

CourseNo: ARCHA4515_001_2013_3

Meeting Location: [AVERY HALL 408](#)

Meeting Time: F 11:00A-01:00P

Instructor Information: [Kazys Varnelis](#)

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

A4515: Network Culture.

The History of the Contemporary

Fall 2013 Professor Kazys Varnelis

Description

The purpose of this seminar is to come to an advanced historical understanding of the changed conditions that characterize our networked age. As a history of the contemporary, the seminar is organized around a series of topics tracing a genealogy of present-day culture, focusing on the network not merely as a technology with social ramifications but rather as a cultural dominant that connects changes in society, economy, aesthetics, urbanism, and ideology. It's a primary thesis of this course that the network is not an innocent technology but rather a social construction that serves to naturalize and exacerbate uneven growth and the distribution of power.

Topics to be addressed include network theory, changing concepts of time and space, the rise of networked publics, contemporary poetics, new forms of subjectivity, and methods of control. Throughout, we will make connections between architecture, urbanism and this insurgent condition.

The theme for fall 2013 is Uneven Growth and responds to a MoMA exhibition that will open in October 2014. Students will be welcome to participate in the workshop at MoMA leading to the exhibition and are encouraged to pursue the topic of Uneven Growth in networks in their research projects.

Requirements

Participation: 20%

Each class will consist of a presentation by the instructor on selected themes, followed by an in-depth discussion in seminar. Students are expected to prepare all readings in order to facilitate a discussion in which all students participate. Active participation by all students in each session is required.

Tumblr: 20%

Each student is expected to maintain a tumblelog on tumblr.com and to post at least twice a week. Beyond mere reblogging of information pertinent to the course, the tumblelog will form a record and commentary upon their research during the semester.

Research Project: 60%

For a research project, students have an option of either undertaking a curatorial project or an essay. Either is due on Monday, December 16.

The curatorial project will explore the topic of uneven growth in networks. The Netlab's specific focus in this exhibit is research on the future of uneven growth in Hong Kong but students are encouraged to explore uneven growth as a constituent of networks.

Both design and scholarship are integral to the term project, which should take the form of an exhibit catalog as might be found in a museum. A carefully curated and designed book will be accompanied a **2,000 word essay** (roughly 10 pages double spaced, 12 points) on the curated material. If students choose to write an essay, they should turn in an essay of roughly 4,000 words (roughly 20 pages double spaced, 12 points).

Plagiarism of any sort will result in immediate failure.

Reading

All readings will be available on-line.

- | | | |
|----|-------|---|
| 01 | 09.06 | Introduction |
| 02 | 09.13 | An Overview of Networks
Manuel Castells, "Informationalism, Networks, and the Network Soc |

		<p>Theoretical Blueprint. In Castells, ed. <i>The Network Society: A Cross Perspective</i> (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004), 3-45.</p> <p>Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," <i>Negotiations</i>, 197. York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 177-182.</p> <p>Charlie Gere, "The Beginnings of Digital Culture," <i>Digital Culture</i> (L Reaktion, 2008), 21-50.</p> <p>Optional: Kazys Varnelis, "Conclusion: The Meaning of Network Cult <i>Networked Publics</i>, 145-163.</p> <p>Network Theory</p> <p>Albert-László Barabási, "Six Degrees of Separation," "Small Worlds, and Connectors," <i>Linked: The New Science of Networks</i> (Cambridge Perseus, 2002), 25-63.</p> <p>Nicholas Carr, "From the Many to the Few" <i>The Big Switch: Rewirin from Edison to Google</i> (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 127-149.</p> <p>Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail," <i>Wired</i>, October 2004, http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html</p> <p>Clay Shirky, "Power Laws, Weblogs and Inequality," <i>Clay Shirky's W the Internet</i>. http://www.shirky.com/writings/powerlaw_weblog.h</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," <i>American Journ Sociology</i> 78 (May 1973), 1360-1380.</p> <p>Duncan J. Watts, "The Connected Age," <i>Six Degrees: The Science o Age</i>, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 19-42.</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, "The Californian Ideology," http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/theory-californianideology-main.html.</p> <p>Saskia Sassen, "Electronic space and power," <i>Journal of Urban Tech</i> (1997): 1-17.</p> <p>Alexander R. Galloway, "Physical Media," <i>Protocol: How Control Ex Decentralization</i>, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 29-53.</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Saskia Sassen, "On Concentration and Centrality in the Global City," and Peter J. Taylor, eds., <i>World Cities in a World-System</i> (Cambrid Cambridge University Press, 1995), 63-78.</p> <p>Stephen Graham, "Communication Grids: Cities and Infrastructure," Sassen, <i>Global Networks. Linked Cities</i> (London: Routledge, 2002), Kevin Phillips, "Preface," "Introduction. The Panic of August," "Fin New Real Economy?" <i>Bad Money</i>. (New York: Penguin, 2009), xi-lxxi</p>
03	09.20	
04	09.27	
05	10.04	<p>Postmodernism and Periodization</p> <p>David Harvey, "Fordism" and "From Fordism to Flexible Accumulati <i>The Condition of Postmodernity</i>, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1989), 125</p>

Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July/August 1984): 53-92.

Jeffrey Nealon, "Once More, With Intensity, Foucault's History of Power," *Foucault Beyond Foucault*, 24-53.

Optional:

Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Townsend, Washington: Bunker Books, 1983), ix-xvi.

Jean François Lyotard, "introduction" "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984), xxiii-xxv, 71-82.

Time

Jean Baudrillard, "The End of the Millennium or the Countdown," *Essays on Symbolic Exchange* 26 (1997): 447-55.

Bruce Sterling, "Atemporality for the Creative Artist,"

06 10.11 <http://www.transmediale.de/en/keynote-bruce-sterling-us-atemporal-artist/>

transcribed:
http://www.wired.com/beyond_the_beyond/2010/02/atemporality-creative-artist/

optional: Robert Sumrell and Kazys Varnelis, "Personal Lubricants. Space and Scenario Planning," *New Geographies* 02 (2010), 127-132

Space

Michel Foucault, "Docile Bodies," *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 135-156.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Capitalist Sovereignty, Or Administering the Global Society of Control," *Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 325-350.

07 10.18 Marc Augé, "Prologue" and "From Places to Non-Places," in *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, (London; New York: Verso, 1995), 1-6. 75-115.

Hans Ibelings, "Supermodernity," *Supermodernity* (Rotterdam: NA Publishers, 1998), 55-102.

Optional:

Kazys Varnelis and Marc Tuters, "Beyond Locative Media: Giving Shape to the Virtual," *Journal of Cultural Studies* 15 (2002), 1-15.

Internet of Things,” *Leonardo* 39, No. 4 (2006): 357-363.

08 10.25 **Uneven Growth Workshop, MoMA**

Subjectivity

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” *On Individuality and Forms*, ed. David Levine, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 324-339.

Kenneth J. Gergen, “Social Saturation and the Populated Self,” *The Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 48-80.

09 11.01

Brian Holmes, “The Flexible Personality. For a New Cultural Critique,” *Transversal*, <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/holmes/>

Jeffrey Nealon, “Once More, With Intensity, Foucault’s History of Power Revisited,” *Foucault Beyond Foucault*, 24-53.

Warren Neidich, “From Noopower to Neuropower: How Mind Becomes Matter,” *Cognitive Architecture: From Bio-politics to Neo-politics; Architecture & Mind in the Age of Communication and Information* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010), 538-581.

Publics

Yochai Benkler, “Chapter 1. Introduction: A Moment of Opportunity Challenge” and “Chapter 4. The Economics of Social Production,” *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedoms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 1-28 and 91-127.

10 11.08

Bill Wauson, “My Crowd. Or Phase 5: A Report from the Inventor of the Mob,” *Harper’s Magazine* (March 2006), 56-66.

Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded Americans is Tearing Us Apart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 1-77.

Optional

Selections from Michael J. Weiss, *The Clustered World: How We Live, How We Buy, and What it All Means About Who We Are* (New York: Little and Company, 1999).

Poetics

Geert Lovink, "Blogging: The Nihilist Impulse," *Eurozine* (2007), <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-01-02-lovink-en.html>

- 11 11.14 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2000), 20-21.
- Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), excerpts.
- Jordan Crandall, "Showing," <http://jordancrandall.com/showing/information>

Complexity

Joseph A. Tainter, "Introduction to Collapse," *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-21.

- 12 11.21 Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 13-32.
- Charles Perrow, "Normal Accident at Three Mile Island." *Society* 18, (1981): 17-26.

- 13 11.29 Thanksgiving Break / No Class