

Philosophies of the City

Columbia University GSAPP

Architecture A6779

Fall 2014

T 11am-1pm

300S Buell Hall

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Office hours: Th 3pm-5pm

Buell Center, 3rd fl. Buell Hall

There is much literature available today on the empirical characteristics of the “global city.” A good portion of this literature also offers a cohesive conceptual frame in which to understand these characteristics. But there is relatively little work on cities today that can be described as philosophical, not in the sense of an academic discipline but rather, as a style of critical thought.

Although in the West this tradition runs from Plato to Augustine and beyond, a useful foundation for understanding the city as an object of critical, philosophical reflection was laid in the early part of the twentieth century by a variety of German thinkers concerned with the problem of the modern metropolis.

This reading seminar will review key aspects of early twentieth-century metropolitan thought and follow these forward into the present, confronting them with new historical formations along the way. Special emphasis will be given to the interactions of capitalism and culture, and to the social relations of modernization, including the role of architecture and urbanism therein. The goal is not a philosophical metalanguage but rather, the elaboration of a critical discourse by which urban artifacts and phenomena can be interpreted, even as they contribute to that discourse.

Students are expected to participate in class discussion, present at least one reading to the class, and write a research paper on a subject related to at least one set of readings, the subject matter of which is to be determined in individual meetings during office hours.

All required readings are available on Courseworks, except as follows:

- * Required—available at Bookculture
- ** On reserve in Avery Library

Students with reading abilities in languages other than English are encouraged to read translated texts in the original language, when possible.

Readings

Week 1: Introduction: Capital, Metropolis, and the Global City

9/2

Karl Marx, Capital, Vol.1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976), Chap. 1, Sect. 3, "The Value-Form, or Exchange-Value," 138-162; and Sect. 4, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret," 163-187.

Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), Chap. 1, "Country and City," 1-8; Chap. 2, "A Problem of Perspective," 9-12; Chap. 23, "The City and the Future," 272-278; Chap. 24, "The New Metropolis," 279-288; Chap. 25, "Cities and Countries," 289-306.

Saskia Sassen, The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), Chap. 1, "Overview," 3-15.

Recommended

Friedrich Engels, The Housing Question (New York: International Publishers, 1935).

Neil Smith, Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984).

Week 2: The Philosophy of Money

9/9

Georg Simmel, The Philosophy of Money, 2nd Ed. ed. David Frisby, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (New York: Routledge, 1990), Chap. 1, "Value and Money," Sect. I, 59-78; Chap. 6, "The Style of Life," Sects. I-III, 429-512. (EBOOK)

Recommended

David Graeber, Debt: The First 5,000 Years (New York: Melville House, 2011), Chap. 12, "(1971—The Beginning of Something To Be Determined)," 361-391.

Reinhold Martin, "Financial Imaginaries: Toward a Philosophy of the City," Grey Room 42 (Winter 2011): 60-79. (JSTOR)

Week 3: The "Spirit" of the Metropolis

9/16

Georg Simmel "The Stranger," and "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in Kurt H. Wolff ed. and trans., The Sociology of Georg Simmel (New York: Free Press, 1950), 402-424,

* Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Peter Baehr and Gordin C. Wells (New York: Penguin, 2002), Part I, Section 2, "The 'Spirit' of Capitalism," 8-28, and Part II, Section 2, "Asceticism and the Capitalist Spirit," 105-122.

Recommended

** David Frisby, Cityscapes of Modernity: Critical Explorations (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2001), "The City Interpreted: Georg Simmel's Metropolis," 100-158.

Week 4: Passages

9/23

Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism (London: Verso, 1973), Chap. 2, "The Flâneur," 35-66.

Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1999), "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century (Exposé <of 1939>)," 14-26; Convolutes A, 31-61; E, 120-150; F, 151-170; K, 388-404; M, 416-455; P, 516-526; Q, 527-536; g, 779-785.

Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament," in The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 74-86.

Recommended

David Frisby, Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).

** Anthony Vidler, Warped Space (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), "The Architecture of Estrangement: Simmel, Kracauer, Benjamin," 65-79.

Week 5: Mass Culture and the Public Sphere

9/30

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), Chap. 4, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," 94-136.

Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Chap. 2, "The Public and the Private Realm," 22-78.

Week 6: Ideology and Materiality

10/7

* Manfredo Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1975).

Fredric Jameson, "The Brick and the Balloon: Architecture, Idealism and Land Speculation," New Left Review 228 (March-April 1998), 25-46.

* Reinhold Martin, Utopia's Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), Chap. 5, "Materiality: Mirrors," 93-122.

Recommended

** Giorgio Ciucci, Francesco Dal Co, Mario Manieri-Elia, and Manfredo Tafuri, The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1979).

** Manfredo Tafuri, The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

Week 7: Negative Thought and the City

10/14

** Massimo Cacciari, Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), Part 1, "The Dialectics of the Negative and Metropolis," 3-96.

Recommended

Massimo Cacciari, Posthumous People: Vienna at the Turning Point, trans. Rodger Friedman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Week 8: Spectacle and Space

10/21

* Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

Henri Lefebvre, "Right to the City" in Writings on Cities, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 61-181.

Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), Chap. 6, "From the Contradictions of Space to Differential Space," 352-400.

Recommended

Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," New Left Review I, n. 146 (July-August 1984): 53-92. Available at <http://newleftreview.org/?view=726>

Slavoj Zizek, Living in the End Times (London: Verso, 2011), Interlude 3, "The Architectural Parallax," 244-278.

Week 9: Violence

10/28

Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1963), Chap. 1, "Concerning Violence," 35-106.

Achille Mbembe, On the Postcolony (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), "The Aesthetics of Vulgarities," 102-141.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), "Of Garbage, Modernity, and the Citizen's Gaze," 65-79.

Election Day

No class 11/4

Week 10: Urban Imaginaries

11/11

Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," 27-47.

Arjun Appadurai, "Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai," Public Culture 12, No. 3, 627-651.

** Anthony Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny. Essays in the Modern Unhomely (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), "Posturbanism," 177-188; "Psychometropolis," 189-198

Hubert Damisch, Skyline: The Narcissistic City (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), Chap. 6, "The Scene of Life of the Future," 71-99; Chap. 7, "Manhattan Transference," 100-118.

Recommended

Andreas Huyssen, ed., Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

Week 11: Circulation and the Commons

11/18

Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, "Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity," Public Culture 14, No. 1 (2002): 191-213.

* Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Commonwealth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), "De corpore 2: Metropolis," 249-260, and Part 5, "Beyond Capital?," 261-321.

Recommended

Giovanni Arrighi, Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century (London: Verso, 2007), Chap. 1, "Marx in Detroit, Smith in Beijing," 13-39.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

David Harvey, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, "Commonwealth: An Exchange," *Artforum* 43, no. 3 (November 2009), 210-215, 256, 258, 269, 262.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/214344086/fulltext/13BD1F5F9B343D088/1?accountid=10226>

Reinhold Martin, "Public and Common(s)," Places / Design Observer (24 January 2013)
<http://places.designobserver.com/feature/public-and-commons/37647/>

Week 12: Visibility and Enclosure

11/25

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

Jacques Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), "The Distribution of the Sensible," 7-45.

Wendy Brown, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty (New York: Zone Books, 2010), Chap. 3, "States and Subjects," 73-105.

Recommended

Jacques Rancière, The Philosopher and His Poor, trans. Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Megacity," Grey Room 01 (Fall 2000), 8-23.

Week 13: Utopia or Camp?
12/9

Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), Part 3, "The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern," 119-188.

David Harvey, Spaces of Hope (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Part 3, "The Utopian Moment," 132-196.

Recommended

<http://occupytheory.org/Home.html>

Michel Foucault, Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics : Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Reinhold Martin, Utopia's Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), Chap. 1, "Territory: From the Inside, Out," 1-26.

Final papers due

12/12 (by 5pm, PDF by Dropbox)