Remarque
Orientation: G Urban Nature

Summary
This teaching unit aims to experiment with the medium of cartography as a means of spatial representation, and as a tool for reading, understanding and changing the territory.

Content
Maps are visual tools for thinking about the world at many scales. They shape scientific hypotheses, organize political and military power, limit the boundaries of private property, and reflect cultural ideas about landscape and non-human nature. To the extent that our world-views inform our perceptions, maps have the power to actually make the territories they represent. Throughout Western modernity, Cartesian perspectives traced the world with respect to a fixed human subject position, while god’s eye views surveyed the land from an abstract elevated ‘nowhere.’ Cartography became the enterprise concerned with the analysis and measurement of the res extensa, that is, the management of nature as resource and neutral background for man’s actions and architectures. In today’s context of ecological crisis, UE U: Cartography aims to promote ways of seeing the land that convey a decentering of this human-architectural sovereignty. Mapping environmental objects of study (be it a building, a lake, a mangrove or an industrial valley) cartography becomes a device to see architecture as environment making and unmaking — as the disruptive collection of actions that build and destroy our organized forms of life.

Sessions
1 (20/09) Architecture as Environmental Apparatus
Cartography against the object-landscape divide

2 (27/09) Drawing Attention I
Line, surface, dot, color

3 (04/10) Drawing Attention II
Field trip to the Geneva botanical gardens

4 (11/10) Cartography as Environmental Language
Frame, layer, system, figure

5 (18/10) Figures of Environmental Enclosure
Plantations, gardens, wastelands / Megastructures, follies, earthworks

6 (25/10) Body-Land Politics and Representation
Peace, gender, race, species, class
7 (01/11) Cartography as Commoning
Counter-mappings and other art-science activisms

8 (08/11) Mid-term Pin-Up
Guest jury Milica Topalovic and Christian Gilot

9 (15/11) Guest Lecture with Godofredo Pereira
Cartography and the Underground Frontier

10 (22/11) Guest Lecture with Denise Bertschi
Cartography and Colonial Memory

11 (29/11) Guest Lecture to be announced
Tba

12 (06/12) Final Pin-Up
Guest jury Adrien Verschuere and Harry Gugger

Keywords
Cartography, architecture, drawing, environmental ethics/aesthetics, political ecology, situated knowledges.

Learning Prerequisites
Recommended courses
Architecture et construction de la ville (Gilot)
A Political History of Urban Form (Aureli)

Important concepts to start the course
Basic hand sketching skills appreciated but not mandatory. General concepts: palimpsest; territorial networks; landscape structures; mapping as reading; mapping as speculative fiction.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

• Identify territorial figures and hierarchies of landscape systems.
• Formulate spatial narratives from the critical selection of those systems.
• Compose territorial fictions through speculative maps.
• Elaborate a personal and consequent visual language of representation.

Transversal skills
• Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
• Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
• Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.

Teaching methods
Theoretical content will be provided through a series of lectures and practical assignments will be assisted by weekly desk critiques and intermediate reviews. Classes will occasionally include the close reading of historical maps and the analysis of texts or passages on cartography/landscape. Special focus will be given to hand drawing. AI, CAD and GIS assistance may also happen upon request. The final submittal of the U.E. will consist of all the work produced during the semester.

Expected student activities
One of the classes will be a trip to a botanical garden.

Assessment methods
Continuous assessment.
Intermediate exercises and desk critiques: 50% of grade.
Review of final work: 30% of grade.
Visual Journal: 20% of grade.

Supervision
Office hours: Yes
Assistants: No
Forum: No

Resources

Bibliography

Ressources en bibliothèque
• Maps / Akerman
• Representing place / Casey
• Le territoire comme palimpseste / Corboz
• Mappings / Cosgrove
• Against the anthropocene / Demos
• The book of legendary lands / Eco
• Histoire des lieux de légendes / Eco
• Geostories / Ghosn
• The new nature of maps / Harley
• Map - exploring the world
• Cartes - explorer le monde
• Close Up at a Distance / Kurgan
• The house of light and entropy / Ponte
• Maps and civilization / Thrower
• Maps of the imagination / Turchi

Websites
• http://laba-ueu-cartography.ch
• http://laba.epfl.ch

Prerequisite for
Atelier Gugger (LABA)