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URBAN HISTORY AND THEORY

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LECTURES
Fridays: 14:30–16:00 Ho Tim Building B6

TUTORIAL SESSIONS
Fridays: 16:10-17:15
Group A: LSK Building 211
Group B: LSK Building 212
Group C: Wu Ho Man Yuen Building 503

PROVOCATION

What are the extents and limits of the power of architects and designers in shaping environmental and social change? What reflexive knowledge must they acquire to tackle the complex challenges posed by accelerating climate change, neoliberal urbanization, and the accompanying crises in housing provision, environmental degradation, and widening social inequality in the 21st century?

DESCRIPTION

This course explores the histories of urbanism and the competing forces that shape city design and their social environments. Students will be introduced to seminal urban theories and recent discourses in architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and urban design to analyze various urban processes and their impacts on local communities. Discussion throughout the course will engage with questions related to contemporary urbanization and consider how historical knowledge can impart a better understanding of the challenges that we face in today's globalized context.

IMPACT

The course familiarizes students with various methods for studying cities as pursued in the social sciences and humanities, including history, geography, and urban studies. Through in-depth discussion and debates of selected case studies, students will gain a historical perspective of urbanization and will develop the ability to analyze specific urban issues, identifying continuities and congruences in city development across different time periods and locations.

This course aligns with the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Habitat's Urban Agenda, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary thinking to address today's pressing urban challenges. A major assignment will require students to explore the concepts of the SDGs and establish meaningful connections with contemporary design practice in Hong Kong.

METHODS

Lectures: Lectures are organized into themes that follow a general chronological order. To enable a fuller understanding of the lecture content, each student is required to generate two critical questions based on the lecture and submit these on Blackboard after each class (please refer to Assignment 1 in the Appendix on p.8).

Tutorial Sessions: Tutorial sessions are designed to help students gain a more in-depth understanding of course topics. These sessions consist of student-led activities aimed at exploring key issues raised in the lectures. Tutorial topics are formulated to challenge students' pre-conceived assumptions and encourage them to "see the big picture," highlighting the role of design in the ongoing reshaping of social and ecological environments in different contexts.

DELIVERABLES

Assignment 1   **Weekly Lecture Topic Questions**
Weekly submission of 2 critical questions based on the lecture content.
Due on Blackboard on Monday following the previous week's lecture.

Assignment 2   **Simulation Game Project**
Students form into groups of six to develop a simulated scenario centering on a specific topic on design and urbanism. The simulation game will be performed in class between Week 7 and 11. The list of scenarios will be provided in Week 2 for signup. This assignment consists of group and individual works.

Assignment 3   **Reflection Essay**
A 500 to 700-word individual reflection essay focusing on a specific topic of the course. Due at the end of the semester.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course aims to familiarize students with the histories and theories of urbanism and the role of design in shaping city forms and social environments. It seeks to equip students with knowledge of city planning, design, and development policy, as well as the needs and aspirations of local communities. Through in-class discussions and debates, students are encouraged to challenge their preconceived assumptions and analyze various urban issues from comparative perspectives. The learning process will also help them develop critical thinking and academic writing skills relevant to research in architecture and urban studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Acquire knowledge of the histories and theories of urbanism and the influence of urban design and planning on shaping past and present built environments.

- Understand planning policy and development legislation, and the impact of urban design and planning projects on reshaping public spaces and the public realm.

- Understand the concepts of the SDGs and establish meaningful connections with contemporary design practice.

- Recognize the positions and aspirations of various stakeholders, including local community members, professionals, policymakers, developers, and other constituencies implicated in the development process.

- Develop critical thinking and academic writing skills for urban research.

- Understand the basics of research ethics.

ASSESSMENT SCHEME

Assignment 1–Weekly Lecture Topic Questions	32%
Assignment 2–Simulation Game Project	40%
Assignment 3–Reflection Essay	20%
Attendance and in-class participation	8%
	100%

REQUIRED READINGS

(Note: All readings listed below will be provided on Blackboard. Additional references for the Simulation Game Project will be added later).

Lecture 1: Design as a Social Act
Cuff, D. (2023). "Architecture at the Heart of Spatial Justice" and "Conclusion: Architecture's Practical Future," 1-16, 253-258. In *Architectures of Spatial Justice*. MIT Press.
Kaliski, J. (2013). "The Present City and the Practice of City Design." In *Everyday Urbanism*, 89-109. Monacelli Press.
Knox, P.L. (2011). "Better by Design." In *Cities and Design*, 65-99. Routledge.

Lecture 2: Environmental Design and the SDGs
International Union of Architects (2017). *An Architecture Guide to the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals*.
Arboleda, G. (2020). "Beyond Participation: Rethinking Social Design." *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE) 71, no. 1, 15-25.
Royal Institute of British Architects (2015). *UN Sustainable Development Goals in Practice*.

Lecture 3: The Modernist City and Utopian Visions
"CIAM: Charter of Athens" (1970). *Programs and Manifestoes of 20th Century Architecture*, 137-145. MIT Press.
Hall, P. (2002). "The City of Tower." In *Cities of Tomorrow*, 219-234. Blackwell.
Ganjavie, A. (2012). "Role of Utopia for Design of Future Cities: Utopia in Urban Planning Literature." *Studies in Literature and Language* 5, no.3, 10-19.

Lecture 4: The Crisis Within Modernism
Jacobs, J. (2003). "The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety." In *The City Reader*, 104-108. Routledge.
Glaeser, E. (2009). "What A City Needs." *New Republic*. 4 September.
Rittel, H. (1972). "On the Planning Crisis." *Bedriftsokonomen* 8, 390-396.

Lecture 5: Design for Dwellings
Robinson, J. et al. (2016). "Providing Housing Through States and Markets." In *Working, Housing: Urbanizing*, Springer, 42-45. Routledge.
Bristol, K.G. (1991). "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," *Journal of Architectural Education* 33, no.3, 163-171.
Chu, C.L. (2007). "Public Housing and the Transformation of Urban Life in Hong Kong, 1955-1975." Unpublished manuscript.

Lecture 6: Architecture, Political Economy and the Public Sphere
Harvey, D. (1988). "Postmodernism in the City: Architecture and Urban Design." In *The Conditions of Postmodernity*, 66-98. Blackwell.
Knox, P. (2011). "Design for New Sensibilities." In *Cities and Design*. Routledge.
Harvey, D. (2021). "The Erosion of Consumer Choices." The Anti-capitalist Chronicles Podcast.

Lecture 7: Ecological Transitions
Escobar, A. (2018). "Preface" and "Introduction." In *Design for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Duke University Press.
Hutton, K. (2020). "Arresting Decay: Tropical Hardwood from Para, Brazil, to the High Line, 2009." In *Reciprocal Landscapes: Stories of Material Movements*, 188-217. Routledge.
Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene. Website: https://feralatlas.org

Lecture 8: The Afterlives of Buildings
Bayrak, S. and Goktas, O. (2023). "Ghost Stories: The Carrier Bag Theory of Architecture." In *The Carrier Bag Theory of Architecture*, 8-55; 100-105. Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts.
DeSilvey, C. (2017). "Palliative Curation: The Death of a Lighthouse." In *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving*, 155-176. University of Minnesota Press.

Chu, C.L. (2023). "The Afterlives of Modern Housing." In *Routledge Companion to Contemporary Architectural History,* 127-143. Routledge.

Lecture 9: Infrastructure Futures
Rosa, B. and Lindner, C. (2017). "Introduction: From Elevated Railway to Urban Park." In *Deconstructing the Highline: Postindustrial Urbanism and the Elevated Park*, 1-20. Rutgers University Press.
Chu, C.L. and Tang, D. (2018). "Infrastructural Imagination: Charting Hong Kong's Futures Through Construction Photography." *HKIA Journal*, 118-123.
Devabhaktuni, S. (2020). "Traces of Protest and Curb-Scale Infrastructures in Hong Kong." *Platform*.

Lecture 10: Design and Urbanism in the 21st Century
Stohr, K. (2006). "100 Years of Humanitarian Design." In *Design Like You Give a Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crisis*, 33-53. Metropolis books.
Blundell Jones, P., Petrescu, D. and Till, J. (2005). "Introduction." In *Architecture and Participation.* Spon Press.
Cruz, T. and Forman, F. (2022). "Where is Our Public Imagination?" and "A Practice of Mediation: Top-down/Bottom-up." In *Socializing Architecture: Top Down Bottom Up*, 44-60. The MIT Press.

Interdisciplinary Online Journals on Architecture and Urbanism
Places Journal	https://placesjournal.org
Platform	https://www.platformspace.net
Guardian Cities Section	https://www.theguardian.com/cities
Roadsides	https://roadsides.net

APPENDIX

Assignment 1: Weekly Lecture Topic Questions

Students will generate two critical questions based on the lecture content each week. The purpose of the assignment is to deepen students' understanding of the course materials, articulate specific concerns, and strengthen their critical thinking skills. Collectively, the questions will serve as a foundation for class discussions and debates, allowing students to connect their ideas with those of their peers.

There are no set formulas for generating the questions; what is crucial is that they must relate the issues raised in the lecture. Students may also reference the week's readings, suggest connections or conflicts with previous discussions, and further explore particular concerns.

All questions must be submitted to Blackboard by 12:00 pm on the Monday following each lecture. The final grade will be based on 8 sets of questions out of 10 lectures.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS

Attendance
Class attendance is required in all courses. For an excused absence, the instructor must be notified and presented with documentation of illness or personal matter. Please note: **Three (3)** or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty
Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students may be

required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

Artificial Intelligence
Unless approved by the Programme or School Director, any use of AI tools such as ChatGPT or image generation tools (Mid-Journey) etc. is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with university policy on academic honesty. Students may refer to the CUHK 'Use of Artificial Intelligence tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments' – A Guide for Students.

Student Work
Submission of studio documentation must be complete and correctly formatted. Missing or incomplete submission of the documentation folder will result in the grade for the course being withheld. This will prevent registration for the following term or delay graduation. In addition, a grade deduction of *one letter grade* will be made.

SCHEDULE

Term 1: 2 September 2024 (Mon) – 13 December 2024 (Fri)

WEEK 01		
06.09	**Lecture 1** **Design as a Social Act** **No tutorial this week.**	Overview of the course topics. Discussion of design as a "social act" as conceived and practiced by architectural and planning professionals in history. The ascendance of expert knowledge and growth of community participation since the 1960s.
WEEK 02		
13.09	**Lecture 2** **Environmental Design and the SDGs** **In-class SDG exercise.**	Introduction to the concepts of SDGs as a framework to envision a better world. The relationship between the 17 SDGs and architectural and urban design disciplines. The challenges in implementing the SDGs in practice and realizing their contribution to local communities.
WEEK 03		
20.09	**Lecture 3** **The Modernist City and Utopian Visions** **Tutorial Session**	The advent of modernist architecture and planning and their supporting institutions over the 20th century. How conceptions of the 'modern' fostered new utopian visions of the future. The vernacularisation of modernism in non-Western contexts and how different communities experienced modernity on their own terms. SDG exercise follow-up.
WEEK 04		
27.09	**Lecture 4** **The Crisis Within Modernism** **Tutorial Session**	Th uneven success of modernist projects to resolve urban problems in postwar Europe, America and Asia. The embrace of and disillusionment with modernism and emergence of counter culture that challenged established conventions. The development of new design theories that departed from the modernist agendas. Discussion of readings and assignments.
WEEK 05		
04.10	**Lecture 5** **Design for Dwellings** **Tutorial Session**	The changing conceptions of homes and housing design over the 20th century. Emerging debates over domesticity, welfare, and social justice in connection with "the right to housing." The significance of global forces and local experiences in shaping housing markets, planning policy and architectural innovations. Discussion of readings and assignments.
WEEK 06		
11.10	**No Class**	Chung Yeung Festival
WEEK 07		
18.10	**Lecture 6** **Architecture, Political Economy and the Public Sphere** **Simulation Game**	The advent of neoliberal economic restructuring and the changing nature of architectural practice since the 1980s. Concerns over the erosion of welfare provision and shrinking public sphere. Architecture, planning and urban design and as a social and political force and their varied impacts on the everyday life of communities. Sessions 1a, b, c
WEEK 08		
25.10	**Lecture 7** **Ecological Transitions** **Simulation Game**	The emergence of ecological thoughts and environmental movements and their effects on design practice since the 1960s. Recent approaches to the study of environments that reconceptualize the relationships between nature and culture and how these ideas took hold in different places. Sessions 2a, b, c

WEEK 09		
01.11	**Lecture 8** **The Afterlives of Buildings**	The growing interest in conservation and contested interpretations of built heritage in recent years. The concepts of adaptive reuse and sustainability in shaping urban redevelopment and design practice. The relationship between conservation and questions of equity and participation.
	Tutorial Session	Discussion of readings and assignments.
WEEK 10		
08.11	**Lecture 9** **Infrastructure Futures**	The politics of infrastructure design and provision. Infrastructure as social-technical systems that facilitate economic development and transform everyday landscapes. The increased privatization of public resources over the past decades and their effects on social relations and democratization.
	Simulation Game	Sessions 3a, b, c
WEEK 11		
15.11	**No formal lecture this week.** **Simulation Games Sessions 4 and 5**	Students participate in Simulation Game Projects Sessions 4a, b, c Sessions 5a, b, c
WEEK 12		
22.11	**Lecture 10** **Design and Urbanism in the 21st Century** **Tutorial Session**	A discussion forum on the future of urbanism and role of designers in confronting emergent environmental and social challenges. Sharing of insights by faculty and other professionals. Discussion of readings and assignments.
WEEK 13		
29.11	**Course Conclusion**	

Grade	Descriptor	Criteria	Points
A	Excellent	Comprehensively excellent performance on all aspects of the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with distinction.	4
A-	Very Good	Generally outstanding performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with merit.	3.7
B+	Good	Substantial performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes satisfactorily.	3.3
B			3
B-			2.7
C+	Fair	Fair performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a passing standard.	2.3
C			2
C-			1.7
D+	Pass	Barely satisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a barely satisfactory standard.	1.3
D			1
F	Failure	Unsatisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Not achieving all learning outcomes.	0

Written Feedback to Students

Term: _____   **Grade:** _____

Course: _____   Date: _____

Assignment: _____   Student Name: _____

Studio Tutor: _____   Student ID: _____

Feedback from Studio Tutor:

Achievements:

Challenges:

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