**CITY LITERACY (3-0-3)**

Summer 2011

**Sabir Khan**

Associate Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture

**Overview**

This course looks at cities and at city life with an eye toward raising *city literacy:*  the ability of city users (residents, commuters, tourists) to make sense not only of the city but of their experience of it as well.

The course frames the city as both material and social space, where everyday urban experience intersects with *palimpsests* (traces of past actions) and *projections* (plans for future projects).

The course deploys direct engagement and cross-disciplinary perspectives to explore how exemplary cities, such as Barcelona, are conceived, perceived, negotiated, and lived.

**Learning Goals**

An ability to observe, document, analyze, and reflect upon the relationship between material and social space;

An understanding of the relationship between design, civic values, and quality of life;

An awareness of how everyday urban experience negotiates traces of past actions and plans for future projects;

A social, cultural, political, economic, and morphological understanding of Barcelona's two-thousand-year urban evolution.

**Outline**

The course is divided into four parts:

1. Part One provides a chronological account of Barcelona, from its origins as a provincial Roman town to the capital of the medieval Mediterranean; from its nineteenth century resurgence at the vanguard of Iberian industrialization to its eclipse during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship (1936-1976); and from its exuberant post-Franco democratic rebirth to its uneven post-Fordist development since 1999.

2. Part Two retraces this history thematically, focusing on Barcelona's capacity to continually reinvent itself physically, socially, economically, and culturally since the 1850s and, especially, over the last thirty-five years since the restoration of democratic rule at the regional and local level. This section revisits, through the multiple perspectives of politicians, officials, professionals, citizens, neighborhood groups, and critics, the notions of the city and of city life that have been ascendant in Barcelona during this period.

3. Part Three focuses on the numerous projects that have transformed the social and physical fabric of Barcelona during this period. These projects serve as exemplary case studies of engaged -- top-down and bottom-up -- social engineering through physical and cultural interventions.

4. Part Four opens up the legacy of the Barcelona Model to comparative evaluation. Contemporary approaches and projects from diverse cities -- Boston, Atlanta, New York -- are discussed in terms of the lessons learned in Barcelona.

**Schedule**

*Part One: Chronological*

*Weeks 1-2; Sessions 1 thru 6*

1. From Roman Colony to Capital of the Medieval Mediterranean.

2. Industrialization.

3. The Cerdà *Eixample*: Beyond the Walls.

4. Metropolitan Scale: Beyond the Rivers.

5. Post-Franco to the Olympics: The "Barcelona Model".

6. Post-Fordist Restructuring: From 1992 to the "Crisis of 2008".

*Part Two: Thematic*

*Weeks 3-4; Sessions 7-12*

7. "Who is the City For?": Citizens, Civic Values, and the Role of Design.

8. "Enlightened Despots": Two Decades of Exemplary City Government.

9. A "Europe of Cities": Barcelona Beyond the Spanish State.

10. "Brand Barcelona": Cultural Capital, Global Imaginary.

11. "Catalan and Cosmopolitan": Immigration from Near and Far.

12. "La Rambla": The Street Perfected.

*Part Three: Transformative Projects*

*Weeks 5-7; Sessions 13-21*

13. The Recuperation of the Ciutat Vella: Surgery in the Old City.

14. Barri Xino to Rambla de Raval: Social Engineering in El Raval.

15. The Restoration of Eixample: Pro Eixample.

16. Nou Barris: Urbanizing the Peripheral Housing Estates.

17. The 19th century towns: Gràcia, St. Andreu, St. Martí.

18. The Waterfront: from Montjuïc to Forum.

19. Poble Nou: @22 and the Conversion of Industrial Landscapes.

20. Transit Systems: Trams, Bikes, Parking.

21. Current Discourses: "Smart City", Agenda 21, "Creative Economies".

*Part Four: Comparisons*

*Weeks 8-9; Sessions 22-26*

22. "Second Cities": Barcelona / Atlanta (Atlantic Station, Belt Line).

23. "Transformative Projects": Barcelona / Boston (Back Bay, Big Dig).

24. Small-scale "Urbanismo": Barcelona / New York (The Bloomberg Era).

25. Urbanism Online *Racons Públics* / "By the City For the City".

26. "Urbanism without Urbanization": Barcelona's New Post-Socialist Dispensation.

**Requirements**

Students are required to attend lectures, participate in class discussions, and complete the assigned readings and course assignments.

There are three assignments:

*Take-Home Exam at Mid-term.* 40% of course grade. Students prepare responses to questions and essay topics drawn from lectures, readings, and walks through the city.

*Project One: Public Space.* 30% of course grade. Observation, documentation, and analysis of a public space and its comparison with other public spaces within the European Prize for Urban Design Archive.

*Project Two: Urban Actions Since 1976: From the Curb Cut to the Ring Road.* 30% of course grade. Focused research on one aspect of Barcelona's urban transformation. The choice of topic ranges in scale: Sidewalk, Street, Block, Neighborhood, Districts, Transit Systems, Parks, Civic Amenities (Civic Centers, Municipal Markets, etc.), Housing, etc.

Students are strongly encouraged, though not required, to participate in the weekly group walks through different parts of the city.

**Reading Assignments**

*Required Readings*

de Solà-Morales, Manuel (2008), *Ten Lessons on Barcelona: Urbanistic Episodes that have made the Modern City*, Barcelona. (in its entirety).

Marshall, Tim (2004), *Transforming Barcelona*, London. (read the following chapters):

Nel.lo, Oriol, “Urban Dynamics, Public Policies and Governance in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona”.

Ferrer, Amador, “Behind Barcelona’s Success Story – Citizen Movements and Planners’ Power”.

Maragall, Pasqual, “Governing Barcelona".

Bohigas, Oriol, “Ten Points for an Urban Methodology”.

Borja, Jordi, “ The City, Democracy, and Governability: the Case of Barcelona”.

Esteban, Juli, “The Planning Project: Bringing Value to the Periphery, Recovering the Center”.

Benach, Nuria, “Public Spaces in Barcelona”.

Balibrea, Mari Paz, “Urbanism, Culture, and the Post-Industrial City: Challenging the ‘Barcelona Model'".

*Additional Readings*

Brash, Julian (2011), "The Neo-Liberalization of Governance in New York City", in *Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City*, Athens GA.

Cosgrove, Denis (2004), "Carto-City, Mapping, and Urban Space", in *Mapping a City*, Hamburg.

Espuche, Albert (1999), "Why Public Space", in *The Reconquest of Public Space, Europe1980-1999*, Barcelona.

Jerram, Leif (2011), "Building Utopia: How Cities Shaped our Lives and Our Minds", in *StreetLife: The Untold History of Europe's Twentieth Century,* Oxford.

Kohn, Margaret, (2004), “The Mauling of Public Space”, in *Brave New Neighborhoods*, New York.

Marshall, Alex (2000), "The Master Hand", in *How Cities Work*, Austin TX.

Resina, Joan (2008), "The City as Social Form", in *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity*, Stanford CA.

Sorkin, Michael, (2009), “The Stairs”, in *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan*, London.

*On Public and Civic Space*

Carrera, Judit (2010), *In Favor of Public Space: Ten Years of the European Prize for Urban Public Space*, Barcelona.

Fairfield, John (2010), *The Public and its Possibilities: Triumphs and Tragedies in the American City,* Philadelphia.

Loukaitou-Sideras, Anastasia (2009), *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space,* Cambridge MA.

Rowe, Peter, (1997), *Civic Realism*, Cambridge, MA.

*On Cities, Streets, Sidewalks, and Walking*

Jacobs, Allan (1995), *Great Streets*, Cambridge MA.

Jacobs, Jane (1961), *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* New York.

Kleiniewski, Nancy (1997), *Cities, Change, and Conflict*, Belmont CA.

Kostoff, Spiro (2005), *The City Assembled: Elements of Urban Form through History*, New York.

Solnit, Rebecca (2000), *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, New York.

Whyte, William (1998), *City: Rediscovering the Center*, New York.

**Additional Sources for Reference and Consultation**

*Barcelona*

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2011), *22@ Barcelona: 10 Years of Urban Renewal*, Barcelona.

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2008), *Barcelona, Transformació: Plans i Projectes*, Barcelona.

Ajuntament de Barcelona (1996), *Barcelona: La Segona Renovació*, Barcelona.

Busquets, Joan (2010), *Cerdà and the Barcelona of the Future, Reality vs. Project*, Barcelona.

Busquets, Joan (2005), *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City*, Cambridge MA.

Busquets, Joan (2003), *Barcelona: A Past with a Future*, Barcelona.

Cabrera i Massanes, Pere (2007), *Ciutat Vella de Barcelona: Memòria d'un Procés Urbà*, Barcelona.

Degen, Mónica (2008), *Sensing Cities: Regenerating Public Life in Barcelona and Manchester*, New York.

Delgado, Manuel (2005), "What is the 'Barcelona Model' a Model Of?", *De la Barcelona Model a la Barcelona Real,* Barcelona.

Gimenez, Alex (2004), *Racons Públics: Concurs de Participació Ciutadana En El Disseny De La Ciutat,* Barcelona.

Mateo, Josep (1996), *Barcelona Contemporània 1856-1999*, Barcelona.

McNeill, Donald (1999), *Urban Change and the European Left: Tales from the New Barcelona*, London.

Serratosa, Albert (1994), *Cerdà Urbs i Territori Planning Beyond the Urban*, Barcelona

Sobrepere, Joan (2010), *The Cerdà Agenda: Constructing Metropolitan Barcelona*, Barcelona.

Peran, Marti (2008), *Post-It City: Occasional Urbanities*, Barcelona

Zanfi, Claudia (2006), *Going Public. Mediterranean Atlas: Istanbul, Beirut, Nicosia, Tel Aviv, Alexandria, Barcelona,* Milan.

**Websites for Reference and Discussion**

[http://theatlanticcities.com](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2ftheatlanticcities.com" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://americancity.org](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2famericancity.org" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://inhabit.com/nyc](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2finhabit.com%2fnyc" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://urbanchoreography.net/](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2furbanchoreography.net%2f" \t "_blank)  
   
 [http://inhabit.com/nyc](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2finhabit.com%2fnyc" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://urbandesignweek.tumblr.com](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2furbandesignweek.tumblr.com" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://www.ifud.org](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ifud.org" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://publicspace.org](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fpublicspace.org" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://www.adb2003.org/raconspublics](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.adb2003.org%2fraconspublics" \t "_blank)  
   
 [http://TheSmarterCity.com](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fTheSmarterCity.com" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://senseable.mit.edu](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fsenseable.mit.edu" \t "_blank)  
   
[http://www.streetnet.org.za/](https://outlook.gatech.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=ef48e2becf7a45f58e700d91b385c0b8&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.streetnet.org.za%2f" \t "_blank)