URBD5703 - URBAN HISTORY AND THEORY

URBAN HISTORY AND THEORY

2017-18 1st Term, Wednesday 4:30am-7:15pm, Room AIT212
Instructor: Prof. Hendrik Tieben (hktieben@cuhk.edu.hk)
Teaching Assistant: Kuang Da
Description

Cities in the 21st century face a range of urgent challenges. This course explores the history of urbanization and its theories identifying reasons why cities evolved the way they did, and where we potentially could find answers to the pressing urban questions. The course is organized according to themes, exploring specific aspects of urban history, theory and design across different times and geographic contexts. Already in ancient Greek time, new cities were considered plans and their arrangement was reflected in theoretical and philosophical writings.

The academic and professional disciplines of urban planning and design emerged only in the late 19th century, at a time in which cities experienced a new scale of challenges due to industrialization, mass migration and precariously health conditions. In the mid-20th century the limitations of urban planning and design as state-organized top-down interventions became increasingly apparent, demanding for a fundamental redefinition of urban design, now as an open process with multiple stakeholders. The question how top-down planning and bottom-up processes can be constructively combined remains a key question for more successful urban design and planning. At the beginning of the 21st century, cities face new challenges in context of different forms of neo-liberalism and state capitalism, armed conflicts, mass-migration, social polarization, and climate change.

In this course, students will develop a historical perspective to understand how the current conditions of cities evolved and reflect about the limitations and potentials of urban design to tackle today’s pressing urban challenges.

Course Structure

The course is organized as a series of lectures and seminars. The content of the lectures is organized chronologically and includes examples from different geographical contexts. In the seminars, students will present and discuss seminal texts on urban history and theory. In two required papers, students develop their critical thinking and writing skills. The first paper gives the opportunity to learn from an international case study in urban design. In the second paper, students formulate their own research interests. This paper should be used to develop ideas and approaches, which later can be developed in their thesis project.
Objectives

• To understand urban history and theory through the discussions of key themes and texts;
• To appreciate the nature of urban design as an open process with multi-stakeholder;
• To establish criteria for the comprehensive evaluation of urban design interventions, considering their cultural, environmental, socio-economical and spatial impacts;
• To learn through case studies of international best practices;
• To foster critical reflection and an aptitude towards life-long learning.

Learning outcome

- Provide students with advanced research skills and develop their ability of critical thinking;
- Provide the knowledge about processes and ideas which have shaped contemporary urban environments;
- Develop awareness what the major urban challenges in the 21st century might be and how they could be addressed;
- Raise awareness about the responsibility of urban designers vis-à-vis current and future urban challenges;
- Provide with the historical and theoretical perspective to reflect and on the potentials and limitations of urban design as a discipline and evaluate design interventions.

Assignments

Each student has to deliver three assignments:

Presentation
- 20min group presentation (power point or keynote) of a given text

Paper 1
- Individual study of an international case study (6 pages with images)
  Case study topics will be announced in class.

Paper 2
- Study of a self-defined topic related to urban design using the theories and methods introduced in the lectures, seminars or studio (10 pages with images). The paper should aim at academic excellence. To reach this standard, students should benchmark their work against international peers for instance by submitting abstracts to an international urban design conference.

Assessment Scheme

For the final grades, the quality of the two papers, the presentation and the active involvement in class will be assessed. All students are expected to read the related seminar texts before each class to involve in meaningful discussions and broaden their theoretical horizon.
For the two papers the intellectual strength of the argumentation is valued most. However, a good or excellent grade can only be achieved if the papers are based on a solid research and present their content according to international academic standards (see below: Grade Descriptor). Papers failing to properly acknowledge all sources (including image sources) will be disqualified according to CUHK’s policy and regulations on honesty in academic work (see below). It is essential that the papers are handed in at the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- Reflective Journal Notes 10%
- Paper 1 35%
- Presentation 10%
- Paper 2 45%

**Academic Honesty:**

Attention is drawn to the 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/](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 (see form in Appendix)

**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.

**Readings:**

**Readings on Hong Kong:**

Christ, E. [et al], eds. (2010). *Hong Kong typology: an architectural research on Hong Kong building types*, Zurich: GTA.


**General Readings on Urban Design:**


UN-Habitat (2016), New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat

**Seminar Texts**


**Web Talks:**

Busquets, Joan - X Cities X Lines: A New Lens for the Urbanistic Project https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9clQHc_BCE

James Corner, Daniel Urban Kiley Lecture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxexRdv0Zn24

Crawford, Margaret - Future of Places https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVPXknfWFr4

Hou, Jeff

Engaging the Asian City: Engaging Which Asian City

g

Lydon, Mike, tactical urbanism, (X)po 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMFJxFxp1Q

Sennett, Richard, "The Open City" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EX1apBAS9A

Saunders, Doug, “Arrival City & Our Urban Futures” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCEfo2yTFZs

Charles Waldheim, "A General Theory" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKuA8LjZEs

Yan Meng, URBANUS https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ymI7ZYASU

Singapore: biophilic city https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMWU9xIM_k
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Seminar/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>Lecture I:</td>
<td>21st Century Urban Challenges and the Role of Urban Design and Place Making</td>
<td>Course introduction and abstract writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Lecture 2:</td>
<td>Analyzing Urban Form and Spaces</td>
<td>Reading Urban Forms (examples from Hong Kong &amp; Singapore)</td>
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</table>
| Sept. 27 | Lecture 4: | The Industrial City and Responses to its Challenges                                             | 3) Cerda, I., General Theory of Urbanization, 1867  
4) Howard, E., Garden Cities of To-morrow, 1898                                                                                           |
| Oct. 11  | Lecture 5: | The Modernist City and Responses to its Challenges                                              | 5) Le Corbusier, *The City of To-morrow and Its Planning*, 1929  
10) Grahame Shane D., “Asian Public Space since 1945: From Mao to the Mall and Beyond”, 2013                                                                 |
| Nov. 1   | Lecture 8: | Visiting Professor Anh Hoai Tran                                                              |                                                                                                                                                    |
14) Ng, E. ed. *Designing high-density cities for social and environmental sustainability*, London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2010  
| Nov. 29  |             | Joint reflections and summary                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Dec. 13  | Deadline Paper 2 |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                    |
| Dec. 14-16 | 10th IFoU Conference: The Entrepreneurial City (participation highly recommended)  |                                                                                                                                                    |
# Grade Descriptor of the Assessment Criteria (Paper 1 & 2, presentation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F (Fail)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall structure of essay</td>
<td>• A carefully articulated answer to the key questions.</td>
<td>• An effective answer to the key questions. However, some key issues may be overlooked or left out of the analysis.</td>
<td>• Provides fragmented points to the key questions.</td>
<td>• A poor answer to the key questions.</td>
<td>• Not answering the question or a very poor answer not directly addressing the stated question.</td>
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<td>• A clear introduction outlining the structure of the essay with explicit central statement addressing the key questions.</td>
<td>• There is an introduction but it does not have a central statement to position the work with reference to the key issues.</td>
<td>• There is no introduction to the structure of the essay and position with reference to the key issues is not stated upfront.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to construct coherent arguments</td>
<td>Arguments are carefully &amp; logically constructed, with strong evidence and data.</td>
<td>Arguments are presented with some solid evidence and information.</td>
<td>Arguments are presented with some evidence and information.</td>
<td>Arguments are made but are weakly supported by evidence.</td>
<td>Arguments are not supported by evidence or by irrelevant evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of wider literature</td>
<td>Extensive use of literature that goes well beyond the reference list.</td>
<td>Do not go beyond the provided reference list.</td>
<td>Use some of the provided literature.</td>
<td>Shows little use of literature.</td>
<td>Shows no use of literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of concepts/ issues</td>
<td>Shows a clear and thorough understanding of concepts and issues through development of synthesised frameworks and deliberations of clear insights.</td>
<td>A sound understanding of concepts/issu es with little evidence of efforts to synthesise beyond lectures and cited literature in class.</td>
<td>Shows understanding of concepts/issu es but efforts seem to confine to making reference to lecture notes.</td>
<td>Insufficient, inadequate or superficial understanding of concepts and issues.</td>
<td>Wrong understanding of concepts.</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td><strong>Clarity of presentation</strong></td>
<td>Presentation and paragraphing are done professionally. Figures and tables are clearly numbered and presented.</td>
<td>Presentation and paragraphing are done clearly. Figures and tables are in order.</td>
<td>The paper is not properly paragraphed and our laid out. Tables and figures are not properly numbered.</td>
<td>Paragraphing is not properly done. Figures are blurred and tables are confusing.</td>
<td>Poor presentation. No proper paragraphing. Tables and figures are done poorly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citation &amp; referencing</strong></td>
<td>All citation and referencing are done properly and consistently.</td>
<td>Some citations are not done properly. Some references are missing.</td>
<td>Citation is NOT done properly. References are missing or not listed properly.</td>
<td>Citations are missing (plagiarism, when identified, could cause failure). References are arranged haphazardly.</td>
<td>No citation and referencing is not properly done.</td>
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**English writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>No spelling mistakes.</th>
<th>Few spelling mistakes.</th>
<th>Quite a few spelling mistakes.</th>
<th>Clear evidence of not using spell check.</th>
<th>Many spelling mistakes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Few, if any, grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>Grammatical mistakes can be found, often due to weak English foundation.</td>
<td>Quite a few grammatical mistakes. Writing style difficult to follow.</td>
<td>Full of grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>Full of grammatical mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing style</td>
<td>Clear and effective writing style that facilitates understanding and communication.</td>
<td>Generally clear and effective writing style that serve to communicate.</td>
<td>Writing style that fails to communicate effectively.</td>
<td>Poor writing style that fails to articulate a particular point of view.</td>
<td>Poor readability.</td>
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Academic honesty and plagiarism
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With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign on the declaration. Students are required to submit a softcopy of the assignment to the VeriGuide system at: [https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/](https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/). After submission, student should receive a receipt and an academic honesty declaration statement via an e-mail from VeriGuide. **Please print the receipt and the declaration statement and submit them to the lecturer together with a hardcopy of the assignment.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>I declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged. I also acknowledge that I am aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the website <a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/</a>.</th>
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**Same Course Offered Before** (please check the boxes)