CITIES BY DESIGN
GSD 5211, Spring 2013, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11:30 AM, Piper Auditorium.
First class: 29 Jan 2013
Last class: 30 Apr 2013
Discussion section meetings to be assigned during Week 01

Course Coordinator: Rahul Mehrotra, Chair - GSD Department of Urban Design
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[office hours, and office hours sign up, listed on course website]

Course Overview

‘Cities by Design’ studies urban form. It provides a synthetic overview of the factors that affect the design of contemporary cities. The year-long course will cover a total of ten cities as case studies to expose students to a range of city-making parameters in various geographical contexts. The course will focus on both the urban condition as a whole by exploring the cities’ processes of evolution, and on the study of urban fragments and projects. Two main pedagogical goals guide the course. The course will allow students to establish a broader definition of the 'urban,' forging commonalities amongst a diversity of cities. It also provides the historical and comparative material to identify the urban characteristics and design strategies that render particular cities distinct.

Eight key themes run across the different case studies. Some urban case studies will emphasize certain themes more than others. The following themes will help to structure students’ comparative analyses:

1. The city’s genealogy and key historical events, phases of development, & patterns of growth
2. The ways in which the terrain, geography, and infrastructural development constrain and present opportunities for the city’s development and ambitions
3. The city’s planning and design culture and decision-making institutions
4. The challenges that social equity present to planning and design in the city
5. The orchestration of the city’s relationship to the broader region
6. How the particular city contributes to a definition of the ‘urban’ condition
7. The framing and design of key urban projects / case studies
8. The city’s planning institutions, historical conditions, urban forms, or ambitions, etc. that have contributed to its iconicity in a global context
Course Requirements:

This semester, Cities By Design will take six cities as case studies. Each case study, with a few exceptions [see schedule below] will be taught during a two-week module, comprised of four lectures and one discussion section. The course will also be structured by assigned readings that have been collected in a course reader. ‘Cities by Design’ Course Readers will be available online at the course i-site. Students MUST BRING THE READINGS TO SECTION to facilitate close readings of the texts – please plan to do so in either digital or printed format. All readings included in the Course Reader are required.

Expectations and Grading:

Term grades will be based on: attendance and participation, biweekly response papers, and a final term paper.

Attendance and participation in all lectures and discussion sections are mandatory for enrolled students. Attendance will be taken at random during the lecture classes and regularly during section. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before the lectures, and to participate actively in section discussions.

One-two page response papers will be based on assigned readings and lectures for each urban case study, and guided by a specific question. The questions are available in the CBD syllabus (see each module description). Response papers are due biweekly in the students’ assigned section.

Term papers will be due at the end of the semester. Term papers should be 5000-word essays that respond to one of several questions. Term paper questions will be made available to students by March 14.

The term paper topics are designed to help students develop comparative analyses of the urban conditions studied during the semester. As this is a graduate-level course, the expectation is that the term paper will be literate, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors. Various guides to style and grammar are available online and at Loeb Library, and writing assistance is available through the GSD Language Resource Center. Papers should use a consistent style of citation (footnotes or endnotes) and include a list of references (at the end in alphabetical order by last name). The term paper is due by Tuesday 14 May. Final papers will be graded out of ten possible points; late papers will be marked down one grade per day. A one-page proposal for the final paper will be due Thursday 11 April.

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the school's standards for academic honesty and conduct. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or paid assistance, deliberate interference with the integrity of the work of others, fabrication or falsification of data, and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious offenses for which disciplinary penalties will be imposed. When using the ideas or words of anybody else, you must identify the source.

NOTE to students: The year-long Cities by Design course is mandatory for all incoming 2012-13 Master’s of Urban Design Students. All other students are welcome to enroll in the course by semester, and need not do so in sequence. Please review the course requirements before selecting this course.
Week 01. Review and Introduction  
(Jan 29/31)

Jan 29: Panel Discussion of Fall Semester Cities  
Alex Krieger, Rob Lane, Joan Busquets, Sibel Bozdogan, Hashim Sarkis, and Eve Blau  
Rahul Mehrotra, moderator

Jan 31: Introduction  
Neil Brenner

Weeks 02-03. ‘RIO DE JANEIRO’ with Farès el-Dahdah  
(Feb 05/07 and Feb 12/14)

Rio de Janeiro Module Description: This module focuses on reconstructing the spatial evolution of Rio de Janeiro from its sixteenth-century origins through its Olympic future by examining a vast visual record, i.e., maps, paintings, prints, photographs, film, and architectural/urban projects. Through Rio de Janeiro's iconography in different media, we will investigate its ever-changing social, political, and physical morphology as the city has constantly had to 'overcome' its own geography and thereby nestle itself between steep granite hills and the Atlantic Ocean. Despite—or perhaps due to—the difficulty of its own geography, this one city has, over the centuries, survived as a colonial settlement on a distant periphery, acted as a port of entry for thousands forced into the trans-Atlantic slave trade, extended Lisbon into Portuguese America, hosted the seat of an empire, formed a republic, showcased a dictatorship, and ultimately became a globally recognized cultural capital that has in modern memory undergone both economic decadence and urban renewal. Of particular interest to this module, are the visual documents that have recorded the history of how social relations shaped Rio's natural landscape and conversely, how the city's urbanism has impacted the lives and distribution of its inhabitants. This remains a visible process as Rio currently undertakes the major development projects related to winning its bid for the 2016 Olympics.

Response Paper Question: Select ONE item from Rio de Janeiro’s visual record. Analyze this item, noting provenance, formal qualities, and its relation to historical changes and social conditions in Rio de Janeiro. You may select an item either presented in lecture or included in one of the below readings. Use the content from both the lectures and readings to support your analysis. [1-2 page response paper, due in your assigned Discussion Section]

Feb 05: Land of Parrots, Hammocks, Cannibals, and Logs: Four Resilient Images of Brazil  

Feb 07: Lodged Between Peaks, Forest, and Bay: Rio de Janeiro as a Colonial Outpost  

Feb 12: A King, Two Emperors, and a Republic: Inadequate Rio de Janeiro in the 19th Century  

Feb 14: The Monument and the Meander: Marvelous, Divided, and Global Rio de Janeiro in the 20th and 21st Centuries  
SECTION for Rio: Feb 22

Weeks 04-05. ‘MEXICO CITY’ with Jose Castillo
(Feb 19/21 and Feb 26/28)

Mexico City is one of the most dynamic and complex cities in the world today. With over 20 million inhabitants, remarkable urban and population growth, an active, yet dual economy, a sophisticated cultural life, and a material history centuries-old, it is quite a case study for architecture and urban design today. The module on Mexico City provides an introduction to the issues and conditions faced by a large city such as Mexico, and relate them to contemporary practices and theories of architecture and urban design. The 4-session module will dwell on a broad range of interests organized around four topics that will serve as windows to explain the city. ‘Session 1: Histories’ will focus on the natural history of the city, its vulnerabilities to natural disasters, and the material, social and economic developments of the 20C as the defining period in the construction of the megalopolis. ‘Session 2: Geographies’ will address the city’s peripheral expansion from its historic center, and topics of redensification, historical preservation, equity, and formal (e.g. Santa Fe) and informal (e.g. Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl) development. ‘Session 3: Politics’ will look at the role that politics, policies, and planning instruments have had in shaping the city. We will pay attention to the production of public space, housing and infrastructure, and how the gaps between the legal/illegal, the planned/unplanned have produced pathologies, abnormalities and unexpected solutions. ‘Session 4: Architecture’ will focus on key practitioners and projects during the last 100 years, critically assessing the relevance and impact of the modern architecture agenda (e.g. National University Campus, Juan O’Gorman, Luis Barragan, Mario Pani) and the ways that recent architectural culture has envisioned change for the city (e.g. Alberto Kalach, Javier Sanchez, Teodoro Gonzalez de Leon).

Response Paper Question: How do the below authors define ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ architectural and urban development? What impact have these modes of development had on Mexico City’s form and urban challenges? Cite examples of the ways in which the ‘formal’ control/planning of the design disciplines have either collided or integrated with the ‘informal’ or de-facto production of Mexico City. [1-2 page response paper, due in your assigned Discussion Section]

Feb 19: Histories


Davis, Diane E. (2009), 'The Modern City: From the Reforma-Peralvillo to Torre Bicentenario: The clash of history and progress in the urban development of modern Mexico City', in Linda A. Newson and John King (eds.), Mexico City through history and culture (Oxford: Oxford U. Press for the British Academy), 55-82.

Recommended Additional Reading:


Feb 21: Geographies

Castillo, Jose (2010), 'The Promise of Neza: Building a City for 1.2 Million Inhabitants One House at a Time', in Ilka & Andreas Ruby (ed.), Re-inventing Construction (Berlin: Ruby Press),388-403.


Feb 26: Politics


Feb 28: Architecture
Castillo, Jose (2010), 'Curatorial Text for the Exhibition Mexican Modernisms.', Mexican Modernisms: Fragments for a possible history of modern architecture in Mexico. (Brussels: Bozar), 1-5.


Recommended Additional Reading:
Various Authors (2001), Mexico City: Projects from the Megacity, Praxis: Journal of Writing + Building, 1 (2).

Lida, David (2008), First stop in the New World : Mexico City, the capital of the 21st century (New York: Riverhead Books).

Urban Age Mexico City Conference Newspaper: http://urban-age.net/0_downloads/MC-Newspaper.pdf

SECTION for Mexico City: March 1

Weeks 06-07. ‘PARIS’ with Antoine Picon
(Mar 05/07 and Mar 12/14)

Response Paper Question: In what sense can one consider Haussmannian Paris as a model? How do the ongoing debates on the Great Paris show the limits of such a model? Discuss the respective agencies of urban planning, engineering and architecture in these debates.

Mar 05/07


Mar 12/14


SECTION for Paris: March 15

Week 08. SPRING BREAK

Week 09-10. ‘SHANGHAI’ with Peter Rowe
(Mar 26/28, and Apr 2/4)

Response Paper Question: Shanghai has often served as an analytical lens in understanding the patterns of urban development in China. How would you characterize Shanghai’s spatial form over the past century? What are some of the major turning points that have had a significant impact on shaping the city, and what were the fundamental drivers and outcomes of each episode? To what extent is Shanghai’s design experience and urban evolution useful in framing design in China, or is Shanghai perhaps more of an exception to the norm? [1-2 page response paper, due in your assigned Discussion Section]

Mar 26: From Fishing Village to Treaty Port

Recommended Additional Background Reading:
Pott, F.L. Hawks (1928), A Short History of Shanghai (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh)


Mar 28: The Republican to the Civil Wars

Lee, Leo Ou-Fan (1999), ‘Shanghai Modern: Reflections on Urban Culture in China in the 1930s.’ Public Sphere, No. 27, pp. 75-107.

Recommended Additional Background Reading:

Kuan, Seng (2004), 'Image of the Metropolis: Three Historical Views of Shanghai’ in Kuan, Seng and Peter G. Rowe,(eds.), Shanghai: Architecture and Urbanism for Modern China (Munich: Prestel), pp.84-95.


**Apr 2: From Mao to Market**


Recommended Additional Background Reading:


**Apr 4: From Puxi to Pudong**


Recommended Additional Background Reading:


**SECTION for Shanghai: April 5**

**Weeks 11-12. ‘DETROIT’ with Jana Cephas**
(Apr 09/11 and Apr 16)

The visual landscape of post-industrial Detroit is, if anything, compelling. Yet, in the first half of the twentieth century, the image of industrial progress in Detroit became emblematic of a new American identity. By the middle of the twentieth century, Detroit’s industrial narrative became central to a national fervor predicating freedom and progress on the unity of industry, design, and national identity. In many ways, Detroit throughout the twentieth century—and into the twenty-first—has been continuously at the forefront of a rigorous project to create an appropriate pictorial code aiming to consolidate the city's varied and contested histories and bring some resolution to its fractured identity. However, it is precisely the ‘otherness’ of Detroit's post-industrial landscape that allows its possibility as a proving ground for a new urbanism.
Formulating identity (of Detroit, of urban dwellers, of oneself) in this context requires explicating meaning from beneath the rubble of the city’s history. Thus these three sessions on Detroit are arranged as a kind of evidential reconstruction—an effort to lift the burden of history from Detroit in an attempt to analyze the city by rebuilding the relationships between urban narratives and urban places. Detroit is both an outlier in the American landscape and, at the same time, the most American of American cities. Thus these discussions on Detroit aim to reveal trends, topics, and concerns relevant to American cities in general.

Response Paper Question: Referencing the concepts presented in the readings and in the lectures, construct a thoughtful, evidence-based analysis of the Detroit Strategic Framework Plan. Analyze the plan from these categories:
1. Urban design: scale and feasibility of proposed projects, relation between urban design projects and long-term urban and regional planning.
2. Implementation: stakeholders, funding, responsibilities, and mechanisms for accountability.
3. Social equity: addressing race and class divisions, the role of large corporations vs small businesses, long-term residents vs newcomers, and formal vs informal planning.
4. Urban image: (re)constructing the image of the city (past, present, and future).

Apr 09: Planning the Industrial City (1701-1930s)

Merritt Roe Smith, “Technological Determinism in American Culture,” In Does Technology Drive History?: The Dilemma of Technological Determinism, pp. 1-35.

Amy Maria Kenyon, “The City That Would Not Go Away,” In Dreaming Suburbia: Detroit and the Production of Postwar Space and Cultures, pp. 121-152.

David Harvey, “Fordism,” In The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change, 125-140.

Recommended reading:

David M. Katzman, Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century.

Apr 11: The Urban Crisis (1940s-1970s)


June Manning Thomas, “Roots of Postwar Development,” In Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit, pp. 14-34.

June Manning Thomas, “Postwar Planning,” In Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit, pp. 15-52.


June Manning Thomas, “Moving toward a Finer City,” In Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit, pp. 217-240.


Ze’ev Chafets, “White People Don’t Know a Goddamned Thing,” in Devil’s Night and Other True Tales of Detroit, pp.17-29.

Recommended reading:

Charles Waldheim, *Lafayette Park Detroit*.

John Hersey, *The Algiers Motel Incident*.

Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying, A Study in Urban Revolution*.

Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, and Harry J. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*.

**Apr 16: Detroit Future City: Planning for the Long Term (1980s-2012)**


**Recommended reading:**
Georgia Daskalakis, et al., *Stalking Detroit*.

Kyong Park, *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*.

Andrew Herscher, *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*.

**SECTION for Detroit: April 19**

**Weeks 12-13. ‘MUMBAI’ with Rahul Mehrotra**

(Apr 18 and Apr 23/25)

**Response Paper Question:** Mumbai demonstrates perhaps one of the most contested spatial conditions of any city in the world – where disparate forms of urbanism coexist in bizarrely close proximities. Describe some of the ways in which urban design intervenes to either reinforce or circumvent the regulatory systems of government in this city. Draw from the below readings and the examples presented in lecture to identify entrepreneurial urban design projects and how government regulates urban space. [1-2 page response paper, due in your assigned Discussion Section]

**April 18: Bombay – The Growth of a City**


**Recommended Additional Background Reading:**


**April 23: Mumbai – Kinetic City**


Mehrotra, Rahul (2008), 'Negotiating the Static and Kinetic Cities', in Andreas Huyssen (ed.), *Other cities, other worlds: urban imaginaries in a globalizing age* (Durham: Duke University Press), 205-221.

D'Monte, Darryl (2006), *Mills for sale : the way ahead* (Mumbai: Published by J.J. Babha for Marg Publications on behalf of the National Centre for the Performing Arts), 8-27.

**April 25: Post-Planning in Mumbai**

Mehrotra, Rahul (2006), 'Post-Planning in Mumbai', in Darryl D'Monte (ed.), *Mills for sale: the way ahead* (Mumbai: Published by J.J. Babha for Marg Publications on behalf of the National Centre for the Performing Arts), 60-73.

Patel, Sheela, d'Cruz, Celine, and Burra, Sundar (April 2002), 'Beyond evictions in a global city: people-managed resettlement in Mumbai', *Environment and Urbanization*, 14 (1), 159-172.


**Recommended Additional Reading/ Non-Fiction:**


D'Monte, Darryl (2006), *Mills for sale : the way ahead* (Mumbai: Published by J.J. Babha for Marg Publications on behalf of the National Centre for the Performing Arts).


Shannon, Kelly and Gosseye, Janina (2009), *Reclaiming (the urbanism of) Mumbai* (Explorations in/of urbanism; Amsterdam: SUN Academia).

Urban Design Research Institute. 'Mumbai reader', (Mumbai: Urban Design Research Institute), Volumes 06, 07, 08, 09.

**Recommended Additional Reading/ Fiction:**


**SECTION for Mumbai: April 26**

**Week 14: Course Review**

(Apr 30)