4.185 Architectural Design Workshop — Architecture + the Spatial Infrastructure of Identification in the City

Instructor: J. Yolande Daniels  ([jvd@mit.edu](mailto:jvd@mit.edu))

Level: Graduate

Final Review: will not hold a review or final exam

Schedule:  Thursday, 6-9 pm, Room 3-329  Units: 0-3-9

Class Description:

While disinvestment characterized the Twentieth-century city; the early Twenty-first century is characterized by reinvestment in cities. From the premise of the City as (playing) field, students will explore methods to reconsider urban structures beginning with the analysis of power structures in Twentieth-century cities as characterized by spatial segregation of groups defined by class, race or ethnicity. How can more equitable cities be produced? And, by looking critically at this process, how can we influence the framework?

Societal patterns produce spatial relationships, buildings, and cities; they are given form in urban systems and structures. The workshop explores the interplay between dynamics and constraints—strategies of dominance, tactics of subversion, the flipping of situated and/or relative attributes—to impart an understanding of how ideological narratives are indexed and represented at multiple scales.

Students will gain an understanding of how cultural phenomena may be spatialized by examining the effects of rules, codes, and customs on the visible structures of cities. Both analytic and prescriptive, the explorations will engage the debate on the degree to which the structures of buildings and cities reflect the social structure of the inhabitants.

The intersections of societal difference, architecture and the city will be explored through game and simulation studies, prototypes and analogous readings. The explorations and results may range from card games to board games to models and simulations that deconstruct and build architectural and urban forms. The challenge of the course is to advance a disciplinary language and tools to address the social dimensions of architectural and urban forms.
Class Schedule

Week 1, September 6 | Introduction
Week 2, September 13 | The City as Play
Week 3, September 20 | Spatial Infrastructure
Week 4, September 27 | Class Will Not Meet
Week 5, October 4 | Game 1
Week 6, October 11 | The City as Field
Week 7, October 18 | The City as Rule
Week 8, October 25 | The City as System
Week 9, November 1 | Game 2
Week 10 November 1 | Class Will Not Meet
Week 11 November 8 | Playing the City: Dynamics | Actions
Week 11, November 15 | Playing the City: Agonisms | Values
Week 12, November 22 | Thanksgiving
Week 13, November 29 | Playing the City: Field | Forms
Week 14, December 6 | Game 3

Learning Objectives/Pedagogy

- Ability to research,conceptualize, develop, and represent an analysis.
- Illustrate relationships between social narratives and existing urban forms.
- Learn how to translate architectural and urban ideas and concepts into two-dimensional and three-dimensional drawings, games, models and simulations.
- Explore strategies to develop material effects for social narratives when lacking.
- Learn and practice presentation skills.

Absence Policy

Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. You are allowed three excused absences for the semester. An excused absence is defined as one that was discussed with and approved by the professor at least 24 hours prior to the date of absence, or a family or medical emergency that is confirmed by your physician or a dean in Student Support Services. Absences beyond the three allotted will result in a decrease in your final grade. If you miss six or more classes, you will be asked to drop the subject or receive a failing grade.

Evaluation Criteria

Attendance 10%
Class Participation 10%
Assignment 1 20%
Assignment 2 20%
Assignment 3 20%
Final Submission 20%

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Completion Requirements

- Readings with prepared notes are required to facilitate class discussions.
- Progress is required at each class session.
- Produce 3 games (individual and team).

Textbooks and Reading Sources

Resources to be shared in class. Readings to be assigned from this list in advance (1 reading per week).

Situationist International Anthology, Ken Knabb, 1981
Theory of the Derive and other Situationist Writings on the City, Xavier Costa, 1996
The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, William H. Whyte, 1980
Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames, Ian Bogost, 2010
Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals, Katie Salen, Eric Zimmerman, 2004
Systems and Models: Complexity, Dynamics, Evolution, Sustainability, Hartmut Bossel, 2007
Nexus: Small Worlds and the Ground Breaking Theory of Networks, Mark Buchanan, 2003
Thinking in Systems: A Primer, Donella Meadows, 2008
The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, 1986
The Informal City, Michel S. Laguerre, 1994.
The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel De Certeau, 1984
Agnostics: Thinking the World Politically, Chantal Mouffe, 2013.

Dynamic Models of Segregation, Thomas Schelling, 1971
A Test of the Schelling Segregation Model, W.A.V. Clark, 1991
Political Economy of the Black Ghetto, William K Tabb, 1970

The Strategy of Conflict, Thomas Schelling
A Game of War, Alice Becker-Ho and Guy Debord
On War, General Carl Von Clausewitz
Little Wars, HG Wells
Battleships: A Popular War Game,
World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements, John Hunter
Metacity/Datatown, MVRDV
World Peace Game, http://www.ted.com/talks/john_hunter_on_the_world_peace_game
Parable of the Polygons, http://ncase.me/polygons/
Multiplicity, http://www.molleindustria.org/blog/multiplicity/
Cutthroat Capitalism, the Somali pirate game by Wired: https://www.wired.com/2009/07/cutthroat-
capitalism-the-game/
Climate Change Game, http://www.gamesforchange.org/studentchallenge/nyc/
Elections are decided by Plankton: http://www.deepseanews.com/2012/06/how-presidential-elections-are-impacted-by-a-100-million-year-old-coastline/

NAAB Performance Criteria

A01. Communication Skills
A02. Design Thinking Skills
A05. Investigative Skills
A06. Fundamental Design Skills
A08. Ordering Systems Skills
A10. Cultural Diversity
A11. Applied Research
C01. Collaboration
C02. Human Behavior
C08. Ethics and Professional Judgment