COURSE DESCRIPTION

City, Landscape, Ecology is a thematically driven course that examines issues and polemics related to urbanization, land settlement and ecology over the past two centuries. The course is made up of discussion sessions and lectures. The purpose is to better understand the role urban, territorial and ecological organization plays in the construction of social practices, human subjectivities, and technologies of power.

City, Landscape, Ecology is divided into three parts: Part 1 (City), begins with an examination of the utopian (and dystopian) imagination and raises some of the fundamental social, political and philosophical problems and stakes of the course. The sessions “Metropolis and Infrastructure” and “Speed” focus on the process of modernization and the public campaigns to reshape cities and towns into the (more or less) efficient, circulatory systems we know today. “Surveillance and Exile” will look at the city as an instrument of power and control and pose question about access, representation, privacy and civic governance.

Part II (Landscape), explores various episodes in the history of landscape: Picturesque garden theory, notions of “wilderness” as epitomized in national and state parks in the United States, and the prevalence of landscape in the work of artists in the 1960s and 70s. Part II concludes with a session on “Modern and Contemporary Landscapes” which focuses on contemporary
approaches to architecture and urbanism that take up many of the questions and challenges explored by landscape artists and designers.

We will also turn to ecology and related issues of climate, urbanization and sustainability in Part III. Here we will examine the rise of ecological thinking in the 1960s; approaches to the environment that were largely based on the systems-thinking of the era. We will look at the work and theories of John McHale, Buckminster Fuller and Stewart Brand and place these approaches within a larger context of environmental awareness advanced by such pioneers as Rachel Carson, Gregory Bateson and Murray Bookchin.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance:** Attendance to all course meetings is mandatory. An attendance sheet will be distributed at each meeting. More than two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of one letter grade. More than four unexcused absences will lead to an automatic failure in the course. If you have a good reason for missing class, please inform the professor by email beforehand.

2. **Readings:** There will be approximately 60-80 pages of reading a week. The reading will be posted online. All readings must be completed before the relevant lecture.

3. **Writing Center:** I strongly recommend that students with even minor difficulties with writing set up an appointment with the Barnard Writing Center before handing in assignments. http://writing.barnard.edu

4. **Course Assessment and Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (Seminars)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Responses:</td>
<td>10 x 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation:</td>
<td>1 x 50</td>
<td>50%</td>
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[Discussion Participation]
Each student is expected to attend all Tuesday lectures and Thursday seminars, to do all seminar readings, to wisely and consistently contribute to the weekly seminar discussions. Discussions will cover explicit and implicit questions concerning urbanism, landscape and ecology in modern culture, and should be used as an open forum for questioning. The discussions are also intended to foster student responsibility for self-directed learning.

[Weekly Reading Responses]
Weekly Reading Responses are due Monday nights at 8pm. I will set up online discussion boards for each week. You will be able to see your classmates’ responses only once you have added your own response to the forum. Once you have added your response, I recommend that you read some of the other responses on the forum. Note: you do not need to submit a response the week that you present. For each of the 12 weeks of the course, you are asked to:

- write a 250-350 word response (no less, no more) to issues and polemics encountered in the readings for that week. In responding to the readings, you may need to briefly summarize the arguments that you feel are central to the week’s theme.

- End your response with one question. The question should not seek a factual answer (how much..., when did.... etc.) but should address what you see as the main points of debate in the readings.
The purpose of weekly responses is three-fold:

- to demonstrate that you’ve read the assigned readings for the week.
- To show that, beyond simply reading the texts, you’ve thought about the central arguments and themes, that you’ve been able to draw connections between that week's readings (and possibly, the readings from previous weeks), and finally, that you’ve been able to scale-up your thinking and consider some of the larger social / political / personal … stakes involved.
- To prepare you for the Thursday seminar discussions. This is especially the case for the questions that I’m asking you to include at the end of your reading response. In seminar, I may ask you to read your questions to the class.

Your responses don’t need to discuss all of the week’s readings, although they should address most of them (at least two or three of the readings). The responses will be graded on a total of 2 points. In order to get a full two points, your response needs to demonstrate that you’ve read the readings and been able to focus on the main issues and arguments they present. For summaries that are poorly written, incomplete or do not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the material, students will get an R for the first couple of weeks, meaning that they’ll need to resubmit the response within a week’s time. Late responses cannot be accepted.

[Class Presentations]
Each of you will be required to present once during seminar over the term. Depending on class size, there may be two presenters per seminar. Presenters for a given week will have to meet together and divide up the reading material in an equal and coherent way. Furthermore, as presenters you must each choose at least one building, urban scheme, or visual project to illustrate the main themes and questions addressed in the readings. You and your co-presenters will prepare a common powerpoint presentation that will integrate all material that might help foster a better class discussion and better dramatize the theories and ideas presented. You should provide comprehensive visual material (sketches, plans, maps, elevations etc…) for the building, urban scheme or visual project that you choose to present. Presentations should last a total of 25 minutes (for all presenters).

Presentations will be graded qualitatively according to this set of criteria:

- Clarity of thought: how well you can describe some of the more difficult and nuanced ideas and arguments in the readings. It is absolutely essential to gain a good grasp of the main themes elaborated in the readings. You’ll probably need to read some essays twice and do additional research in order to get a proper handle on the material. Please take a look at the list of additional readings at the end of the syllabus. You may want to read some of them before your presentation.

- Visual presentation: Your presentation needs to be organized in a coherent way. You’ll be marked on how well you can connect the ideas elaborated in the readings with the projects you choose to present.

- Originality and Unity of Thought: Your presentation should not follow the pace and narrative of the readings too strictly. In other words, you should identify the main themes and arguments (thesis) of each reading and state them at the onset of your presentation rather than tediously going through every element of the author’s argument. A great presentation will have clearly stated the main themes, arguments and will have identified the stakes of such arguments (Why is this important? What is the context? How does this argument/idea differ from other possible interpretations?).
Each student will prepare a 12 page term paper based on the theme or topic of the student’s choice. You must all set up an individual appointment with me to discuss your paper topic ideas before October 1. Furthermore, on Thursday November 6, class time will be reserved for students to briefly present their topic and read the introductory paragraphs to their papers. Week 14 will be devoted to formal reviews of your term papers. Guests will be invited to hear and comment on your papers. Final papers will be due the following week to provide students with the opportunity of incorporating suggested changes and adding final touches.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this reading and writing intensive course, the student will be able to:

1. Develop a critical understanding and awareness of some of the decisive ideas, theories and debates relating to urbanism, landscape and ecology over the past century.
2. Understand the role that urban, landscape and ecological organization play in the construction of social practices, human subjectivities and political awareness.
3. Understand the way that discourses traditionally seen as external to the discipline of architecture inform and elucidate its practice and production.
4. To understand the ideological shifts in history that have shaped our notions of cities, nature, landscape, and ecology.
5. Demonstrate the ability to read texts critically and to relate issues encountered in these texts to contemporary architectural discourse and practice.
6. Develop research, writing, and critical thinking skills through the research and writing of a series of reading summaries and a term paper that use textual and visual evidence to state a meaningful thesis.
CLASS SCHEDULE

•  = mandatory reading;  -  = recommended

PART I:  CITY

WEEK 1

TU & TH 9/02 & 9/04

THOMAS MORE, "Utopia" (1516), in THE UTOPIA READER, GREGORY CLAEYS AND LYMAN TOWER SARGENT, EDs. (NEW YORK: NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999), 77-93.

ALDOUS HUXLEY, "Brave New World" (1932), in GREGORY CLAEYS AND LYMAN TOWER SARGENT, EDs., THE UTOPIA READER (NEW YORK: NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999), 347-363.


DAVID HARVEY, "The Figure of the City," in SPACES OF HOPE (BERKELEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 2000).


WEEK 2

TU & TH 9/09 & 9/11


KARL MARX, "The Fetishism of the Commodity" in CAPITAL, VOL. 1, 1867

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, "The Painter of Modern Life," 1864

GEORG SIMMEL, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," 1903


WEEK 3

Tues. 9/16
Thurs. 9/18


WEEK 4

Tues. 9/23
Thurs. 9/25


PART II: LANDSCAPE

WEEK 5

Tues. 9/30
Thurs. 10/02


- Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery" (1936)


**WEEK 6**

Tues. 10/07  
Thurs. 10/09


**WEEK 7**

Tues. 10/14  
Thurs. 10/16

- Robert Morris, “Notes on Art as/and Land Reclamation”, in *October*, vol. 12 (Spring, 1980), pp. 87-102
- Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 30-44.

**WEEK 8**

Tues. 10/21  
Thurs. 10/23

PART III: ECOLOGY

THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

WEEK 9

Tues. 10/28
Thurs. 10/30

WEEK 10

Tues. 11/04
Thurs. 11/06
No Reading Responses due for this week

Tuesday: No Classes
Thursday: TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS (DRAFTS)

WEEK 11

Tues. 11/11
Thurs. 11/13
• Clarence J. Glacken, “Reflections of the History of Western Attitudes to Nature,” GeoJournal 26, no. 2 (1992), 103-111.
WEEK 12

Tues. 11/18
Thurs. 11/18

• N. Katherine Hayles, "Simulated Nature and Natural Simulations: Rethinking the Relation between the Beholder and the World," in Uncommon Ground- Rethinking the Human Place in Nature

WEEK 13

Tues. 11/25
Thurs. 11/27

No Reading Responses due for this week

Tuesday: FILM (t.b.a.)
Thursday: No Classes (Thanksgiving)

WEEK 14

Tues. 12/02
Thurs. 12/04

Tuesday and Thursday: TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS
Invited Guests: t.b.a.
CASE STUDIES

UTOPIA


METROPOLIS AND INFRASTRUCTURE


See the following books for project ideas:
• Kelly Shannon, Marcel Smets, *The landscape of contemporary infrastructure* (Rotterdam: NAi, 2010).

SPEED


PUBLIC / PRIVATE

[ N. Schöffer, *The Cybernetic City*; C. Ratti, SENSEable City Laboratory, Laura Kurgan and The Spatial Information Design Lab, *Million Dollar Blocks*, Vito Acconci, Following Piece; Diller and Scofidio; Occupy Wall Street

See the following books for project ideas:
• Anselm Franke, Eyal Weizman eds., *Territories: Islands, Camps And Other States Of Utopia* (Walther Konig, Koln, 2003).
• Martin Henatsch, Gail B. Kilpatrick, eds., Firewall: Jonas Dahlberg, Andreas Köpnick, Julie Mehretu, Aernout Mik, Julia Scher, Markus Vater, Magnus Wallin, Johannes Wohnseifer (Bielefeld : Kerber, 2004).
• Mark Lombardi, Global Networks (New York : Drawing Center, 2003).
• Giovanna Borasi, Mirko Zardini, Actions: What You Can Do With the City (CCA, 2008).

WILDERNESS

See the following books for project ideas:

TERRITORY AND POWER
[ Yangtze River dam;]

See the following books for project ideas:
• Neeraj Bhatia and Mary Casper, eds., The Petropolis of Tomorrow (Actar, 2013).
• Edward Burtynsky, Manufactured Landscapes: The Photographs of Edward Burtynsky (Yale University Press, 2003).
• Kate Orff, Petrochemical America (Aperture, 2012).

LAND ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE
[G. Kepes; R. Smithson; N. Holt; M. Heizer; W. De Maria; R. Serra; Christo and Jeanne Claude; R. Long; M. Lin; J. Turrell;]

See the following books for project ideas:
• Udo Weilacher, Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art (Birkhauser, 1996).
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPES
[Le Corbusier, Christopher Tunnard, Garret Eckbo, Daniel Urban Kiley, Tschumi, P. Eisenman / J. Derrida, R. Koolhaas, Robert Irwin, Field Operations and Diller and Scafido, the High Line; Downsview Park Competition; Fresh Kills Competition; Weiss/Manfredi]

See the following books for project ideas:
• Kate Orff, Petrochemical America (Aperture, 2012).
• Neeraj Bhatia and Mary Casper, eds., The Petropolis of Tomorrow (Actar, 2013).
• Edward Burtynsky, Manufactured Landscapes: The Photographs of Edward Burtynsky (Yale University Press, 2003).
• Caroline Klein, Regenerative Infrastructures: Freshkills Park NYC, Land Art Generator Initiative (Prestel, 2013).
• Friends of the High Line, Designing the High Line: Gansevoort Street to 30th Street (Friends of the High Line, 2011).

THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
[R.B. Fuller; John McHale; Reyner Banham; Stewart Brand; I. McHarg;

See the following books for project ideas:
• Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., Sorry, Out of Gas: Architecture's Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis
• Ian L. McHarg, Design with Nature (Doubleday / Natural History Press, 1971).

RADICAL AND DEEP ECOLOGIES
[1970s off-the-grid eco-houses, contemporary eco-experiments, especially those that suggest a new social/political framework... ]

• Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., Sorry, Out of Gas: Architecture's Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis
• Stewart Brand, Whole Earth Catalog
• Lloyd Kahn, Shelter I (1973) and Shelter II (1978).
• Lloyd Kahn, Domebook I (1970), Domebook II (1971).

CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGIES
[MVRDV, Pig City; B. Ingels; P. Rahm; Terreform One;

See the following books for project ideas:

ADDITIONAL READINGS

UTOPIA
• Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk, “Floating Utopias: Freedom and Unfreedom of the Seas,” in Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism
• Marie Theres Stauffer, "Utopian Reflections, Reflected Utopia- Urban Designs by Archizoom and Superstudio," AA Files 47 (Summer 2002).
• Anthony Vidler, "Cities of Tomorrow," Artforum International (Sep 2012).
• *Space architecture: the work of John Frassanito & Associates for NASA / John Zukowsky ; with a preface by Buzz Aldrin.*
• Giovanna Borasi, Mirko Zardini, eds., *Other space odysseys : Greg Lynn, Michael Maltzan, Alessandro Poli* (Montréal : Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2010).

**METROPOLIS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**SPEED**
• Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” 1936
• Molly Wright Steenson, “Interfacing with the Subterranean: Paris’s Pneumatic Post” *Cabinet* 41 (Spring 2011), 82-86.

PUBLIC / PRIVATE
• Teddy Cruz, “Border Update: Magical Realism the American Way,” *Log* (Fall 2005): 51–67

PART II: LANDSCAPE

WILDERNESS
• Clarence J. Glacken, “Reflections of the History of Western Attitudes to Nature,” *GeoJournal* 26, no. 2 (1992), 103-111.

**TERRITORY AND POWER**

• Mike Hodson and Simon Marvin, Urbanism in the Anthropocene: Ecological Urbanism or Premium Ecological Enclaves? *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 14, no. 10 (2010).

**LAND ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE**

• Robert Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape."
• Robert Morris, “Notes on Art as/and Land Reclamation”, in *October*, vol. 12 (Spring, 1980), pp. 87-102
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPES


Additional Readings


• Panayiota Pyla, "Counter-Histories of Sustainability," in Volume 18 "After Zero."


• Kate Orff, Petrochemical America, (Aperture, 2012).


• Neeraj Bhatia and Mary Casper, eds., The Petropolis of Tomorrow (Actar, 2013).


THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., *Sorry, Out of Gas: Architecture's Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis* (Montréal, Québec ; Mantova, Italy: CCA ; Corraini Edizioni, 2007).

RADICAL AND DEEP ECOCOLOGIES

- Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., *Sorry, Out of Gas: Architecture's Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis*
- Stewart Brand, *Whole Earth Catalog*

CONTEMPORARY ECOCOLOGIES

• Allenby Braden, "Complexity- the New Frontier," in *Reconstruction Earth: Technology and the Environment in an Age of Humans*
• N. Katherine Hayles, “Simulated Nature and Natural Simulations: Rethinking the Relation between the Beholder and the World,” in *Uncommon Ground- Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*