CourseNo: ARCHA6160_001_2013_1
Meeting Location: BUELL HALL 200
Meeting Time: R 04:00P-06:00P

Instructor Information:
Janette K Kim

***[T]here are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know.* —Former United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, at a February 12, 2002 press briefing regarding weapons of destruction in Iraq.**

This seminar investigates the political ecology of climate change through the lens of risk management in architecture and urbanism. The idea of a risk society expands existing discourse about environmentalism—often focused on preservation, conservation and restraint—to include broader questions about an economy of collective resources. Swelling oceans, parched fields, and dwindling species counts, among other potential hazards of a warming planet, spread collateral damages of modern marvels to new, greater collectives of shared interest. For architecture and urbanism, impending hazards call for risk management strategies. The design of tropical tourist destinations, aging power grids, and carbon-free cities can mitigate climate disasters while generating new ones.
In this course, we will ask how architecture's response to climate risk imagines new collectives. We will begin by reading major texts outlining theories of risk and their registration in contemporary insurance markets and land use practices. We will then examine a series of ecological models that have emerged in architecture and urbanism over the past century, and evaluate their recycled role in contemporary practice. From 'Urban Ecology' to 'Spaceship Earth,' we will inquire about the ethical assertions of each model to test their political implications against risk theories. We will study projects to identify architectural design strategies and analytic techniques associated with each model, and to evaluate their implications for contemporary risk management.
To examine the contemporary implications of these theories and practices, we will study the impact of Superstorm Sandy in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut in October 2012. Students have an option to write a paper or produce an original research project studying the relationship between management of hurricane risk management and land use practices (from the architectural to the urban) in relationship to the readings and projects discussed in the seminar. Examples might include hazard prediction strategies, emergency response and local organization, or resilient infrastructures. Students are encouraged to experiment with the format and methods in their work.
Sample readings include texts on political ecology (Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, Peter Sloterdijk, et. al.), ecological theory (Donald Worster, Daniel Botkin, and William Cronon, et. al.), urban theory and history (Lewis Mumford, Mike Davis, Richard Florida, et. al.), and architecture and landscape practices (Reyner Banham, Jonathan Massey, et. al.).
For the full syllabus click.