

GGR 361S: UNDERSTANDING URBAN LANDSCAPES
Department of Geography, University of Toronto
Spring 2005

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Meeting time: Thursday 10:10 am - 12:00 pm, SS 2130

Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3 pm, Room 5041 (or by appointment)

Course Description:

How did our urban landscape evolve? How can we understand it? What are its problems? How can we solve them? This course is concerned with these questions.

The urban landscape occupies a unique and privileged place in our cultural experience. As a cultural and aesthetic artifact, the urban landscape may be regarded as the vision a society projects about itself into the future. This course considers the forces that have given shape to the urban landscape as it has evolved in modern, industrialized cities over the course of the 20th century. We consider how the ideas of urban planners and architects, the needs of capital, the constraints of the environment, and the actions of differently positioned urban subjects collide to shape urban space. Our task is thus to learn to “read” urban space in the context of social relations and political economies.

The first half of the course examines the development of the modernist and postmodern city through the 20th century, both downtown and in the suburbs. Then the course shifts to considering contemporary notions of “placemaking” and “urban design” as remedies to the failures of the modernist city—social, economic, architectural, and environmental. The notion that altering the *physical* city to solve apparent *social* problems will be discussed in light of Toronto case studies.

Requirements and Grading:

Students are expected to participate in class discussions. There will be one mid-term test (short definitions and multiple-choice questions) and two short essays (250 words), and a 2-hour comprehensive exam scheduled during the examination period.

Class participation	5%
Mid-Term test	15%
Short essays (15+15)	30%
Toronto case study	25%
Final exam	30%

Note: Penalty for late assignments is 5% of the earned grade for each day late (incl. Sat & Sun.)

Reading Materials:

[1] The following required **course book** is available for purchase at the Toronto Women's Bookstore [73 Harbord St., just West of Spadina].

Edward Relph, "The Invention of Modern Town Planning: 1890-1940," in The Modern Urban Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 49-75.

[2] A **course reader**, containing other required readings for the course, will be available as a photocopied reader from the Canadian Scholars' Press [180 Bloor Street W, suite 801; order at info@cspi.org].

The reader is also on reserve at the Gerstein Library, King's College Circle. The

Course Outline and Readings:

Week 1 (Jan. 6): Reading the Urban Landscape: A View From the 'Future'

Excerpts, *Blade Runner*.

Week 2 (Jan. 13): The Making of the Modernist City I: The Invention of Town Planning

Friedrich Engels, "The Great Towns," in The City Reader (New York: Routledge, 1996), 47-55.

Spiro Kostoff, "Haussmanization," in The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History (Toronto: Little Brown, 1992), 267-75.

Ebenezer Howard, "The Town-Country Magnet," in The City Reader, 346-53.

Week 3 (Jan 20): The Making of the Modernist City II: Architecture as Revolution?

Edward Relph, "The Invention of Modern Town Planning: 1890-1940," in The Modern Urban Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 49-75.

Edward Relph, "Modernist and Late-Modernist Architecture," in The Modern Urban Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 190-210.

James C. Scott, "The High-Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique," in Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University, 1998), 103-32.

Film: *Writing on the Wall*

Week 4 (Jan 27): The Tragedy of the Modernist City

James C. Scott, "The High-Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique," in Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University, 1998), 132-46.

Marshall Berman, "Modernism in New York," All That is Solid Melts into Air (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 288-329.

Jane Jacobs, "The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety," and "Generators of Diversity," in The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Vintage Books, 1961). [104-8 from The City Reader] and 143-51.

Film: *New York: A Documentary*

Week 5 (Feb. 3): The Postmodern Urban Landscape

Edward Relph, "Post-Modernism in Planning and Architecture: 1970-," in The Modern Urban Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 211-37.

David Harvey, "Postmodernism in the City: Architecture and Urban Design," in Conditions of Post-Modernity (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 66-98.

Mike Davis, "Fortress L.A." in City of Quartz, 223-240.

Ralph Rugoff, "Honey, I Shrunk the City," and "Building a Lost Future," in Circus Americanus (New York: Verso, 1995), 25-29, 67-70.

Film: *Reinventing the City: New York and Los Angeles*

Essay #1 due

Week 6 (Feb. 10): Toronto Case Studies & Test

Roger Trancik, "What is Lost Space?" in Finding Lost Space (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986), 1-20.

Kevin Lynch, "The Image of the Environment" and "The City Image and Its Elements", in The Image of the City (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), 1-13, 46-90.

Short test

READING WEEK: FEB. 14-18

Week 7 (Feb 24): Suburbs, Urban Renewal and the Segregated City

Edward Relph, "Planning the Segregated City: 1945-75," in The Modern Urban Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 138-65.

Doloros Hayden, "Sitcom Suburbs," in Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth (1820-2000) (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 128-153.

Larry McCann, "Suburbs of Desire: The Suburban Landscape of Canadian Cities, c. 1900-1950," in Richard Harris and Peter Larkham, eds., *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 129-137.
 Doloros Hayden, "What Would a Non-sexist City Be Like?" in The City Reader, 142-57.
 John Sewell, except on St. Jamestown, in The Shape of the City (Toronto: U of T Press, 1993), 163-171.

Film: *Bleeker Street*

Week 8 (Mar 3): New Urbanism

The Charter of the New Urbanism (on course website)

Todd Bressi, "Planning the American Dream," in The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), xxv-xlii.

Cliff Ellis, "The New Urbanism: Critiques and Rebuttals," Journal of Urban Design 7(3): 261-291.

Doloros Hayden, "Nostalgia and Futurism," in Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth (1820-2000) (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 201-215.

Essay #2 due

Week 9 (Mar 10): Nature in the Metropolis

Anne Spirn, "Improving Air Quality, Enhancing Comfort, and Conserving Energy," in The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 62-87.

Mike Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," in Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 93-147.

Michael Hough, "Principles for Regional Design," in Out of Place (New Haven: Yale) 179-195. [excerpt of chapter 8; stop at heading "The Making of a Memorable Landscape."]

David Owen, "Green Manhattan," The New Yorker, 18 October 2004, pp. 111-123.

Week 10 (Mar. 17): Reclaiming Public Places

Michael Sorkin, "Introduction," Variations on a Theme Park (New York: Noonday Press, 1992), xi-xv.

Edward Relph, "Modernity and the Reclamation of Place," in D. Seamon, ed., Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing (New York: SUNY Press, 1993) 25-40.

Jeffrey Hopkins, "Excavating Toronto's Underground Streets: In search of Equitable Rights, Rules, and Revenue," in Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake, eds., City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 63-81.

Film: *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

Week 11 (Mar 24) & Toronto Case Study Presentations
Week 12 (March 31)

Written reports due beginning of class, March 24

Week 13 (April 7): Planning the Just City

Leonie Sandercock, "Towards Cosmopolis: A postmodern utopia," *Towards Cosmpolis* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 163-202.

Summary of the City of Torontos Official Plan. 2002 (on Course Website)

Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil, "Still Planning to be Different? Toronto at the Turn of the Millenium." *DISP* 140, Vol.36, no. 1 (2000).

Kanishka Goonewardena and Adrian Blackwell, "Poverty of Planning: Tent City and the New Official Plan" (on Course Website).

Landscape science brings landscape ecology and urban ecology together with other disciplines and cross-disciplinary fields to identify patterns and understand social-ecological processes influencing landscape change. Landscape planning brings landscape architecture, urban and regional planning, landscape and ecological engineering, and other practice-oriented fields to bear in processes for identifying problems and analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating desirable alternatives for landscape change. Landscape design brings plans, designs, management prescriptions, policies and other activities

Century Urban Landscape Engels, F. (2011) [1845] "The Great Towns," in R. LeGates and F. Stout (eds.) *The City Reader*. 5. Week 5 (October 9) | Postmodern Urban Landscapes Ellin, N. (1999) "Themes of Postmodern Urbanism" in *Postmodern Urbanism*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 154-204. Relph, E. (1987) *Post-Modernism in Planning and Architecture: 1970-*, in *The Modern Urban Landscape*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 211-37. FILM: *Postmodernism* (2001) (approx. 30 minutes).