

**THE URBAN LANDSCAPE:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
(ANG 6286)**

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Fall 2014; CBD 105: M: 6-7 (12:50-2:45); W: 6 (12:50-1:40);

Office Turlington B360; Contact Hours: M-11:45-2:45 or by appt.

Summary: The Urban Landscape focuses on diverse questions related to urbanism and urban life through time, notably tied to space, built environment and landscape. It explores variation between forms of urbanism, including diverse non-Western forms, and between elite, middle class, and marginal groups in urban society. The course is broken into three primary segments: (1) pre-modern and non-Western urbanism (week 2-3) and modern European industrial urbanism and impacts across globe, including early theories on urbanism (week 4-7); (2) late 20th century urban anthropology and ethnography from practical and theoretical perspectives, focusing on Brazilian examples and comparative cases (week 9-12); (3) presentations (week 13-15). While the class focuses on urban studies as practiced in anthropology, materials are drawn from sociology, geography, urban studies and planning, history, critical theory and cultural studies. Final content and subject matter will be subject to change on the basis of seminar composition and interests of participants.

Overview: What is the city, or urbanism? What variation in urban form, content, or history can be delineated across time and space? What differences can be inferred between cities and urbanized populations - lived worlds, built environments, and representations of urban life – in the contemporary world. The course reviews materials from pre-modern (pre-colonial and early colonial, to 1700), modern (early industrial to late 20th century) and post- or neo-modern urban contexts. Case materials are drawn from across the globe. It contrasts public urban life from the top down view of planners, politicians and patricians, elite social groups and institutions with the bottom up view, representing diverse subaltern urban groups and lived realities. It also considers the middle ground, where the two extremes of urban society meet and interact, often promoting novelty and creating hybrid institutions, norms, and practices,

often in highly dynamic, even volatile and fragmented contexts where norms vary and are contested.

Urban revolutions: Early urban contexts are invariably tied to symbolic and ritual control of belief and propaganda, marked by explicit exclusion of elite groups and the politico-ritual engagements they control in spatial orientations, performance, and material culture. This is the “urban revolution,” coined by V. Gordon Childe (1936, 1950), with reference to the world’s oldest cities, in SW Asia and the Mediterranean. The trait list Childe proposed, e.g., full blown cities, writing, intensive state economies, armies, police, and the like, has to be radically revised to include diverse examples of early major cities, in Asia and nuclear America, as well as alternative forms of urbanism, that have been described across the globe (China, SE Asia and Pacific, Africa, and Native America), as explored here. The city, as it is known and theorized by Western scholars, morphs again in form, content, and representation during the transition from Medieval to modern cities, ultimately giving rise a second “urban revolution,” as discussed by Henri Lefebvre (1970). Today, a third urban revolution can be delineated, as the balance tipped from rural to urban (over 50% of world population lives in cities as of 2006), including regional, national, and global forces that integrate urban populations to other regions, other urban settings, and the rural and natural. Nonetheless, anthropological viewpoints on cities remain underdeveloped, particularly cases with histories that span the twentieth century or longer.

Urban populations and planning: The course focuses on the social and political construction of urban space, the control and orientation of human bodies, body movement, and bodily distributions, emphasizing the physicality and materiality of urban built environment and landscape. Urban space is a reflection of both integrated and contested groups and identities, and inclusionary and exclusionary practices in urban planning and development, and representations of cities and city-dwellers in popular media. We consider the nature and relationship of urban subgroups, with respect to key features of urbanism, such as central place and countryside (urban-rural/peasant), functional, social, and political economic organization, notably heterogeneity and segregation, as well as integration, and design and planning. The urban built environment of a reflection of this social anatomy is explored as a means of analyzing differences in space, practice, and experience of different social groups, including marginalized, middle, and elite groups.

Urban Place-Making & Knowledge: In addition to planned features of urbanism, self-organizing aspects of urban built environment, in terms of socio-economic and political institutions, legal norms, performance and embodiment, and thought or knowledge systems are considered. The course takes a “perspectivist” theoretical approach, which is defined less by a theoretical or practical agenda than a lack of one, in other words it is non-paradigmatic. Case materials are historically situated within dynamic, interdisciplinary and dialogic knowledge

production communities. The focus is on research context and the issues, perspectives, and dialogues that emerge from them in scientific, humanist, critical and popular discourse. Focus on specific contexts of application highlights the heuristic and highly varied nature of interdisciplinary empirical research, issues of scale, and the diversity of perspective and voice. It promotes a view that “robusticity” in planning and construction, meaning accessibility and engagement by diverse social groups within broader global contexts is an achievable goal of social scientific and humanistic studies. Urban socio-economic and political realities, and human rights, can be balanced with concerns across the globe with what scientists loosely call “ecological resiliency” and “sustainability.”

Urban Visions: the course considers utopian, heterotopian, and dystopian visions of urbanism, from the view of the development of world civilization and from futuristic visions of utopias in cultural production, from Thomas More to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. It emphasizes that heterotopian landscapes of actual urban life are “shot through” with utopian and dystopian perspectives, places, and practices, which are considered from the viewpoint of critical theory, particularly contemporary literary criticism and cultural studies.

Evaluation: Class attendance and participation are expected.

Class will convene on Mondays for two hours of lecture; from week 2 forward, alternative Wednesday class-time will be devoted to independent activities, with in-class discussion the following W. Final grade will be based on activity assignments (50 pts) and final presentation and submission (research paper or other product, 50 pts) to be agreed upon with instructor by mid-semester.

Activity 1: chose a city, do a brief history, a map of major zones, and monitor newspaper 3-4 times per/week to follow a particular theme or topic of news; weeks 2-5 (10 points based on brief class powerpoint presentation)

Activity 2: Individually or in groups: Bo Diddley plaza; weeks 5-12 (40 points; based on four brief written summaries of results to be discussed in class the week after activity). This activity requires 4 hour long focused activities in the area of the plaza, focusing on built environment, institutionality, social groups and interaction and traffic (according to handout to be distributed week 3)

Primary books: readings tba will be distributed each week, particularly from three readers; M. Miles, et al., eds. (2000), *The City Cultures Reader* (CCR); S. Low, ed. (2005), *Theorizing the City* (TC); and G. Gmelch and W. Zenner, eds. (2002), *Urban Life* (UL) and the following books:

1. *The City* (Robert Parks and Ernest Burgess, 1925)
2. *The Urban Revolution* (Henri Lefebvre, 2003 [1970])
3. *Post-modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Edward Soja, 2011)
4. *Urban Outcasts* (Loïc Wacquant, 2007)
5. *The Modernist City* (James Holsten)
6. *City of Walls* (Teresa Caldeira)
7. *Dreaming Equality* (Robin Sheriff)
7. *Travesti* (Don Kulick)
8. *Vita* (João Biehl)
9. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests & the Politics of Memory* (Andreas Hyussen 2003)
10. *Noir Urbanisms* (Gyan Prakash, 2010)

Provisional Course Outline:

Week 1 (start 08/25). Introduction: The Three Urban Revolutions (Hannerz (1996); CCR, Introduction; S. Sernau, Global Problems: The Search for Equity, Peace and Sustainability (2006), chapters 5 & 9; N. Abercrombie, S. Hill and B. Turner, Sociology (2000), sections on urban);

Urban Ecology; Urban Development, Public Health and Security;

Urban Language, Communication and Ritualization

Urban Archaeology

Urban Ethnography

Context-based Science & Anthropology as Meeting Place

Part 1: Beginnings, 5000-1950

2. (09/02; no class 09/01). Earliest Cities: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus, Greece/Rome (Fustel de Coulanges; Weber; Southall; Yoffee)
3. (09/8). Rise of the Industrial City (Marx; Simmel; Weber): Medieval Cities
4. (09/15). Urban Society & Interaction: Industrial Age Cities (Durkheim, Lefebvre, Bourdieu, Foucault): European Industrial Cities
5. (09/22). Form & Function of Cities: Chicago School 1 (Parks and Burgess; Le Corbusier; Moses; Wacquant): NYC & Chicago
6. (09/29). City as Mentalité: Chicago School 2 & Benjamin (Parks and Burgess; Goffman; White, Jacobs): Chicago, NYC & Paris
7. (10/06) Industrial Urbanism and its Malcontents (Global South, Howard, Jacobs) (tba)
8. (10/13). Watch "Urbanism" and Prepare for Presentation of Bo Diddley Plaza

Part II: Urban Ethnography

9. (10/20). Modern Cityscapes (Soja; Jameson): *The Modernist City* (Holsten); *City of Walls* (Caldeira): LA & Brazil
10. (10/27). Subjectivities (Low; Bourgois): *Dreaming Equality* (Sheriff); *Vita* (Biehl): Brazil
11. (11/3). Bodies, Networks & Institutions (Low; Wacquant; Scheper-Hughes); *Trávesti* (Kulick), *Beneath the Equator* (Parker), *Consumption Intensified* (Dougherty): USA & Brazil
12. (11/10). Networks, Archives and Built Environment (Whitehead; Hyussen; Prakash; Heck 1): São Paulo
13. (11/17). Scale & Sustainability (Harvey; Heck 2): São Paulo
14. (11/24). Presentations
- 15 (12/1). Presentations
16. (12/8). Presentations