

Urban Citizens 11.S951

A Series of 6 Lectures and Discussions  
 Led by Carlo Ratti, with Richard Sennett  
 Dates: November 9, 11, 16, 23, 30, December 7  
 Time: 5-8PM  
 Classroom: 9-255

**Instructor Information:**

Carlo Ratti, Professor of the Practice  
[ratti@mit.edu](mailto:ratti@mit.edu)

Richard Sennett, Visiting Professor, MIT  
[richard.sennett@nyu.edu](mailto:richard.sennett@nyu.edu)

**Course Description**

"Urban Citizens" explores how political participation is shaped in the city. Not a survey, the course presents a set of difficult problems, which the lectures lay out; discussion in each session focuses on answers, if there are any.

The main requirement is your engagement; we want to stimulate you to do work long-term on citizenship. The paper you will write is about your own future work, hopefully stimulated by, but not limited to, our concerns.

Because of the climate summit COP 26 in which Richard Sennett is involved, we have been obliged to compress the course into six weeks. The first three meetings of the six will be live with both of us; the fourth will have Sennett on Zoom, though the classroom discussion will be live; the last two will have everyone together.

**Class Schedule**

Week One (November 9) Two Spaces of Participation

We argue that there are two fundamental forms of urban political space: agoric and pnyxic. We try to show how they mold participation in different ways

Week Two (November 11 ) Liminal Ghettoes

We explore new ways that segregation and isolation are appearing in cities, in contrast to classic territorial ghettos. We ask how the new ghetto-ization might be contested politically.

Week Three (November 16) The City-State

We explore the city as a self-governing polity. How much can people in cities be masters of their own fortunes? And who are "the people" -- do they include people temporarily in the city, like tourists or refugees? What are their obligations, and their rights?

Week Four (November 23) The Politics of Impersonality

We take up the classic proposition advanced by Hannah Arendt that citizenship should transcend identity politics; citizenship is impersonal. Was Arendt right? Can people

practice citizenship beyond the confines of self, class, race, or group identity? Is impersonality a form of equality?

Week Five (November 30) The Problem of Surveillance

We present ways in which new technologies of surveillance are affecting urban life. The issues they pose cannot be reduced, we argue, to a simple opposition of surveillance versus freedom.

Week Six (December 7) Cities and Climate Change

We try to work out how climate change will affect citizenship, and in particular whether climate change can be dealt with democratically.

### **Return to in-person teaching/learning**

MIT and DUSP are excited at the opportunity for a return to in-person teaching and learning after 2+ semesters of remote life. To ensure that all classes can and will be delivered in person, MIT has worked hard to put into place policies, procedures and technologies to maximize the likelihood of a safe and uninterrupted semester. That said, the ever-evolving pandemic means we need to be prepared. If any student in class tests positive for covid-19, MIT Medical has established clear procedures for ensuring safety of everyone and MIT's Class Notification and Support Team will help that student continue learning to with the least possible disruption. If any of the Instructors in this class are unable to attend in person due to covid-19, we will work together with the leadership of DUSP, the School, and the Institute to ensure minimum disruption.

In the case of the need for any remote teaching, we will use this "zoom classroom": <https://mit.zoom.us/j/97416696631?pwd=NVpsK2c2N1VrS3pkamRLRm04c3lLdz09>  
passcode: Urban

### **Inclusive Classroom**

MIT values an inclusive environment. Carlo and Richard hope to foster a sense of community in this classroom and consider this classroom to be a place where students will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with us.

### **Special Accommodations**

MIT is committed to the principle of equal access. Students who need disability accommodations are encouraged to speak with Disability and Access Services (DAS), prior to or early in the semester so that accommodation requests can be evaluated and addressed in a timely fashion. If you have a disability and are not planning to use accommodations, it is still recommended that you meet with DAS staff to familiarize yourself with their services and resources. Please visit the [DAS website](#) for contact information.

### **Academic Integrity**

In this course, we will hold you to the high standard of academic integrity expected of all students at the Institute. We do this for two reasons. First, it is essential to the learning

process that you are the one doing the work. We have structured the assignments in this course to enable you to gain a mastery of the course material. Failing to do the work yourself will result in a lesser understanding of the content, and therefore a less meaningful education for you. Second, it is important that there be a level playing field for all students in this course and at the Institute so that the rigor and integrity of the Institute's educational program are maintained.

Violating the Academic Integrity policy in any way (e.g., plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, cheating, etc.) will result in official Institute sanction. Possible sanctions include receiving a failing grade on the assignment or exam, being assigned a failing grade in the course, having a formal notation of disciplinary action placed on your MIT record, suspension from the Institute, and expulsion from the Institute for very serious cases.

Please review MIT's [Academic Integrity](#) policy and related resources (e.g., working under pressure; how to paraphrase, summarize, and quote; etc.) and contact me if you have any questions about appropriate citation methods, the degree of collaboration that is permitted, or anything else related to the Academic Integrity of this course.

### **Student Support**

#### **Graduate Students: GradSupport**

As a graduate student, a variety of issues may impact your academic career including faculty/student relationships, funding, and interpersonal concerns. In the Office of Graduate Education (OGE), [GradSupport](#) provides consultation, coaching, and advocacy to graduate students on matters related to academic and life challenges. If you are dealing with an issue that is impacting your ability to attend class, complete work, or take an exam, you may contact GradSupport by email at [gradsupport@mit.edu](mailto:gradsupport@mit.edu) or via phone at (617) 253-4860.

*Website:* <https://oge.mit.edu/development/gradsupport/>