

CourseNo: ARCHA4780_001_2013_1
Meeting Location: AVERY HALL 504
Meeting Time: T 01:00P-03:00P

Instructor Information:
[Felicity Dale Scott](#)

Description

This seminar will investigate contemporary trajectories of architectural research and practice that intersect with questions of human rights, urbanism, notions of public space, and spatial politics. We will ask what role the discipline plays (or might play) in current debates over questions of political representation, defense, the organization of territory, surveillance, warfare, political conflict, and cultural heritage as well as in questions of citizenship, diaspora, humanitarian intervention, justice, and democracy. These are at once profoundly fascinating and highly complicated fields of study, and there is a growing body of important literature pertaining to them. The seminar will provide a forum both for considering this work in all its complexity and for identifying new lines of research and further critical prospects. Architecture and the city have long been understood to provide the very infrastructure of citizenship and democracy for instance in the sense of organizing and of giving a formal and aesthetic identity to public space and to cultural and political institutions. In the first half of the 20th century, modern architecture was largely identified with ideals of social progress and radical spatial transformation, and the discipline soon came to be embraced after the Second World War by the United Nations as having a role to play not only in addressing rights issues, such as housing, but in the world of international relations. Such enlightenment ideals are not without their own difficult legacy and specific critiques of human rights will be addressed during the class. Architecture and urban sites have also, of course, frequently been the location of (or even provided techniques for) inequity, colonization, violence, terrorism, and exclusion, raising the question of the discipline's possible responsibility. Finally, as will be addressed in the seminar, architecture's current role in the organization of public space is further complicated by the increasingly interconnected and mediated if dispersed condition we know as globalization, and by the post-national politics to which it has given rise. Indeed, the very notion of space and of a public within it has been profoundly transformed, raising not only questions but also significant critical prospects for the discipline's relations to contemporary forces and events. To investigate this complex set of issues, we will address relevant contemporary work and research by architects and architectural theorists as well as working through important literature and critiques of human rights, public space, the public sphere, surveillance, and citizenship. We will look at topics including camps, borders, apartheid planning, responses to terrorism, as well as architectures of warfare, displacement, and occupation. In addition we will identify and discuss contemporary practices that have forged critical and strategic interventions within these fields.

Readings

Required readings are available through Courseworks. The Courseworks readings are found under "Class Files," then the sub-file "Shared Files," and are organized by week. Further readings are not on reserve and are only listed on printed syllabus handed out in class.

Method of Evaluation

Class Presentations and Participation 50% Final Paper 50% All work submitted should be original and written for this course. Students should familiarize themselves with Columbia University's Statement on Academic Honesty, found at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html>