

## 4.244J/11.333J: Urban Design Seminar: *New Century Cities*

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TA: Viktorija Abolina, available upon request

Wednesdays 9:00-11:00AM in 10-401  
Open to all students; required for Urban Design Certificate Program

### Course Description

This seminar investigates the complex nature of ‘successful’ urban design, and attempts to identify and evaluate examples of urban design that are at the leading edge of practice -- anticipating the future. The seminar will deal with two parallel questions:

- *What are the key trends that will shape the future form and function of cities?*
- *How will these changes affect the role of the urban designer?*

If urban design may be defined as the process of giving physical design direction to the growth and conservation of cities, suburbs and regions, it must be seen as far more than an aesthetic phenomenon; it is also a social and political endeavor. The task of the urban designer is to build places that are successful across multiple dimensions: physical, social, financial, political, and aesthetic.

The first part of the seminar focuses on the **present**. We will survey the landscape of contemporary urban design practice, with the intent of categorizing major approaches and orientations, while also identifying urban design problems that seem to require new approaches. To gauge the complexity of evaluating urban design quality, during the first month of the seminar participants will look at urban design awards and competitions. Participants will compare the selection process and results of two awards programs that deal centrally with urban design: *Progressive Architecture Awards* for urban design and the *Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment*.

The second part of the semester will consider the **future**. Sessions will each focus on a key trend that is affecting and reorganizing the form of cities. Participants in the class, working in small groups, will select, research and present the trend including two to three representative case projects that may arguably be considered ‘of the future’. Our collective challenge will be to identify the trajectory of cities and the city design profession from both physical and social perspectives, leading to the *New Century City*. In 100 years, what will the city be like? The topics and cases, to be discussed and confirmed with the class, will represent major venues where change is now challenging conventional notions of urban design.

Topics covered over the past several years have included:

1. *New ways of living*
2. *Reclaiming the industrial landscape*
3. *Monumental city*
4. *Cities of learning*
5. *Event city*
6. *Artificial nature*
7. *Digital city design*

To provide a common focus for our thinking across the topics, and how the future might be realized, we will study the concept of a “campus” as one model which has been suggested to describe the emerging city. In particular, we will focus on MIT as a case – can it tell us anything about the future of cities and urban design? Teams will be asked to reflect on this question in researching the topics and the class will conclude with a “thought experiment” about the future of the campus.

### **Class Requirements**

Work for the class will include: two short individual “thought experiment” assignments, group leadership of a session on one of the above topics (or others suggested) and participation in class discussions. You will also be asked to keep a journal (any length) on discussions and readings. Individual assignments will count for 40% of your grade. The group presentation will count for 40% and participation in discussions will make up the remaining 20%.

Five or six sessions will be devoted to exploring future trends in urban design. At each session, a group of students will present their research and thoughts on the topic and cases that support the trend, and relationships to the MIT campus. Students will organize the class and lead discussion on their assigned days. At least two weeks prior to the assigned class session, students will be required to meet with the instructor to present their outline for the class, including:

- Definition of the trend and evidence of it in cities today;
- Precedents for the trend in specific cases;
- Prediction for how it will change city form; (reflecting on MIT)
- Questions for discussion; session schedule and student roles;
- Readings (to be distributed to class in advance).

A guest may be invited by the students to act as respondents to the presentation. After the team presentation, each group member will be asked to prepare a self-evaluation, and to confidentially evaluate the contribution of other members of his/her group.

All readings for the class will be on the Stellar class website, and should be completed in advance of each class. Please see the TA if you have questions.

**11.333J/4.244J: Urban Design Seminar**  
Spring 2012

**PART 1: URBAN DESIGN NOW**

**Feb 8 Places and Prospects**

Introduction to the seminar and subject material.

*What do urban designers do, and why do they do it? What are the larger forces that help give direction to the types of projects that seem to be emerging as important? Is there a difference between the conception of urban design held by architects seeking to intervene at a larger scale and by planners seeking to improve the quality of the physical environment?*

**Distribute Thought Experiment 1:** "City design awards competition".

Due in class, March 7.

**Feb 15 The Changing Nature of Cities and City Design**

Discussion of possible themes and cases to be explored during March and April.

*What are the important socio-environmental issues that urban designers must contend with currently? Are traditional approaches and practices of urban design still relevant to these challenges? Which seem outdated and which are "of the future"? How is the nature of cities changing and how does this affect urban design practice? What are the characteristics of a New Century City?*

**Readings:**

Lang, Jon. "The Nature of Urban Design Today; Basic Attitudes in Urban Design", *Urban Design: The American Experience* (NY: Van Nostrand, 1994). pp. 68-123.

"New Century City Developments" *Urban Land Institute*, 2009. See also:  
<http://newcenturycities.wordpress.com>

"Smarter Planet", IBM, 2012. [www.ibm.com/smarterplanet](http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet) (see links to Smart Cities and Buildings)

**Select topics and groups.**

**Feb 22 The Campus as an Urban Design Paradigm**

It has been suggested that the campus is a metaphor for the emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century city. The changing nature and emerging role of campuses in cities using the MIT campus as a model. (Come prepared to discuss your thoughts about MIT at the beginning of class.)

*How would you describe MIT in terms of its urban design? What is the campus, exactly? What are the plans for the campus? How does it perform in terms of the themes and qualities we have been discussing in class?*

**Guest:** Michael Joroff, Senior Lecturer

**Readings:**

William J. Mitchell, *Five Uneasy Pieces* (Unpublished manuscript about new buildings on the MIT campus)

MIT Campus Planning and Design, *Campus Development History* (manuscript)

Dennis Frenchman and Michael Joroff. *Daegu Institute of Science and Technology Program and Design Guidelines*, (Seoul, 2005: Science Technology Policy Institute.)

**Feb 29 Judging the Quality of Urban Design**

Presentation of the Rudy Bruner Awards.

*How should we judge "urban excellence"? Is this the same thing as "excellent urban design?" How do we judge the longevity and/or future significance of present day projects? Are these issues important?*

**Cases:** Rudy Bruner Awards, 2011

**Guest:** Simeon Bruner, founder of the Rudy Bruner Awards, Rudy Bruner Foundation

**Reading:**

View *2011 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* and previous awards at the Foundation website <http://www.brunerfoundation.org>. Come to class prepared with questions.

**Mar 7 City Design Award: Assessing what's important**

Discussion of student work.

***Thought Experiment 1 due in class today - be prepared to discuss***

## **PART 2: ASSESSING URBAN DESIGN FUTURES**

**Mar 12 Past Futures [SPECIAL TIME MONDAY MARCH 12, 9-11, REPLACES WED. MARCH 14]**

*How was the present envisioned in the past? What models of the future urban form and function emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? How effective were they in shaping the present? What do they say about current models of the future?*

**Examples:**

Industrial visions: Italian Futurists  
"World of Tomorrow"

Modernist visions: Broad-acre City  
Radiant City  
"Go-go" visions: Metabolists  
Archigram  
"No-go" visions: The 80's and 90's

**Distribute Thought Experiment 2:** "A day in a life"  
Due in class, May 16.

**Readings (skim):**

Corn, Joseph and Horrigan, Brian. "The Community of Tomorrow", *Yesterday's Tomorrows* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1984. pp. 34-53

Jencks, Charles. "Philosophies of the Future," and "Inexorable Trends," *Architecture 2000: Predictions and Methods*. London: Studio Vista, 1971. pp. 9-48.

Cook, Peter (ed.). "Instant City," *Archigram*. New York: Praeger, 1973. pp. 86-101.

Ross, Michael. "Megastructuring," and "Architechnology", *Beyond Metabolism: The New Japanese Architecture*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1978. pp. 22-36, 55-70.

Lubow, Arthur. "How Architecture Rediscovered The Future" *New York Times Magazine*, May 18, 2003

**March 21 – May 2 Topic Sessions**

**[NO CLASS MARCH 28: SPRING VACATION, SPECIAL SESSION MONDAY, APRIL 9, 9-11, REPLACES WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11]**

*Student teams will present and discuss one topic each week. Topics will be decided the second week of class. Participants should review the list of suggested future urban design trends and related readings/case studies at the end of this syllabus.*

*Teams are to upload selected readings to Stellar one week in advance of their class. Students will be asked to submit journals on topic sessions and readings following the final session on May 2; the content and length are up to you (however please reflect on at least two of the session topics).*

**May 9 Redesigning Urban Design**

Discussion of the future of city design.

*What are common themes among the topics we discussed? Do they add up to a larger vision of the future city? What topics have we not discussed? How will these affect the future form and function of the city? Of the MIT campus? What will urban designers be doing in fifty years?*

**Reading:**

Jon Lang, "Redesigning Urban Design," *Urban Design: The American Experience*. pp. 124-134.

Kevin Lynch, "City Design: What It is and How It Might Be Taught" (1980), in Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth, eds., *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 652-59.

**May 16 A Day in a Life: Bringing the trends together**

Student presentations and discussion.

***Thought Experiment 2 due in class today - be prepared to discuss***

## SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FUTURE URBAN DESIGN TRENDS

The following suggested list of possible topics and related cases and readings is provided to give students assistance in selecting/formulating topics for class discussion. The first seven topics have been presented in class in prior years and have readings and case study resources. These readings are in the class reader and on Stellar. Additional topics are suggested and you may suggest a new topic for the focus of a team. Your team will be responsible for distributing the readings one week prior to your presentation.

### **1: *New living and lifestyles: Homes and neighborhoods***

*How will demographic trends such as the aging population affect demands for housing design and the formation of neighborhoods? What will these trends mean for the existing urban housing stock? What affect will communications technology have on daily quality of life? What about new live-work arrangements? What are the alternatives to class-stratified, uniformly designed residential developments?*

#### **Examples:**

Technology: House\_n MIT  
CyberHome, Chino Hills, CA  
Miniature Homes

Aging: Hismen Hin-nu Terrace (San Antonio NDC), Oakland, CA  
Rosa Vista, Mesa, AZ  
Life Care Communities

Live-work Stoudburg Village in Adamstown, Pa  
Rosemary Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, Fla  
Marina Heights, Kirkland, Wash

#### **Possible Readings:**

Larson, Kent. "A Machine Crafted Home of the Future", *Architecture and Urbanism*.

Larson, Kent. "Changing Places & House\_n Research Topics" and "MIT Open Source Building Alliance"

Larson, Kent. "PlaceLab: A House\_n + TIAX Initiative"

Thomas Blank, "Future of Housing for Older Persons", *Older Persons and Their Housing: Today and Tomorrow*. Pp. 175-224.

## 2: Distributed cities: The new workplace

*How is work and production now being organized? Where is work being done? What is the changing nature of the “workplace” – does this concept make sense anymore? What effects will these changes have on real estate, development products and programming? What is the future of the high-rise office building? Factories? Other places of work?*

### Examples:

Industrial: VW Glaserne Factory, Dresden  
Autocity, Wolfsburg  
Carl Zeiss Plant/University, Jena, Germany

Offices: Chiat/Day Offices, New York  
SAS Headquarters, Stockholm  
BA Waterside Complex, Heathrow, London  
Mixed use urban offices

### Possible Readings:

Albrecht, Donald and Broikos Chrysanthe (eds.). “Introduction” and Russell, James S. “Form Follows Fad,” *On the Job: Design and the American Office*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. pp. 17-29; 49-73.

Duffy, Francis. “Two Traditions,” and “New Ways of Working”, *The New Office*. Conran: London, 1997. pp. 12-67.

Henn Architekten. *Die Glasern Manufactur*. Munich: Junius, 2003.

Henn Architekten. *Stahl and Form*. Duseldorf: Stahl-Informationen-Zentrum, 2001. pp. 1-31

Gladwell, Malcolm. “Designs for Working,” *The New Yorker*, Dec. 11, 2000. pp. 60-70.

## 3: Public places and media technology

*How will advanced communication technologies and media affect the form and function of cities? What technologies are available and who will control them? Will they change and energize the use of public space? Is a new kind of space emerging?*

### Examples:

2nd generation  
technopoles: Digital Mile, Zaragoza, Spain  
Seoul Digital Media City  
Media City:UK (BBC)  
Arabianranta, Helsinki  
Orsted Copenhagen

Ubiquitous cities  
Cisco: Connected Cities  
IBM: Smarter Cities  
Samsung: U-city project



### **Possible Readings:**

- Baker, Linda. "Urban renewal, the wireless way"  
[http://dir.salon.com/story/tech/feature/2004/11/29/digital\\_metropolis/index.html](http://dir.salon.com/story/tech/feature/2004/11/29/digital_metropolis/index.html)
- Castells, Manuel. "The Culture of Cities in the Information Age," *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. pp. 367-389
- Frenchman, Dennis. *Media Street Elements, Guidelines, and Illustrations*. MIT/Seoul Development Institute, 2003.
- Frenchman, Dennis, and Rojas, Francisca. "Zaragoza's Digital Mile: Designing for a New Public Realm," *Places*, 18-2, 2007 <http://www.iconarch.com/publish/ZaragozaDigitalMile.pdf>
- Frenchman, Dennis; Amendola, Giandomenico; Beamish, Anne; Mitchell, William J. *Technological Imagination and the Historic City*. Ligouori Editore, 2009.

### **4: Cities of learning: Schools, stories and meaning**

*How can schools become "centers" for communities? Can the construction of design-enhanced narratives and designed arts and culture districts give new value to places? How can we come to terms with the merits and drawbacks of "themed environments?" Is a new kind of public realm emerging that merges information and form?*

#### **Examples:**

- Public learning: Patterson, Union City and Trenton, NJ schools  
West Main Street Corridor, Charlottesville, VA  
UC Irvine Main Street, CA
- Narrative places: Llobregat River Corridor, Catalunya, Spain  
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Area  
Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Park, PA  
Automobile National Heritage Area, Detroit
- Arts districts: Worcester Arts District, Worcester, MA  
DownCity, Providence, Rhode Island

#### **Possible Readings:**

- Larsen, Kurt. Learning cities: the new recipe in regional development. *OECD Observer*: 73.
- Roy Strickland, "Neighborhoods for Learning", *Places*, (Vol 13 #1, 2000). pp 58-65.
- Dennis Frenchman, "Narrative Places and the New Practice of Urban Design", in Vale and Warner, eds. *Imaging the City* (New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research, 2001). pp 257-282.
- Matthew Wansborough and Andrea Mageean, "The Role of Urban Design in Cultural Regeneration," *Journal of Urban Design*, (Vol. 5, No. 2, 2000). pp 181-197.
- Icon Architecture and Roy Strickland with Urban Partner Isles, Inc., "Trenton Community-Based Schools Master Plan," May 2002.

## **5: Reclaiming the industrial landscape: Land and water infrastructure**

*How can industrial landscapes and underused urban port infrastructure be transformed to serve a post-industrial economy and culture? What is the right balance between preserving the waterfront for traditional uses and developing new uses and activities? Who should decide?*

### **Examples:**

Ports:	Huangpu River Vision Plan, Shanghai London Docklands Waterfront, Cape Town Flats Oxbow Long-Range Development Plan, Cleveland, OH La Vieux Port de Montreal
Transportation:	Central Artery, Boston Cheongyecheon Stream, Seoul Park East Expressway, Milwaukee Viaduc des Artes, Paris Promenade Plantee, Paris

### **Possible Readings:**

City of New York/Field Operations, *Freshkills Park Lifescape: Draft Master Plan 2006*

Campbell, Robert. "A Paris Match?" *Boston Globe*. March 12, 2002.

Dennis Pieprz, "Regenerating Recovered Waterfront," *Aquapolis*, 2002. pp. 34-41.

Lauren Heberly, "Understanding Brownfields Regeneration in the US," *Local Environment*, October 2006.

Song, Kimberly, "In Seoul, a Splash of the Past," *Wall Street Journal*. Jan. 7, 2004.

For additional project information: skim case studies at  
[www.boston.com/beyond\\_bigdig/cases](http://www.boston.com/beyond_bigdig/cases)

## **6: Artificial Nature: Natural systems in the city**

*How will cities be shaped by the need to sustain natural systems? What does this mean for managing the environment on a regional level? How will technology come into play?*

### **Examples:**

Landscape	Don River Basin, Toronto
Urbanism:	High Line, New York City, Lower Manhattan Charles River Basin Project
Development:	Masdar, UAE Woodlands, Texas Redland Preservation Plan, FL Farmview, Yardley, PA Portola Valley Ranch, Portola Valley, CA Village Homes, Davis, CA

**Possible Readings:**

Alan Berger, *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America*. (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006)

Anne Whiston Spirn, "Reclaiming Common Ground, Water, Neighborhoods and Public Spaces" in Robert Fishman, ed. *The American Planning Tradition*. (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999). pp. 297-313.

Anne Whiston Spirn, "Epilog, Visions of the Future," *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design*. pp. 263-275.

Living planet report, 2008. World wildlife foundation annual publication online  
[http://www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/all\\_publications/living\\_planet\\_report/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/living_planet_report/)

Mohsen Mostafavi (ed), *Ecological Urbanism* (Lars Muller, 2010)

**7: The Monumental City**

*How does symbolic or monumental architecture effect or shape the city? What are the current trends in monumental architecture and urban design? What symbols will we see in the future?*

**Examples:**

Washington D.C.

Beijing Olympic facilities and recent architecture

Paris cultural projects

Brasilia, Brazil

**Possible Readings:**

Jonathan Barnett - Chapter 2 "The Monumental City". *The Elusive City* (1986)

J. L. Sert, F. Léger, S. Giedion. "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943)

Alexander D'Hooghe. Volume #9 "A Theory of New Monumentality" (2006)

**8: Divided Cities: Security and the New Urban Culture**

**9: Social Justice and Urban Design**

**10: Reclaiming and reusing obsolete suburban infrastructure**

**11: Recovering from Disaster**

**12: The instant city: slums and overnight building settlements**

**13: Globalized architecture**

**14: The Temporary City**

## **MIT Notes**

**Disabilities.** If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform in class, please see the instructor early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

**Academic Integrity.** Plagiarism and cheating are not acceptable. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension. Please see the instructor if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism