PLAN A6011  CITIES, NATURE, TECHNOLOGY
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation
Program in Urban Planning

Instructor: R. Beauregard
Mondays, 11-1  200 Buell

The purpose of this course is to explore the city as a socio-technical-ecological network. The focus is on how humans, nature, infrastructural and regulatory technologies, and built forms negotiate, accommodate, and collaborate among themselves to produce large, dense human settlements. We will be concerned not just with people and their organizations (e.g., governments, corporations) but also with buildings, sewers and streets, billboards, wetlands and rivers, plants and animals. The perspective of the course is derived from actor-network theory, science and technology studies, and urban political ecology. The goal is to provide the student with an historical and neo-materialist understanding of the evolution of cities that gives precedence to heterogeneous networks; that is, assemblages of human and non-human things. Explicitly rejected is any intervention designed for humans acting alone to engage the assumed passive materiality of the city.

Course Readings

The required course readings are available in a course packet that is available at Village Copier at 1181 Amsterdam Avenue at 118th Street.

Assignments

Students are expected to do the course readings prior to class and be ready to discuss them. There will also be two assignments: one asks you to investigate an urban object and through this object consider the materiality of the city. The other consists of three take-home examinations focused on course readings and lectures. The due dates for the assignments are shown on the Schedule below. Specific guidelines are available on the Courseworks web site under Files & Resources.

Grading

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Examination 1</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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Consultations

If you wish to meet individually about the course, please contact me. My e-mail address is rab48@columbia.edu and my office telephone is (212) 854-6280. My office is 305
Buell Hall. Office hours will be Monday 2-5 and Tuesday 3-5. Best would be for you to make an appointment.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

1. September 8  Cities as Socio-Technical-Ecological Networks  
2. September 15 Materiality, Heterogeneity, and Assemblages  
3. September 22 Ecology of Cities  
   Examination 1 Due  
4. September 29 Cities as Socio-Ecological Assemblages  
   Selection of Object Due  
5. October 6 Urban Political Ecology  
6. October 13 Infrastructural Technologies  
7. October 20 Regulatory Technologies  
8. October 27 Cyborg Urbanization  
   November 3 No Class  
   Draft of Paper Due  
9. November 10 Buildings  
   Examination 2 Due  
10. November 17 Obsolescence and Life-Cycles  
11. November 24 Obduracy  
   Final Version of Paper Due  
12. December 1 Demolition  
13. December 8 Adaptive Re-Use  
   December 8 Last Day of Classes  
   December 11 Examination 3 Due

**ASSIGNED READINGS**

1. **Cities as Socio-Technical-Ecological Networks**
   
   
   

2. **Materiality, Heterogeneity, and Assemblages**
   
   


3. Ecology of Cities


4. Cities as Socio-Ecological Assemblages


5. Urban Political Ecology


6. Infrastructural Technologies


7. Regulatory Technologies


8. Cyborg Urbanization


9. Buildings


Catherine Fennel. 2011. “’Project Heat’ and Sensory Politics in Redeveloping Chicago Public Housing,” Ethnography 12, 1:40-64.

10. Obsolescence and Life-Cycles


11. Obduracy


12. Demolition


13. Adaptive Re-use