

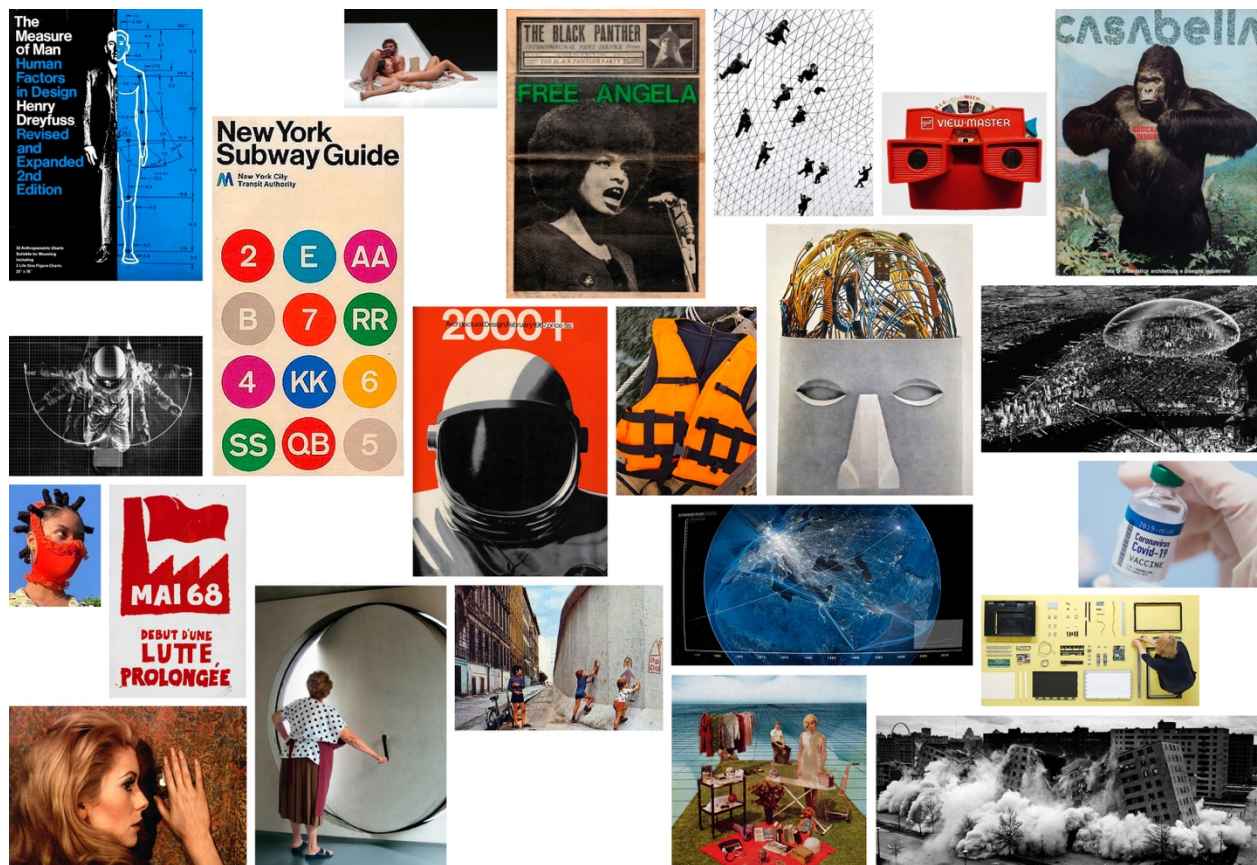
B+C | A

Barnard and Columbia Colleges Architecture Department

**Instructor** Evangelos Kotsioris (ekotsior@barnard.edu); (212) 854-8430  
**Hours** Wednesdays & Fridays, 1:10 pm – 4:10 pm (some classes to last until 5:10 pm)  
**Location** TBD  
**Office Hours** Fridays, by appointment  
**CA** TBD

Summer A 2021 ARCH UN1010 (3 points)

## DESIGN FUTURES: New York City



**“If it works, it’s obsolete.” —Marshall McLuhan**

How does design operate in our lives? What is our design culture? In this course, we explore the many scales of design in contemporary culture -- from graphic design to architecture to urban design to global, interactive, and digital design. The format of this course moves between lectures, discussions, collaborative design work and field trips in order to engage in the topic through texts and experiences.

## DESIGN (AND ITS DISCONTENTS)

We are constantly suspended in a universe of design. Every day, our relationship with the environment, with each other, and (most importantly, perhaps) with ourselves, is continuously mediated by an endless stream of designed artifacts — from coffee cups, ergonomic toothbrushes, cell phones, and traffic lights, to screen interfaces, urban furniture, sports clothes, subway maps, and bedside chargers. Once sufficient, this rather limited understanding of design has drastically expanded to include operations on a vast number of heterogeneous sites beyond the scale of the human body — from the scale of subatomic particles, chemical molecules, biological cells, and body prosthetics, all the way to that of undersea cable networks, aircraft pathways, satellite constellations, and interplanetary missions.

In its rather short history, the term “design” has been habitually ascribed positive connotations. To be “designed” is to be thought-out, thoroughly-calculated, eye-pleasing, well-made, easily-used, and perhaps more easily disposed-off. This deceptively positivist understanding of design, as we shall see, is inseparable from the production and consumption of commodities under (neoliberal) capitalism, and the increasingly rapid product life-cycles the latter perpetuates through planned obsolescence. As a result, design is often loaded with dubious ethics, malicious intentions, and detrimental effects. “Design thinking” has been routinely employed to impose exclusion, exacerbate inequality, instigate conflict, enable violence, remove life.

This class will explore the multivalent definitions of design implied, described, and performed across scales and disciplines. We will challenge any *a priori* values ascribed to design, and particularly probe the ways its practice intersects with daily life, environmental impact, and social (in)justice. Towards this end, we will strive to uncover not only the cultural meaning, but also the often unstated, political underpinnings of design protocols. A series of workshops and project-based exercises will help us to learn skills test our hypotheses. While rooted in history and contemporary development, we will seek to imagine alternative futures for what design could be. Throughout this process, New York City will serve as our laboratory for observation, experimentation, and intervention.

## SCHEDULE SUMMARY

<b>Class 1: May 5</b>	WHAT IS DESIGN?	<b>Class 7: May 26</b>	WOMEN DESIGN
<b>Class 2: May 7</b>	AGITATION DESIGN	<b>Class 8: May 28</b>	DESIGNING MOTHERHOOD
<b>Class 3: May 12</b>	DESIGNING ANIMAL	<b>Class 9: Jun 2</b>	RADICAL DESIGN
<b>Class 4: May 14</b>	DESIGN ECOLOGIES	<b>Class 10: Jun 4</b>	WHITE BY DESIGN
<b>Class 5: May 19</b>	DESIGNING NORMALCY	<b>Class 11: Jun 9</b>	DESIGNING THE GLOBE
<b>Class 6: May 21</b>	SELF-DESIGN	<b>Class 12: Jun 11</b>	DESIGN FUTURES