

# POSTWAR URBAN DESIGN: Public Space and its Representation

**CourseNo:** ARCHA6868\_001\_2015\_1

**Meeting Time:** R 11:00A-01:00P **Meeting Location:** [AVERY HALL 115](#)

## **Instructor Information:**

[David J. Smiley](#)

The discourse of modern urbanism and urban design largely revolves around a broad, if vague, concept of public space. Occupying a privileged position, public space in the West is an unquestioned component of urbanity, the normative core of the "good city" and a "good society." Citizenship, speech, assembly, identity are, according to this model, performed and confirmed in such spaces and the binary of "public and private" legitimizes the spatial, experiential, political and economic relations of social life. Yet public space is no abstract, liberal democratic "speakers' corner," since it is shaped through the hegemonic actions of states and institutions and their control of technologies and capital. The globalization of urban design strategies further challenges the status of public space, showing how it can be appropriated, hybridized or elided.

*So, an architect or urbanist might ask, what is this space I am labeling "public" on my drawing?*

The question of public space is highlighted in the New Town, perhaps the most iconic if also problematic thread of modernist urbanization. The class will examine New Towns and other large-scale urban design projects since 1945 in order to chart those spaces labeled public. We will ask how exactly such spaces were expected to perform. How were design decisions imagined to shape a public? Through case studies, students will examine the shaping and perception of ground plans, sections and elevations – from below ground garages to upper level walkways – and document volumes, uses, routes and surfaces. Students will also research the policies, regulations, technologies and management methods through which the would-be public spaces were mediated. Is it possible to create a fluid taxonomy or representational strategy – typological, morphological, functional, organizational – to increase our working knowledge, as future makers of such spaces?

*Part I* will be devoted to the concept(s) of and questions about public space integral to modernist urban design and New Towns.

*Part II* will consist of assigned case studies of New Towns which groups of students will represent through tactics and diagrams of public space. Each weekly class will be lead by the student group and this group will also be responsible for presenting the assigned New Town at the Part II Review.

*Part III* will consist of documentation and representation of recent New Town or large-scale urban projects by groups of students. Discussion will take place in class and at the desk. This work will be presented at the Part III Review.

[Download Syllabus](#)

Use calendar function to access readings.

