Course Description

This seminar explores how the buildings, streets, and public spaces of a city relate to its economic, social, and political life. The seminar thus bridges visual studies and the social sciences. The seminar is pro-active. In addition to classroom readings and discussions, you will work in small teams to photograph and film particular projects in the city. Practitioners and planners of various urban design projects in the city will speak about their work, and I'd hope also that you'd become involved in one of these projects. In sum, the course aims to sensitize you to the urban environment, as well as introduce you to the skills urbanists use at work.

The course is divided into three parts. The first orients you to the field. The second is about some key issues in cities and what they literally look like. The third explores different forms of urban design, occurring today, as projects or in places in London. Throughout, your team will photograph, film and edit together, but your term paper I'd like you to write individually.

Urban design work is in one way more casual and in another more intense than normal academic course-work. There are texts I'll assign during the term, but it's really a matter of sifting through what ideas prove most useful to you. There are no right and wrong answers about what cities should look like.

The seminar ends by the teams showing work they've done to the whole group; I'll also invite to these sessions some architects, planners, and members of the public involved in the particular places where you've been working.

February 3, 2016
Orientation: What Does a Good City Look Like?

Images: 1. Liverpool St. versus Canary Wharf  
2. Bedford Square versus Old Street

PART ONE: THE VISUAL AND THE SOCIAL

February 10, 2016
Urbanism: The Founders

Required Readings:
1. Richard Sennett, “The Great Generation” in Making and Dwelling. (PDF available on course site.)
2. Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” in Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities. (PDF on course site.)
Additional Readings:


February 17, 2016
Urbanism: The Divide

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

Images: Plan Voisin, Charter of Athens, Greenwich Village

February 24, 2016
Practicum 1: Visit to Olympic Site

Prepare with online photography training materials:
https://wp.nyu.edu/seeingthecity/photography/

A site visit and initial photography will be scheduled for either February 27th or 28th.

March 2, 2016
Practicum 2: Analysis of Site Photographs with Cassim Shepard

Teams will present the photos they’ve taken of the site in class. Photographer/videographer Cassim Shepard will join.

Images: 1. Team presentations
2. Urban photography of Jacob Riis, Walker Evans, Thomas Struth

PART TWO: THE VISIBILITY OF POWER

March 9, 2016
About Ghettoes, Old and New
Required Readings:
1. Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea*. (Advance copy will be distributed.)

Additional Readings:
2. Richard Sennett, “Fear of Touching: The Jewish Ghetto in Renaissance Venice” in *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. (PDF on course site.)

Images:
1. Jewish Ghetto, Photos from exhibit “Harlem on my Mind”
2. 6th Avenue from Duneier’s book, *Sidewalk*
3. Muslim districts, banlieues of Paris

March 16, 2016
The Iconography of Global Finance

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:
2. Harvey, David, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*

Images: Class assignment: Team photographs of 4 London skyscrapers: the “cheesegrater,” the “gherkin,” the “walky-talkie”, and the “shard”

March 23, 2016
Gentrification and Its Limits

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:
2. Suzanne Hall, *City, Street and Citizen: The Measure of the Ordinary*.

Images: Class assignment: Team photographs of Old Street

March 30, 2016
Spring Break

April 6, 2016
Putting Parts One and Two Together

Lecture and class discussion. No additional reading.

PART THREE: URBAN DESIGN

April 13, 2016
Practicum 3: Introduction to Google Sketch-up with Guido Robazza
Teams will begin visualizing their designs for the Olympic site. Architect/lecturer Guido Robazza will join the class to walk you through manipulating the model that he has created for this design purpose.

**April 20, 2016**
Teams will use class time to continue work on their designs.

**April 27, 2016**
Teams will present initial project designs to Richard Sennett and Guido Robazza for bench crits.

**May 4, 2016**
Teams will use class time to continue work on their designs.

**May 11, 2016**
Public presentations of projects to people from the Olympic Development Authority and the Cambridge University Department of Urban Studies.

**May 18, 2016**
Week 2 of final project presentations.

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*Of Interest (Optional): “Screening the City” series at LSE Cities*

LSE Cities will be hosting a film series this term entitled “Screening the City”. Beginning with King Vidor’s foundational *The Crowd* (1928) on Tuesday 2nd February, it will open out some of the rich formal and theoretical intersections that tie the cinema to the modern city. The series includes Jean-Luc Godard’s *Alphaville* (1965) on Tuesday 16th February and Patrick Keiller’s *London* (1994) on Tuesday 1st March.

Each screening will take place at 32 Lincoln’s Inn Fields (32L.G.03), and begin at **6.15pm**. There will be a short introduction to each film and opportunity for discussion after.