesforinstructors/academicintegrity/statement>

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS STATEMENT**

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you must visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting eligible accommodations in their courses will need to first meet with an ODS staff member for an intake meeting. Once registered, students are required to visit ODS each semester to set up new accommodations and learn how to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register with ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which you can bring me your faculty notification letter and we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. Barnard ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 008. Columbia ODS is located in Wien Hall, Suite 108A.

### **AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO COURSE TEXTS STATEMENT**

All students deserve to be able to access course texts. The high costs of textbooks and other course materials prohibit access and perpetuate inequity, and Barnard librarians are partnering with students, faculty and staff to increase access. By the first day of advance registration for each term, you should be able to view on Canvas information provided by your faculty about required texts (including ISBN or author, title, publisher, and copyright date) and their prices. Once you have selected your classes, here are some cost-free methods for accessing course texts, recommended by the Barnard Library: find out if your faculty has placed the texts on reserve at Barnard Library or another Columbia library, and look for course texts using CLIO (library catalog), Borrow Direct (request books from partner libraries), Interlibrary Loan (request book chapters from any library) and NYPL. Students with financial need or insecurity can check items out from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library and Butler Library and can consult with the Dean of Studies and Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for getting access to course texts. Talk with your librarian and visit the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability guide ([library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability](http://library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability)) for more details.

### **WELLNESS STATEMENT**

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. For more information about available resources:

- Barnard Students: <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman>
- Columbia Students: <http://www.college.columbia.edu/resources> Click on Health-Wellness
- Columbia GS Students: <https://gs.columbia.edu/health-and-wellness>
- Columbia SEAS Students: <http://gradengineering.columbia.edu/campus-resources>

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE:

(\* ) required readings; (-) case studies

### Week 01: INTRODUCTION

Wed Sep 5 Discussion: On Curating, Architecture and Environment  
Readings: \* Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"  
\* Michel Foucault, "What is An Author?"  
Beatriz Colomina, "On Architecture, Production and Reproduction"

### Week 02: ON CURATING

Mon Sep 10 Discussion: Production / Reproduction; Photography; Discursive spaces; Introduce Project 1  
Readings: \* Barry Bergdoll, "In the Wake of Rising Currents: The Activist Exhibition"  
\* Sylvia Lavin, "Showing Work"  
\* Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Curating Architecture and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*"  
\* Henry Urbach, "Exhibition as Atmosphere"  
Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message"  
Brian O'Doherty, "Inside the White Cube"  
Schafer, Ashley and Amanda Reeser, "Praxis questionnaire for Arch. Curators"  
Susan Sontag, "On Photography"  
Case Studies: - *The International Style Exhibition*, MoMA, 1932  
- *Rising Current*, MoMA, 2010  
- *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes*, MoMA, 2013

Wed Sep 12 Visit: *Trip to Avery Classics, Columbia University*

### Week 03: HAZARDOUS CONCEPTS

Mon Sep 17 Discussion: Nature; Wilderness; Technology; Sustainability; Green; Anthropocene; Innovation  
Readings: \* Ulrick Beck, *World Risk Society* (excerpt)  
\* William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature"  
\* Leo Marx, "Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept"  
\* Robin Kelsey, "An Inversion" in e-flux "Accumulation"  
Samuel Hays, "From Conservation to Environment: Environmental Politics in the United States since World War II"  
Mark Jarzombek, "Sustainability: Fuzzy Systems and Wicked Problems"  
Ariane Lourie Harrison, "Charting Posthuman Territory"  
Timothy Morton, "Natural History Lessons"  
Wed Sep 19 Work session Project 1

## PART 1: SITES & SCALES

### Week 04: DWELLINGS

Mon Sep 24 Discussion: Dwelling; Shelter; Technology  
Readings: \* Sigfried Gideon, *Mechanization Encounters the Home* (excerpt)  
\* Reyner Banham, *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (excerpt)  
\* Anthony Vidler, "Homes for Cyborgs"  
Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking"  
Reyner Banham, "A Home Is Not a House"

	Case studies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Architecture without Architects</i>, MoMA, 1964</li> <li>- <i>Structures Gonflables</i>, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1968</li> <li>- <i>Italy: The New Domestic Landscape</i>, MoMA, 1972</li> </ul>
Wed Sep 26	Work session	Project 1
<b>Week 05: BODIES AND OBJECTS</b>		
Mon Oct 1	Discussion:	Human / Non Human; Categories / Classifications; Hybrids
	Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, "The Mirror of Design" and "The Unstable Body" in <i>Are We Human?</i></li> <li>* Buckminster Fuller, "Humans in the Universe" from <i>Critical Path</i></li> <li>* Catherine Ingraham, "Post-Animal Life"</li> <li>* Michel Foucault, <i>Order of Things</i> (excerpt)</li> <li>Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"</li> <li>Catherine Ingraham, "Introduction," <i>Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition</i></li> <li>Norbert Wiener, "Information, Language, Society" in <i>Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine</i></li> <li>Jennifer Wolch, "Anima Urbis"</li> </ul>
	Case studies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Aspen Design Conference</i>, 1970 (Also Martin Beck later exhibit)</li> <li>- <i>MAN TransFORMS</i>, Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt, 1976</li> <li>- <i>Istanbul Design Biennial</i>, 2016</li> </ul>
Tues Oct 2	Lecture: 6-7:30pm	<i>Nicholas Renaud, Concordia University</i> (organized as part of Prof. Ralph Ghoche's <i>Cities, Landscape and Ecology</i> class)
Wed Oct 3	Work session	Project 1
<b>Week 06: INVISIBLE ENVIRONMENTS</b>		
Mon Oct 8	Discussion:	Atmosphere(s); Contaminants; Pollutants
	Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Daniel Barber et al, "Accumulations" in e-flux: <i>Accumulations</i></li> <li>* David Gissen, <i>Subnatures</i> (excerpt)</li> <li>* Superstudio, "Microevent / Microenvironment"</li> <li>* Marc Wasiuta, "EAT in Osaka"</li> <li>Reinhold Martin, "Environment c. 1973"</li> <li>Marc Wasiuta, "Ecstatic Purification" in e-flux: <i>Superhumanity</i></li> </ul>
	Case Studies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ambiente / Environment</i>, Gratz / Trigon, 1967</li> <li>- <i>Blur Building</i>, Diller Scofidio Renfo, 2002</li> <li>- <i>Cloudscapes</i>, Venice Biennale, 2010</li> <li>- <i>Air Drifts</i>, Oslo Triennial, 2016</li> </ul>
Wed Oct 10	Guest:	<i>Jacob Moore, Curator and Assistant Director, Buell Center at Columbia</i>
<b>Week 07: LAND, AIR, WATER</b>		
Mon Oct 15	Discussion:	Territory; land / water; city / nature; edges and boundaries
	Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Buckminster Fuller, <i>Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth</i>, 7-63</li> <li>* Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist, "On the Land, on the Sea, in the Air – The Repertoire of Metabolism" in <i>Project Japan. Metabolism Talks</i></li> </ul>



- \* Felicity Scott, "Cruel Habitats" in *Outlaw Territories*
  - \* "5KL: Land / Land, Climate, and Culture," conversation between Rebecca Solnit and Cassim Shepard (video)
  - Erik Swyngedouw, "Circulations and Metabolisms"
  - Kisho Kurokawa, "The Philosophy of Metabolism"
- Case studies:
- *Montreal Exposition*, 1967
  - *EAT at Pepsi Pavilion*, Osaka International Exhibition, 1970
  - *American Lawn: Surface of Everyday Life*, CCA, 1998
  - Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Project Japan (book)*
  - Liam Young, "Unknown Fields" (ongoing)
- Wed Oct 17    Work session    Project 1

## **PART 2: FLOWS AND EXCHANGES**

### **Week 08: ECOLOGIES**

- Mon Oct 22    Discussion:
- Readings:
- \* Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*
  - \* John McHale, "The Ecological Context" and "Ecological Redesign" in *The Ecological Context*
  - \* Sanford Kwinter, "Notes on the Third Ecology"
  - \* Moshen Mostafavi, "Why Ecological Urbanism? Why Now?" in *Ecological Urbanism Reader*
  - Barry Commoner, "The Ecosphere" in *The Closing Circle*
  - Charles Waldheim, "Landscape as Urbanism" in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*
  - Greg Asner, "Ecology from the air" (TED talk)
  - Damian White and Chris Wilbert, "Introduction," *Technonatures*
- Case studies
- Whole Earth Catalog
  - Ecological Urbanism Reader
- Wed Oct 24    Work session    Project 1 due; introduce Project 2
- Thur Oct 25    Lecture    **Passive House, by IdS./R architecture**  
6-7:30pm    (organized as part of Prof. Ralph Ghocche's *Cities, Landscape and Ecology* class)

### **Week 09: NETWORKS**

- Mon Oct 29    Discussion:    Physical / digital infrastructure
- Readings:
- \* Christopher Alexander, "The City Is Not a Tree Part 2"
  - \* Benjamin Bratton, *The Stack* (excerpt)
  - \* Matthew Gandy, "Water, Space and Power" in *Concrete and Clay*
  - Mathew Gandy, "New York" in *Recycling and the Politics of Urban Waste*
  - Manuel De Landa, "The Nonlinear Development of Cities"
  - Steve Hinchliffe & Sarah Whatmore, "Living Cities: Toward a Politics of Conviviality"
- Case studies:
- *Living City*, Archigram, ICA, 1963
  - *After Belonging*, Oslo Triennial, 2016
- Wed Oct 31    Guest:    **Ignacio Galan, Curator, After Belonging, Oslo Triennial, 2016**

### **Week 10: FORGOTTEN SPACES**

- Mon Nov 5    *No class*

Wed Nov 7 Film: *Forgotten Spaces* by Alan Sekula

**Week 11: METRICS, CODES, REGULATIONS**

Mon Nov 12 Discussion: Codes and Regulations; Design Standards  
Readings: \* Michelle Addington, "Energy Issues" (panel discussion, video)  
\* Dry Conversations about Math, in *Praxis*, forthcoming  
\* Susannah Hagan, "'Performatism': Environmental Metrics and Urban Design"  
\* Kate Gordon, "On Energy Policy and the Economic Risk of Climate Change" (video)  
\* Jordan Kauffman, "To LEED or Not to Lead"  
Paris Agreement, 2015  
Case Studies: - Greater Number, Milan Triennale, 1968  
- Venice Biennale, Ricky Burdett director, 2010

Wed Nov 14 Work session Project 2

**Week 12: CHANGE**

Mon Nov 19 Discussion: The future; change; development; growth; resilience; agency  
Readings: \* Marshall Berman, "The Tragedy of Development"  
\* Orit Halpern, "Hopeful Resilience"  
\* Elizabeth Grosz, "Future, Cities, Architecture"  
\* Erik Assadourian, "Degrowing Our Way to Genuine Progress" (web)  
Bruno Latour and Alben Yaneva, "Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move"  
Bruno Latour, "Love Your Monsters"  
Donella Meadows, *The Limits to Growth*, excerpt  
Case Studies: - "This is Tomorrow", Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1956  
- *Reporting from the Front*, Venice Biennale, 2016  
- *Dimension of Citizenship*, Venice Biennale, 2018

Wed Nov 21 Work session Project 2

**Week 13: WORK SESSION**

Mon Nov 26 Work session Project 2  
Wed Nov 28 Work session Project 2

**Week 14: WORK SESSION**

Mon Dec 3 Work session Project 2  
Wed Dec 5 Work session Project 2

**Week 15: WORK SESSION**

Mon Dec 10 Work session Project 2  
Mon Dec 17 Due: Project 2 upload; hardcopies due

Note: Dates and readings may be adjusted. Stay tuned for announcements in class.



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#### **OTHER RESOURCES:**

The Architectural League of New York. The 5000lb Life Project <https://archleague.org/project/the-five-thousand-pound-life/>