EPFL

AR-436 | **A Political History of Urban Form**
Aureli Pier Vittorio

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture	MA1, MA3	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	Oral
Workload	90h
Weeks	12
Hours	**2 weekly**
Courses	2 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

The course offers an overview of the history of the city and the urban territory from antiquity to the contemporary age through the concept of urban form.

Content

The term urban and the neologism *urbanization* were introduced in the 19th century in order to address the all-encompassing spatial process through which society reproduces itself. Yet the urban, whose political nature is seldom questioned, casts a long shadow and includes millennia of city making.

The study of urban form focuses on the way both city and territory are physically constructed. Central to the study of urban form is the question of *form* understood as the concrete organization of physical entities. In this course we will maintain that form is always a product of political forces: no matter how intangible or elusive these forces are, they always leave concrete traces on the ground. City elements such as houses, roads, squares, parks, gardens, bridges, monuments, and infrastructure can be considered as forensic clues in order to understand and map power relationships at play in a specific historical moment. From the perspective of urban form, those city elements can be assumed as what reveals the nomos of the city. The word *nomos* comes from the Greek *nemein* which means 'organization' but also 'orientation'. Every society implies a form of organization and orientation whose politics are inevitably reflected in the way the physical environment is constructed.

To decipher the nomos of the city is to learn how the physicality of the city reveals the power relationships that have produced it. The city is thus the most important historical index of these relationships and its close reading raises the most fundamental questions about city and its architecture: who builds a city? Who inhabits a city? And above all what is the ultimate purpose of a city?

The seminar will thus introduce each case study by paralleling the close reading of specific urban artifacts with an introduction to historical conditions that had produced these artifacts. Students will be trained to carefully look at and describe the city through the concreteness of its architecture. They will look at plans, drawings, paintings, photographs, and texts.

From Ancient Mesopotamia to the Early Islamic city, from workers' villages in Ancient Egypt to the Poleis of Ancient Greece, from Classicist architecture in 17th century Paris to the single family cottage of the American suburbia, from the development of the medieval Bastides to the Squatters of 1970s Europe, we will research the relationship between urban form, architectural history and political thinking.

Course Sessions
Session 1 - *From Circle to Rectangle*
Early Human Settlements and the Rise of Domestication
Session 2 - *How we Became Urban*
Early Cities of Near East and Indus Valley
Session 3 - *City of Work*
Urbanism in Ancient Egypt
Session 4 - *From Oikos to Polis*
The architecture of the Ancient Greek *Polis*: Zagora, Athens, Piraeus, Olynthus
Session 5 - *Conquest and Domestication*
The making an Urban Empire from Territory to the *Domus*
Session 6 - *Division and Multiplication*
The Architecture of the Ancient Chinese City

Session 7 - *Towns and Territories*
From the French *Bastides* to Early Colonial Towns in Asia and the Americas
Session 8 - *From Garden to Medina*
The architecture of the Early Islamic City
Session 9 - *From State to Capital*
Urban Development in 16th Century Rome, 17th century Paris and 18th century London
Session 10 - *Territory and Enclosure*
Primitive accumulation from the 'English Enclosures' to the Jeffersonian Grid.
Session 11 - *Production and Reproduction*
Housing and the Rise of Industrial Labor in Europe and England.
Session 12 - Society as a Factory
Struggles in the Post-Fordist City, from Squatting to Gentrification

Learning Outcomes

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

 • Interpret in a critical manner the concepts developed during the course

 • Argue the relations between political thought and urban form

 • Develop a reflection on the relationship between historical conditions and the city morphology

 • Elaborate a description of the city through the concrete elements of architecture

Expected student activities

Personal work during the semester, reading of texts, personal study of a theme.

Assessment methods

Personal work during the semester, presented and discussed during an oral exam.

Resources

Bibliography

·   Jerry D. Moore, *The Prehistory of Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 23-55.
·   Kent V. Flannery, "The Origins of the Village Revisited: From Nuclear to Extended Households", in *American Antiquity* Vol. 67, No. 3 (Jul., 2002): 417-433.
·   Richard Bradley, "A Life Less Ordinary: The Ritualization of the Domestic Sphere in Later Prehistoric Europe," Cambridge Archaeological Journal 13, no. 1 (2003): 5–23.
·   David Wengrow, "'The Changing Face
of Clay': Continuity and Change in the Transition from Village to Urban Life in the Near East," Antiquity 72, no. 278 (December 1998): 783–95.
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·   Mario Liverani *The Near East. History, Society and Economy* (Lonon and New York: Routledge, 2014), 34-80.
·   Mario Liverani, *Uruk, The First City* (Sheffield UK: Equinox Publishing, 2006).
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·   Nicholas Cahill, "Olynthus and Greek Town Planning", in *The Classical World* 93, no. 5 (Summer 2000): 497–515; Nicholas Cahill, *Household and City Organization at Olynthus* (New York: Yale University Press, 2002).

·　　Robert Garland, *The Piraeus* (Duckworth: London, 1987).
·　　Luigi Mazza, "Plan and Constitution: Aristotle's Hippodamus: Towards and Ostensive Definition of Spatial Planning", in *The Town Planning Review*
·　　Vol. 80, No. 2 (2009): 113-141.
·　　Kathrin Lomas, "The Idea of a City: Elite, Ideology and the Evolution of Urban Form in Italy 200BC – 100AD", in Helen Parkins (ed.) *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City* (Routledge: London, 2011), 21-41.
·　　Neville Morley, "Cities in Context: Urban Systems in Roman Italy", in Helen Parkins (ed.) *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City* (Routledge: London, 2011), 42-58.
·　　Various Authors, *Misurare la Terra: Centuriazione e Coloni nel Mondo Romano* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1985).
·　　O. A. W. Dilke, "The Roman Surveyors", in *Greece & Rome* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Oct., 1962): 170-180.
·　　Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011).
·　　Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House," in *Papers of the British School in Rome* 56 (1988): 43–97.
·　　Shelley Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–8.
·　　Jing Qiao, "Power and the Sacred: The Confucian Origins of Chinese Urban Space", in Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria Shéhérazade Giudici (eds.), *Rituals and Walls: The Architecture of Sacred Space* (London: Architectural Association, 2016).
·　　He Yeju, Chinese *Imperial City Planning History* (Beijing: China Architecture and Building Press, 1996), 11-34.
·　　Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 34-56.
·　　James Bentley *Fort Towns of France: The Bastides of the Dordogne and Aquitaine* (London: Tauris Parke, 1994), 12-46.
·　　Adrian Randolph, "The Bastides of southwest France" *The Art Bulletin* **77**.2 (June 1995): 290–307.
·　　John W. Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America* (Princeton: Princeton: University Press, 1969), 3-106.
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·　　Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population.* Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78 (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 1-29.
·　　K A C Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, Vol. 1 (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), 8-27.
·　　Hamed Khosravi, Camp of Faith, On the Islamic Political Theology and Urban From. In: Pier Vittorio Aureli (ed.), *The City as a Project* (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2013), 70-100.
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·　　Kazim al-Janabi, *An Outline of the Planning of the city of Kufa* (Baghdad: Dar al-Jumhuriyah, 1967), 3-25.
·　　Mafredo Tafuri, "*Jugum Meum Soave Est:* Architecture and Myth in the Era of Leon X" in *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architecture* (London, New York: Yale University Press: London, 2006), 99-156.
·　　Hilary Ballon, *The Paris of Henry IV* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991).
·　　Maria Shéhérazade Giudici, "Specific Spaces: Government and the Emergence of architecture d'accompagnement, 1584-1765" in Pier Vittorio Aureli (ed.), *The City as a Project* (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2014).
·　　John Summerson, Georgian London (Yale University Press: London, New York, 2003).
·　　Rachel Stewart, *The Town House in Geogian London* (London: Paul Mellon Centre, 2009).
·　　Karl Marx, "Section 1. The Two Factors of a Commodity: Use-Value and Value" in: Idem, *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1992), 125-130.
·　　Karl Marx "Part Eight: So-Called Primitive Accumulation". In Karl Marx, *Capital* Volume 1, (London: Penguin, 1992), 873-942.
·　　Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
·　　Gary Fields, "Land into Property: Enclosure, Land Improvement and Making Property on the English Landscape" in: *Enclosure: Palestinian Landscapes in a Historical Mirror* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2017), 23-91.

·   William David Pattison, *Beginning of the American Rectangular Land Survey System*, 1784-1800 (Chicago: The University of Chicago 1967).

·   Michaela Friedberg, "The (False) Dissolution of Territory" in *Arch+* 'The Property Issue', 2018: 200-207.

·   Michael McKeon, *A Secret History of Domesticity* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006).

·   George Teyssot, "The Disease of Domicile" in *Assemblage* no.6 (June 1988): 72-97.

·   Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1983), 23-55.

·   Lindy Biggs, *The Rational Factory: Architecture, Technology and Work in America's Age of Mass Production* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 10-39.

·   This session will look as the urban transformations of the last fifty years in light of class struggles that marked the passage from the industrial metropolis to the 'Post-fordist' City.

·   Mario Tronti, "La Società e la Fabbrica" in *Operai e Capitale* (Turin: Einaudi 1966), 45-67.

·   Alberto Battagia, Achille Marotta, Mass Worker and Social Worker: Reflections on the New Class Composition" in: https://notesfrombelow.org/article/mass-worker-and-social-worker

·   Archizoom Associates, "No-stop city. Residential Parkings, Climatics Universal System" in *Domus* 496, March 1971: 49-55.

·   Alexander Vasuvedan, *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting* (London: Verso 2017).

·   David Harvey, "The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and The Commodification of Culture" in *Spatial register* Vol. 38, 2002: 93-110.

·   Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck, Neil Brenner, "Cities and the Rule of Market", in Gary Bridge, Sophie Watson (eds.), *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (Blackwell: London, 2012), 23-44.

Ressources en bibliothèque

- The prehistory of home / Moore
- The city in history / Mumford
- La cité à travers l'histoire / Mumford
- The idea of a town / Rykwert
- Rituals and walls / Aureli
- The autonomous city / Vasudevan
- The new Blackwell companion to the city /Bridge
- The rational factory / Biggs
- Housing and Habitat in the Ancient Mediterranean / Bradley
- Uruk, the first city / Liverani
- The Ancient Indus / Wright
- Household and City Organization at Olynthus / Cahill
- The Piraeus / Garland
- Roman urbanism / Parkins
- The Roman House and Social Identity / Shelley
- Chinese imperial city planning / Shatzman
- Town Planning in Frontier America / Reps
- Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture / Vaughan
- Sécurité, territoire, population / Foucault
- The City as a Project / Aureli
- Interpreting the renaissance / Tafuri
- The Paris of Henry IV / Ballon
- Georgian London / Summerson
- The town house in Georgian London / Stewart
- Enclosure / Fields
- The secret history of domesticity / McKeon