

MIT – SA+P

Fall 2022

4.228 Contemporary Urbanism Proseminar: Theory and Representation



Photograph from California World's Fair Commission, *California at the World's Columbian Exposition*, 1893.  
Found in Ickx, Wonne. "The Chicago Stump." In *Ecology*, edited by Matteo Ghidoni, 28–31. San Rocco 10, 2014.

# CONTEMPORARY URBANISM PROSEMINAR

## THEORY AND REPRESENTATION

**Instructor:**

Mohamad Nahleh ([nahle@mit.edu](mailto:nahle@mit.edu))

**Teaching Assistant:**

Subu Bhandari ([sbhandar@mit.edu](mailto:sbhandar@mit.edu))

**Schedule:** W 2:00 – 5:00 pm EST

1-150

**Credits:** 3 – 0 – 6 G / 3 – 0 – 9 G

## INTRODUCTION

A Giant Sequoia known as the General Noble Tree lived for roughly three millennia in the Converse Basin Grove of Northern California until, on August 12, 1892, four axes set in motion the monthlong process of felling it. The 50 feet of scaffolding installed to elevate the lumberjacks tasked with this endeavor attest to the fact that this was no arbitrary decision. In fact, once felled, General Noble was sliced up and shipped to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Installed in an area of the fair that would later come to be known as the 'White City,' General Noble was reassembled and exhibited to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus' inaugural trip across the Atlantic. Not only was its massive trunk mined and hollowed out upon its arrival to site, but its interior was outfitted with a series of platforms, a winding staircase, electric lighting, and photographs detailing its deracination, transportation, and reassembly<sup>1</sup>.

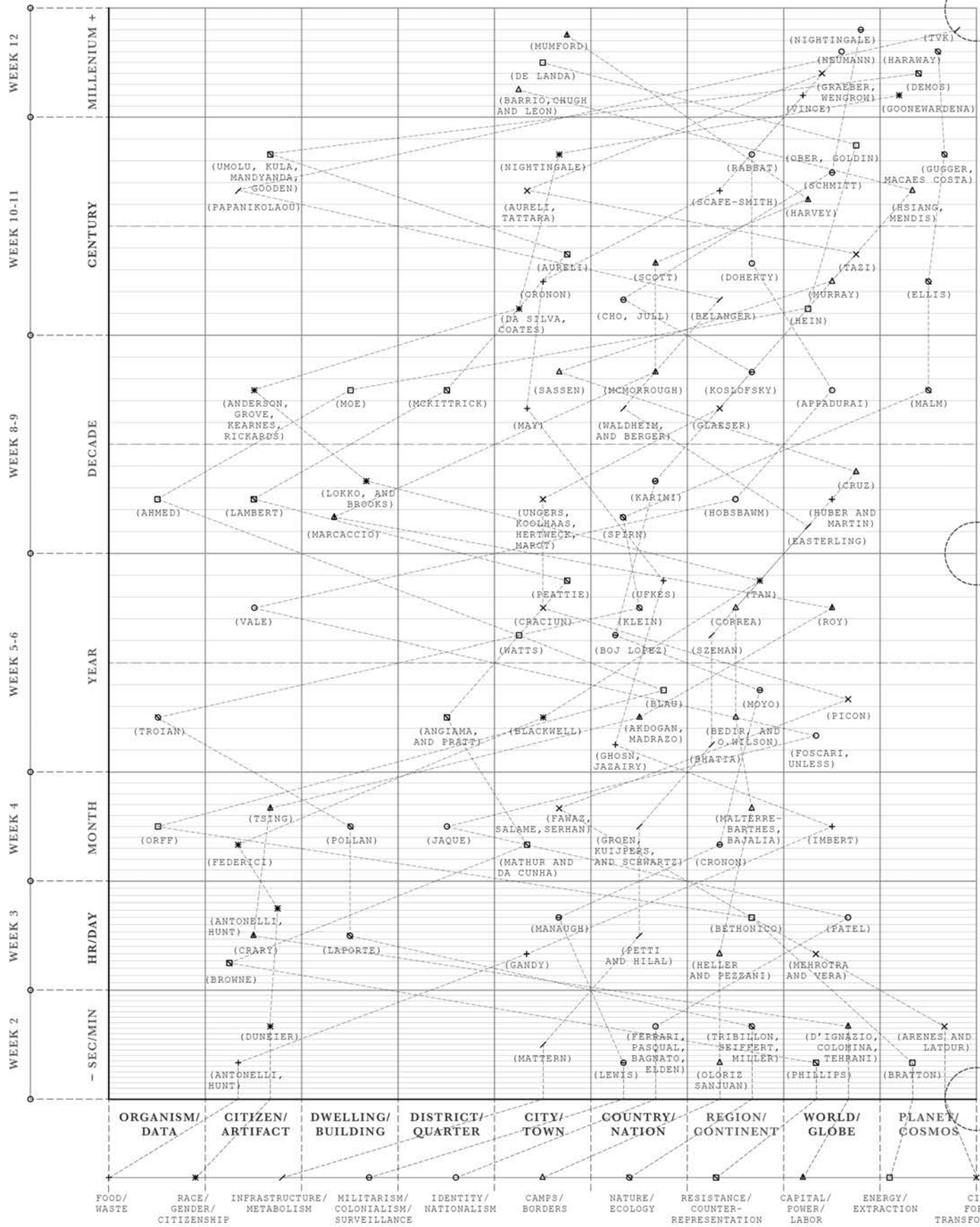
Upon the closing of the Chicago Fair, the 30-foot-wide trunk was moved to Washington D.C. where it found a new life (or death) at the entrance of the National Mall. There, General Noble was capped with a cupola roof and served as a touristic attraction for several decades until the Department of Agriculture found in its rapid deterioration enough reason to turn it into a storage shed away from the public gaze. Not much would be heard of the stump in the following decades. One of the last explicit mentions of it exists in records that trace its arrival to the Department of Agriculture's experimental farm in Arlington County in the 1930s. There, it would decay until the establishment of the Pentagon on that same site a few years later.

General Noble's life, from its sprouting and steady growth in a free continent to its brutal felling and journey across newly settled territory is but one example of how planetary timescales—particularly those that extend beyond human lifecycles—are forced to serve the interests of a single species. Mined, extracted, channeled through extensive networks of infrastructure, and transported from invisible enclaves to centers of power, they are made to play key roles in the accumulation of capital, the invention of national identities, the commemoration of colonial histories, and the aestheticization of violence against the planet. These processes operate—purposefully and by design—across various territories and timescales to impact the conditions of contemporary urbanism. Making legible their operations demands designing urgent alternatives to the vocabularies and metaphors defining the late fortified city—ones that for too long have solely privileged both its visible/cartographic transformations, and the specific intervals of time through which such transformations can best be observed.

In moving towards territorial representations of urbanism, this seminar foregrounds the diverse geographies and timescales through which the factors conditioning the contemporary city can be observed, theorized, and represented. It does away with the trope of thematically partitioning the city—and the exploration of a different topic every week—to instead examine how all such issues collectively impact, or are impacted by, different spaces and temporalities. As evidenced by the course diagram on the following page, each session of this seminar will focus on a different relationship between space and time. Much like photographs taken at different exposures, each week will offer a different resolution (or reading) of key challenges impacting the mechanisms of urbanization today. In doing so, the seminar offers a more complicated understanding of, and engagement with, the possibilities, limitations, and agency of design in tackling the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ickx, Wonne. "The Chicago Stump." In *Ecology*, edited by Matteo Ghidoni, 28–31. San Rocco 10, 2014.



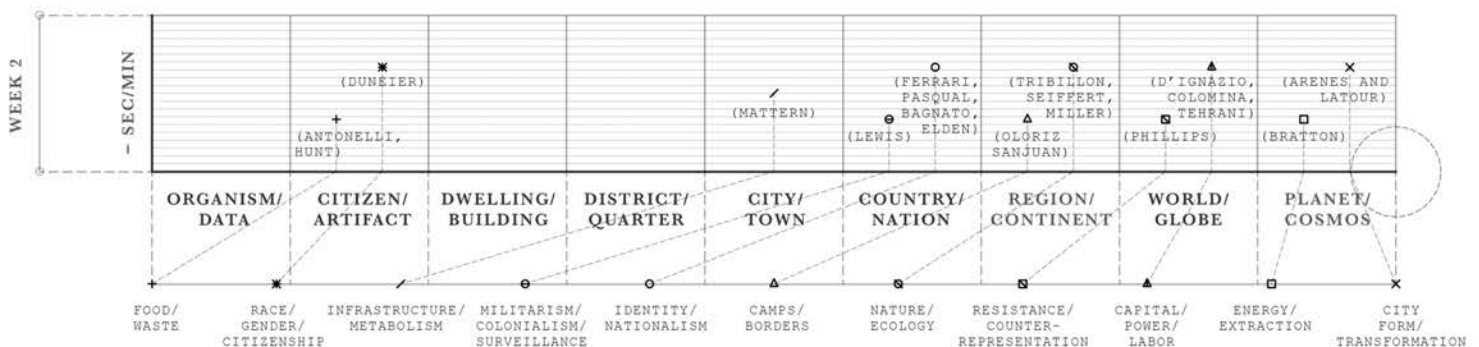
W1  
INTRODUCTION

W7  
WORKING SESSION (1)

W13  
WORKING SESSION (2)

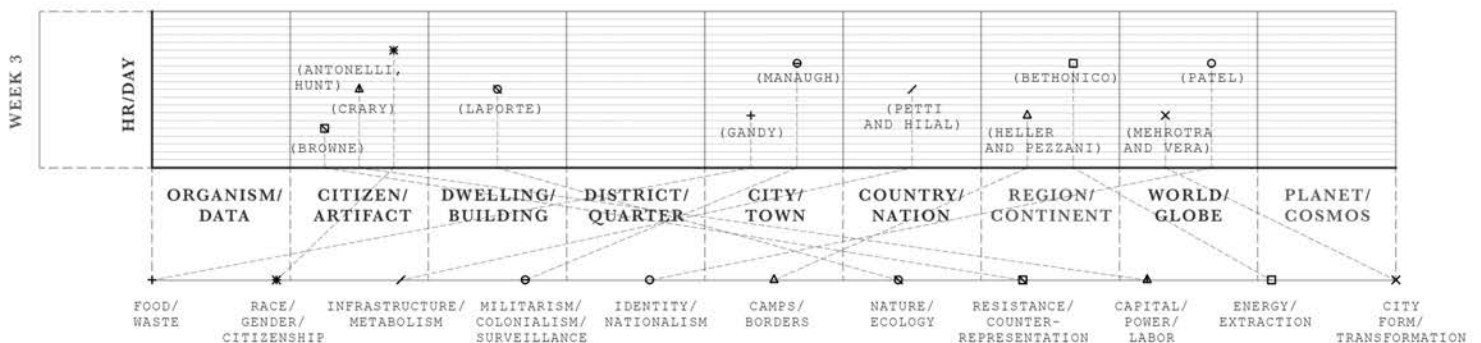
## WEEK 2: TRACES OF AN URBAN PULSE

- + Antonelli, Paola, and Jamer Hunt. "Serpentine Ramp." In *Design and Violence*, edited by Sarah Resnick, 188–92. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015.
- \* Duncier, Mitchell. "The Men Without Accounts." In *Sidewalk*, 1. paperback ed., 81–111. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001.
- / Mattern, Shannon. "City Console." In *A City Is Not a Computer: Other Urban Intelligences*, 1st ed., 18–50. Places Books. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.
- ⊖ Lewis, Randolph. "Feeling Surveillance." In *Under Surveillance: Being Watched in Modern America*, First edition., 12–51. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017.
- Ferrari, Marco, Elisa Pasqual, and Andrea Bagnato. "Introduction" and "The Instability of Terrain." In *A Moving Border: Alpine Cartographies of Climate Change*, 18–24, 51–61. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- △ Tribillon, Justinien, Isabel Seiffert, and Christoph Miler. "Subatomic Diplomacy." In *Micro Odysseys*, edited by Justinien Tribillon, Michaela Büsse, and Dámaso Randulfe, 22–39. Migrant 5. Migrant Journal Press, 2018.
- ⊗ Olóriz Sanjuán, Clara. "Dislodging Land-Ocean Binaries: The Politics of Littoral Sediments." In *Landscape as Territory*, 114–43. London: New York: Architectural Association (Inc.); Actar, 2019.
- ⊞ Phillips, Rasheedah. "Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock." In *The Funambulist by Its Readers: Political Geographies from Chicago and Elsewhere*, edited by Léopold Lambert and Suzanne Labourie, 198–203. Paris, France: The Funambulist, 2019.
- ▲ D'Ignazio, Catherine, Beatriz Colomina, and Nader Tehrani. "Opening," "Privacy and Publicity in the Age of Social Media," and "Protocols of Construction: Specifications of New Media." In *Public Space? Lost and Found*, edited by Gediminas Urbonas, Ann Lui, and Lucas Freeman, 252–65. Cambridge, MA: SA+P Press, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, 2017.
- Bratton, Benjamin H. "Governing Planetary Skin: Energy as Information Geography." In *Geographies of Information*, edited by Taraneh Meshkani and Ali Fard, 167–73. New Geographies 7. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- × Arènes, Alexandra, and Bruno Latour. "If the Earth Is Not a Globe, How to Sketch It?" In *Ness. On Architecture, Life, And Urban Culture: Mad World Pictures*, 80–91. S.I.: NESS, 2019.



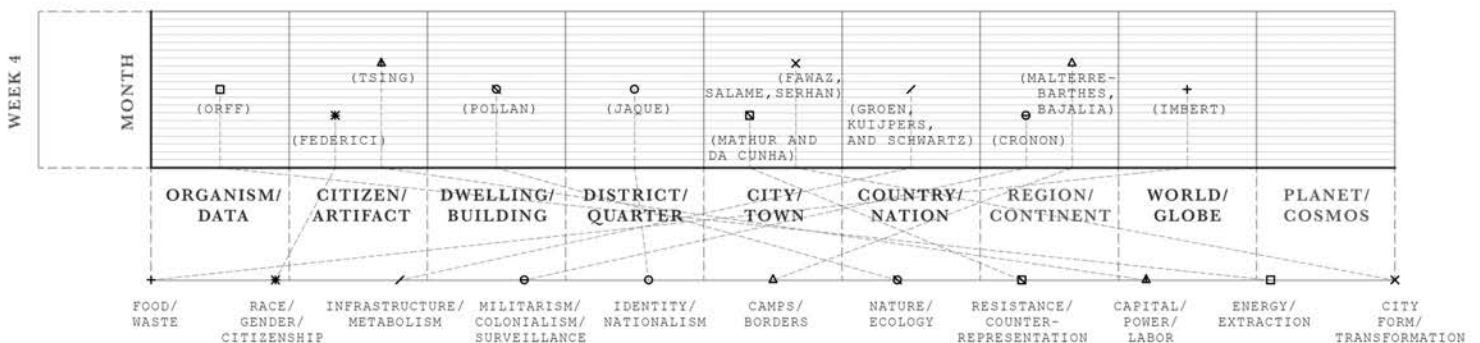
### WEEK 3: POLITICS OF A DARKENING SKY

- + Gandy, Matthew. "The Paris Sewers and the Rationalization of Urban Space." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 1 (1999): 23–44.
- \* Antonelli, Paola, and Jamer Hunt. "Operation Sovereign Borders Graphic Storyboard." In *Design and Violence*, edited by Sarah Resnick, 175–82. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015.
- / Hilal, Sandi, and Alessandro Petti. "On the Border" and "The Road Map." In *Permanent Temporariness*, 67–73, 89–107. Stockholm, Sweden: Art and Theory Publishing, 2018.
- ⊖ Manaugh, Geoff. "Crime Is Just Another Way to Use the City." In *A Burglar's Guide to the City*, First edition., 33–80. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016.
- Patel, Reena. "Off-Shoring Customer Service: A New Global Order." In *Working the Night Shift: Women in India's Call Center Industry*, 27–47. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- △ Heller, Charles, and Lorenzo Pezzani. "Liquid Traces: Contesting the Lethal Architecture of the Mediterranean Sea." In *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, edited by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galan, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, and Marina Otero Verzier, 41–52. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- ⊗ Laporte, Dominique. "Cleaning up in Front of One's House, Heaping Against the Wall." In *History of Shit*, 26–55. A Documents Book. Cambridge, Mass. London: MIT, 2002.
- ⊠ Browne, Simone. "Everybody's Got a Little Light Under the Sun." In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, 63–88. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- △ Crary, Jonathan. "Chapter 1." In *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, Paperback ed., 1–28. London: Verso, 2014.
- Bethónico, Mabe. "Conversations on Exploited Lands: Above the Grounds of Minas Gerais." In *World of Matter*, edited by Inke Arns, Nabil Ahmed, Gavin Bridge, T. J. Demos, Timothy Morton, and Hartware MedienKunstVerein, 74–82. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015.
- × Mehrotra, Rahul, and Felipe Vera. "Ephemeral Urbanism." In *Grounding Metabolism*, edited by Daniel Ibañez and Nikos Katsikis, 122–31. New Geographies 6, 2014.



# WEEK 4: SEASONS OF ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

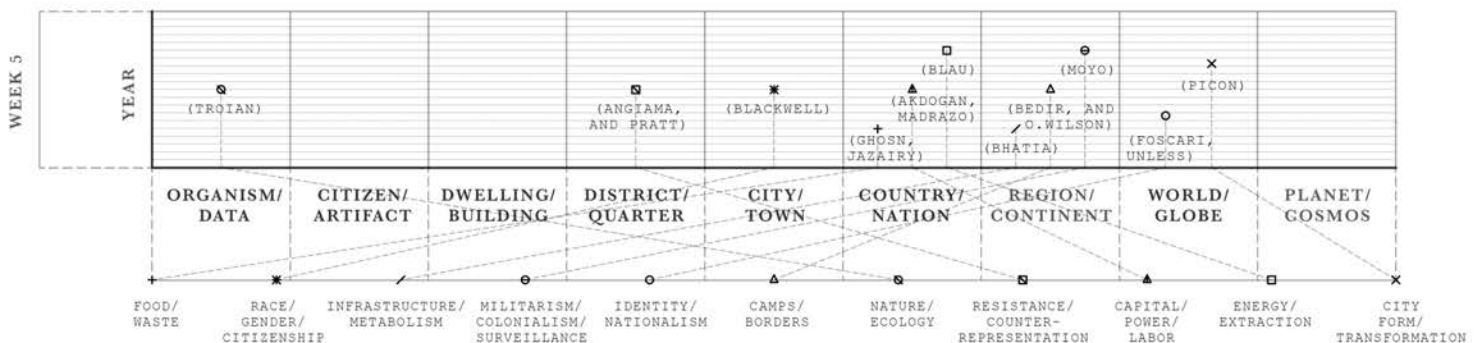
- + Imbert, Dorothée. “Aux Fermes, Citoyens!” In *Ecological Urbanism*, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University, 256–67. Zürich: L. Müller, 2013.
- \* Federici, Silvia. “Wages Against Housework.” In *Work, Body, Leisure*, edited by Marina Otero Verzier and Nick Axel, 175–82. Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2018.
- / Groen, Ludo, Marten Kuijpers, and Johannes Schwartz. “Up-Time: Reporting From Automated Landscapes.” In *I See That I See What You Don’t See*, edited by Marina Otero Verzier and Francien van Westrenen, 133–74, 2020.
- ⊖ Cronon, William. “Seasons of Want and Plenty.” In *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 1st rev. ed., 20th-Anniversary ed., 34–53. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003.
- Jaque, Andrés. “Politics Do Not Happen in Squares.” In *Public Space? Lost and Found*, edited by Gediminas Urbonas, Ann Lui, and Lucas Freeman, 57–69. Cambridge, MA: SA+P Press, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, 2017.
- △ Malterre-Barthes, Charlotte, and A. George Bajalia. “Crossing Into Ceuta.” In *Dark Matters*, edited by Justinien Tribillon, Michaela Büsse, and Raulf Dámaso, 8–23. Migrant 4. Migrant Journal Press, 2017.
- ⊗ Pollan, Michael. “Nature Abhors a Garden” and “Why Mow?” In *Second Nature: A Gardener’s Education*, Nachdr., 37–65. New York, NY: Grove Press, 20.
- ⊠ Mathur, Anuradha, and Dilip da Cunha. “The Sea and Monsoon Within: A Mumbai Manifesto.” In *Ecological Urbanism*, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University, 194–207. Zürich: L. Müller, 2013.
- △ Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. “Working the Edge” and “Open Ticket, Oregon.” In *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, 61–84. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Orff, Kate, and Richard Misrach. “Infrastructure” and “Waste.” In *Petrochemical America*, First paperback edition., 131–44, 145–56. New York, NY: Aperture, 2014.
- × Fawaz, Mona, Dounia Salamé, and Isabela Serhan. “Seeing the City as a Delivery Driver: Practices of Syrian Men in Beirut, Lebanon.” In *Refugees as City-makers*, by Mona Fawaz, Mona Harb, Ahmad Gharbieh, and Dounia Salamé, 60–81. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 2018.





## WEEK 5: THE RISE OF TERRITORY (1)

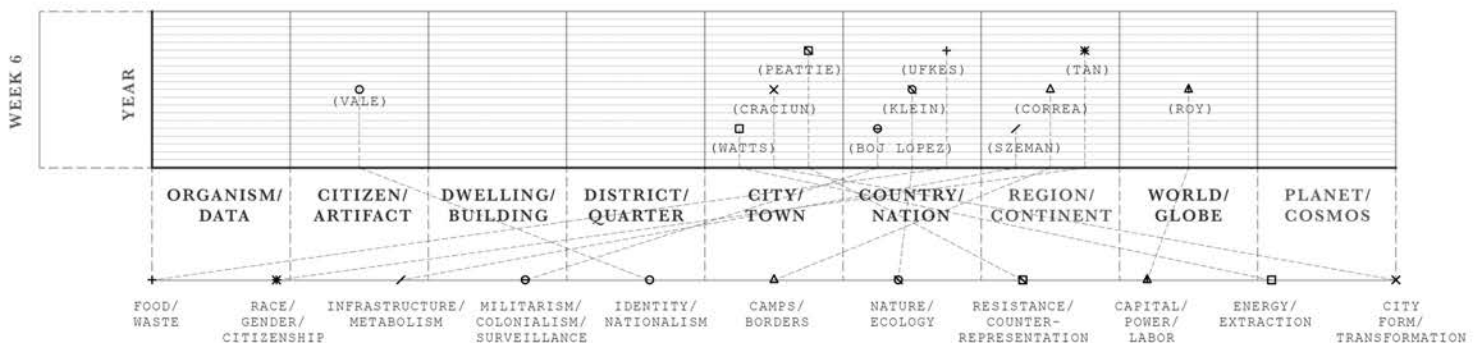
- + Ghosn, Rania, and El Hadi Jazairy. "Trash at the Boundaries." In *Geographies of Trash*, 16–29. New York; Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2015.
- \* Blackwell, Adrian. "Tar and Clay: Public Space Is the Demonstration of a Paradox in the Physical World." In *Public Space? Lost and Found*, edited by Gediminas Urbonas, Ann Lui, and Lucas Freeman, 19–37. Cambridge, MA: SA+P Press, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, 2017.
- / Bhatia, Neeraj. "Harvesting Urbanism Through Territorial Logistics." In *The Petropolis of Tomorrow*, edited by Neeraj Bhatia and Mary Casper, 272–87. AatR 47. New York, NY: Actar D, 2013.
- ⊖ Moyo, Ruvimbo. "Nkandlagate: Only Partial Evidence of Urban African Inequality." In *Scandalous*, edited by Ann Lui, Nathan Friedman, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and Planning, 160–71, 244–53. Thresholds 43, 2015.
- Foscari Widmann Rezzonico, Giulia, and UNLESS, eds. "Antarctic Pie: The Menacing Geometry of Power." In *Antarctic Resolution*, 70–99. Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2021.
- △ Bedir, Merve, and Mabel O. Wilson. "Deconstructing the Threshold: Waste Lands/Trauma/Hospitality" and "Provisional Demos: The Spatial Agency of Tent Cities." In *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, edited by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galan, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, and Marina Otero Verzier, 179–92. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- ⊗ Troian, Martha. "Grassy Narrows, Ontario, 1962-." In *It's All Happening so Fast: A Counter-History of the Modern Canadian Environment*, edited by Lev Bratishenko, Mirko Zardini, and Canadian Centre for Architecture, First edition., 121–27. Heijningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016.
- ⊠ Angiama, Sepake, and Emmanuel Pratt. "Nourishing the Root: Transforming the Urban Ecologies of Chicago." In *And Other Such Stories: 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial*, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama, and Paulo Tavares, 145–51. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- △ Akdogan, Arman, and Felix Madrazo. "Capital versus Capital." In *Visionary Power: Producing the Contemporary City*, edited by Christine de Baan, Joachim Declerck, Véronique Patteeuw, and Berlage Instituut, 33–39. Rotterdam: New York, NY: NAI Publishers; Available in North, South and Central America through D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2007.
- Blau, Eve. "Introduction: Oil and Urbanism" and "Chapter 1: Oil Baron City." In *Baku: Oil and Urbanism*, by Eve Blau with Ivan Rupnik, 15–30, 62–74. Zurich: Park Books, 2018.
- × Picon, Antoine. "The Limits of Intelligence: On the Challenges Faced by Smart Cities." In *Geographies of Information*, edited by Taraneh Meshkani and Ali Fard, 77–83. New Geographies 7. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.





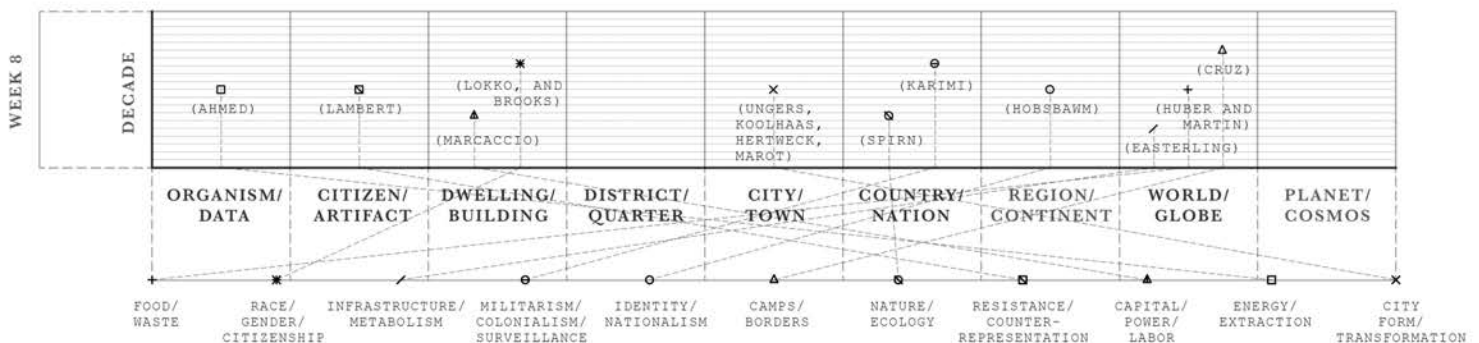
## WEEK 6: THE RISE OF TERRITORY (2)

- + Ufkes, Frances M. "Building a Better Pig: Fat Profits in Lean Meat." In *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*, edited by Jennifer R. Wolch and Jody Emel, 241–58. London; New York: Verso, 1998.
- \* Tan, Pelin. "The Scale of Commons and Solidarity Infrastructures." In *And Other Such Stories: 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial*, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama, and Paulo Tavares, 135–43. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- / Szeman, Imre. "On the Politics of Region." In *Dimensions of Citizenship*, edited by Nick Axel, Ann Lui, Mimi Zeiger, and Iker Gil, 90–101. Los Angeles, CA: Inventory Press LLC, 2018.
- ⊖ Boj Lopez, Floridaalma. "Naming, A Coming Home: Latinidad and Indigeneity in the Settler Colony." In *Decentering the U.S.*, edited by Léopold Lambert, The Funambulist:52–56, 2022.
- Vale, Lawrence J. "Mediated Monuments and National Identity." *The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 4 (1999): 391–408.
- △ Correa, Felipe. "Petrol Encampments." In *Beyond the City: Resource Extraction Urbanism in South America*, First edition., 65–88. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016.
- ⊗ Klein, Naomi. "Blanking the Beach: The Second Tsunami." In *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, 1st Picador ed., 385–405. New York: Picador, 2008.
- ⊠ Peattie, Lisa Redfield. "Representation." In *Planning, Rethinking Ciudad Guayana*, 111–52. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987.
- △ Roy, Ananya. "Small Worlds: The Democratization of Capital and Development." In *Poverty Capital: Microfinance and the Making of Development*, 1–40. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Watts, Michael. "Oil City: Petro-Landscapes and Sustainable Futures." In *Ecological Urbanism*, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University, 420–24. Zürich: L. Müller, 2013.
- × Craciun, Mihai. "Ideology: Shenzhen." In *Great Leap Forward: Harvard Design School "Project on the City,"* edited by Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, Leong Sze Tsung, and Judy Chung Chuihua, 44–155. Project on the City 1. Cambridge (Mass.) Köln [Paris]: Harvard design school Taschen, 2001.



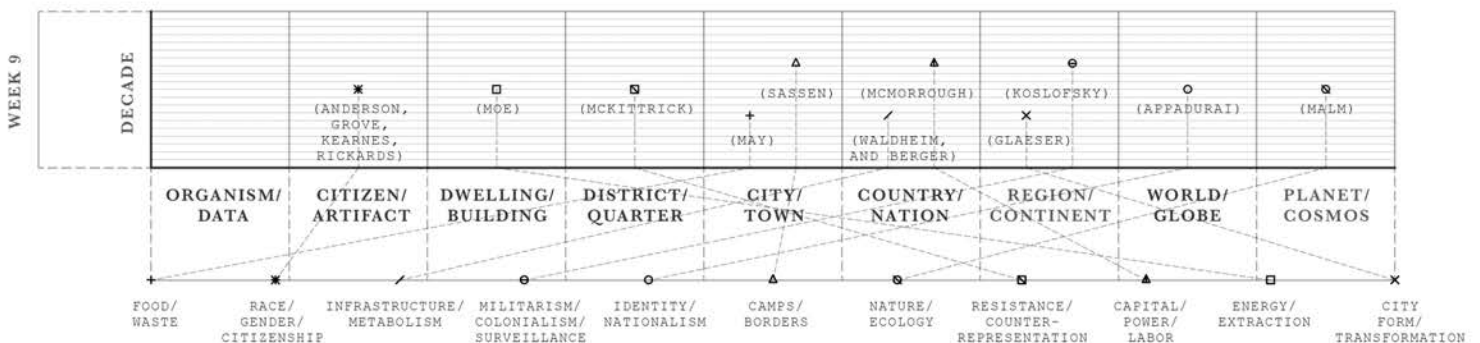
## WEEK 8: CONSTRUCTING GIFTS, RHYTHMS, AND RITUALS (1)

- + Huber, Frauke, and Uwe H. Martin. "Of Seed and Land." In *World of Matter*, edited by Inke Arns, Nabil Ahmed, Gavin Bridge, T. J. Demos, Timothy Morton, and Hartware MedienKunstVerein, 130–48. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015.
- \* Lokko, Lesley, and Gwendolyn Brooks. "African Space Magicians" and "Excerpt from In the Mecca: Poems." In *And Other Such Stories: 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial*, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama, and Paulo Tavares, 63–69, 70–74. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- / Easterling, Keller. "Broadband." In *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space*, 95–136. London; New York: Verso, 2014.
- ⊖ Karimi, Pamela. "Alternative Belongings: Instituting and Inhabiting the Iranian Underground." In *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, edited by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galan, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, and Marina Otero Verzier, 98–109. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- Hobsbawm, Eric John. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." In *The Invention of Tradition*, by Terence Osborn Ranger and Eric John Hobsbawm, 1–14. Canto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- △ Cruz, Teddy. "The Political Equator. Conversations on Coexistence: Border Neighborhoods as Sites of Production." In *Of Bridges & Borders Vol. II*, edited by Sigismond de Vajay, Pedro P. Donoso, and Flavia Costa, First edition., 352–63. Zürich: jrp ringier, 2013.
- ⊗ Spiri, Anne Whiston. "Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon, 1. publ. as pbk., 91–113. New York, NY: Norton, 1996.
- ⊞ Lambert, Léopold. "Introduction: The Cartography of Power," "Foucault and Architecture: The Encounter That Never Was," "The Architectural Underestimation," "Do Not Become Enamored with Power," "Mon Corps, Topie Impitoyable," and "The Political Technology of the Body." In *Foucault, The Funambulist Pamphlets: 7–38*. Punctum Books, 2013.
- △ Marcaccio, Roberta. "Tutti Proprietari." In *Real Estates: Life without Debt*, edited by Jack Self and Shumi Bose, 45–49. London: Bedford Press, 2014.
- Ahmed, Nabil. "Earth Poison." In *World of Matter*, edited by Inke Arns, Nabil Ahmed, Gavin Bridge, T. J. Demos, Timothy Morton, and Hartware MedienKunstVerein, 86–95. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015.
- × Ungers, O. M., Rem Koolhaas, Florian Hertweck, Sébastien Marot, and UAA Ungers Archives for Architectural Research. "Relaunch," "Berlin: A Green Archipelago," and "The City in the City." In *The City in the City: Berlin: A Green Archipelago*, 6–24, 71–130. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013.



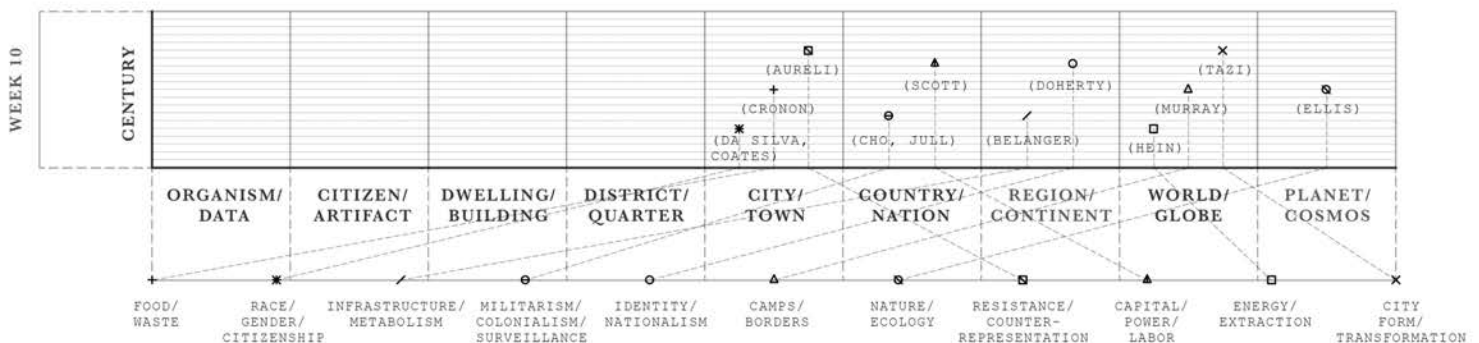
## WEEK 9: CONSTRUCTING RIFTS, RHYTHMS, AND RITUALS (2)

- + May, John. "Bringing Back a Fresh Kill" and "On Technology, Ecology, and Urbanism." In *Crisis*, edited by Mario Ballesteros, Irene Hwang, Tomoko Sakamoto, Michael Kubo, Anna Tetas, Albert Ferre, and Ramon Prat, 78–115. Verb 6. Barcelona: Actar, 2008.
- \* Anderson, Ben, Kevin Grove, Lauren Rickards, and Matthew Kearnes. "Slow Emergencies: Temporality and the Racialized Biopolitics of Emergency Governance." *Progress in Human Geography* 44, no. 4 (2019): 621–39.
- / Waldheim, Charles, and Alan Berger. "Logistics Landscape." *Landscape Journal* 27, no. 2 (2008): 219–46.
- ⊖ Koslofsky, Craig. "Colonizing the Urban Night: Resistance, Gender, and the Public Sphere." In *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, 157–97. New Studies in European History. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Traumatic Exit, Identity Narratives, and the Ethics of Hospitality." In *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, edited by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galan, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, and Marina Otero Verzier, 34–40. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- △ Sassen, Saskia. "Old Borders and New Bordering Capabilities: Cities as Frontier Zones." In *Of Bridges & Borders Vol. II*, edited by Sigismond de Vajay, Pedro P. Donoso, and Flavia Costa, First edition., 222–37. Zürich: jrp ringier, 2013.
- ⊗ Malm, Andreas. "On Unicorns and Baboons: For Climate Realism." In *The Progress of This Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World*, 119–56. London; New York: Verso, 2018.
- ⊠ McKittrick, Katherine. "Plantation Futures." *Small Axe* 1, no. 3 (2013): 1–15.
- Δ McMorrough, John. "City of Shopping." In *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*, edited by Harvard design school, Judy Chung Chuihua, Rem Koolhaas, Jeffrey Inaba, and Leong Sze Tsung, 193–203. Project on the City 2. Köln London Paris [etc.] Cambridge (Mass.): Taschen Harvard design school, 2001.
- Moe, Kiel. "State." In *Empire, State & Building*, 182–231. New York: Actar, 2017.
- × Glaeser, Edward L. "Why Do Cities Decline?" In *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*, 41–68. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2012.



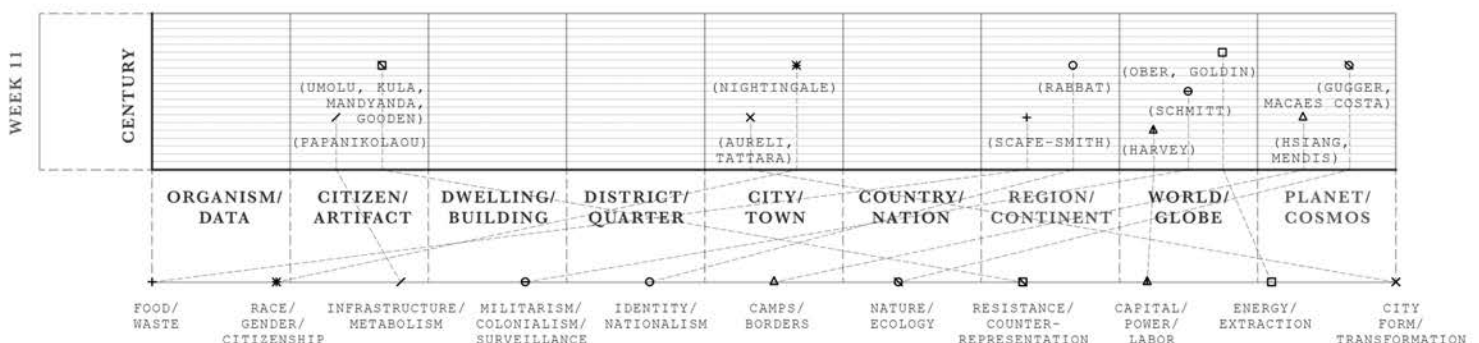
## WEEK 10: CENTENNIAL RESURRECTIONS (1)

- + Cronon, William. "Annihilating Space: Meat." In *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, 3. print., 207–62. New York: Norton, 1992.
- \* Ferreira da Silva, Denise, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. "The Racial Question(ing) of Justice," and "Excerpt from The Case for Reparations." In *And Other Such Stories: 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial*, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama, and Paulo Tavares, 23–31. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- / Bélanger, Pierre. "Redefining Infrastructure." In *Ecological Urbanism*, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University, 332–49. Zürich: L. Müller, 2013.
- ⊖ Cho, Leena, Matthew Jull, and Arctic Design Group. "Arrivals." In *Mediating Environments*, First edition., 18–61. Next Cities Series. Erscheinungsort nicht ermittelbar: Applied Research and Design Publishing, 2019.
- Doherty, Gareth. "There's More to Green than Meets the Eye: Green Urbanism in Bahrain." In *Ecological Urbanism*, edited by Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University, 174–83. Zürich: L. Müller, 2013.
- △ Murray, Martin J. "Cities as an Assemblage of Enclaves." In *The Urbanism of Exception: The Dynamics of Global City Building in the Twenty-First Century*, 147–98. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- ⊗ Ellis, Erle C. "Ecologies of the Anthropocene." In *Grounding Metabolism*, edited by Daniel Ibañez and Nikos Katsikis, 20–27. New Geographies 6, 2014.
- ⊠ Aureli, Pier Vittorio. "Introduction" and "Toward the Archipelago." In *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, 1–46. Writing Architecture Series. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011.
- ▲ Scott, Allen J. "A Brief Historical Geography of Capitalism." In *A World in Emergence: Cities and Regions in the 21st Century*, 1–14. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2012.
- Hein, Carola. "Between Oil and Water." In *The Petropolis of Tomorrow*, edited by Neeraj Bhatia, 436–47. AatR 47. New York, NY: Actar D, 2013.
- × Tazi, Nadia. "Fragments of Net-Theory." In *Mutations*, edited by Rem Koolhaas, Stefano Boeri, Sanford Kwinter, and Nadia Tazi, 42–57. Barcelona: ACTAR [u.a.], 2000.



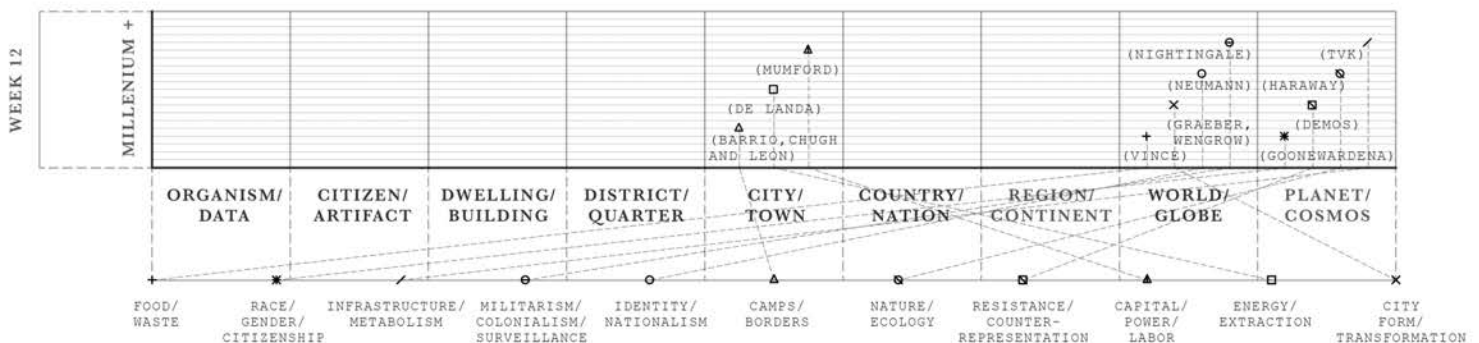
# WEEK 11: CENTENNIAL RESURRECTIONS (2)

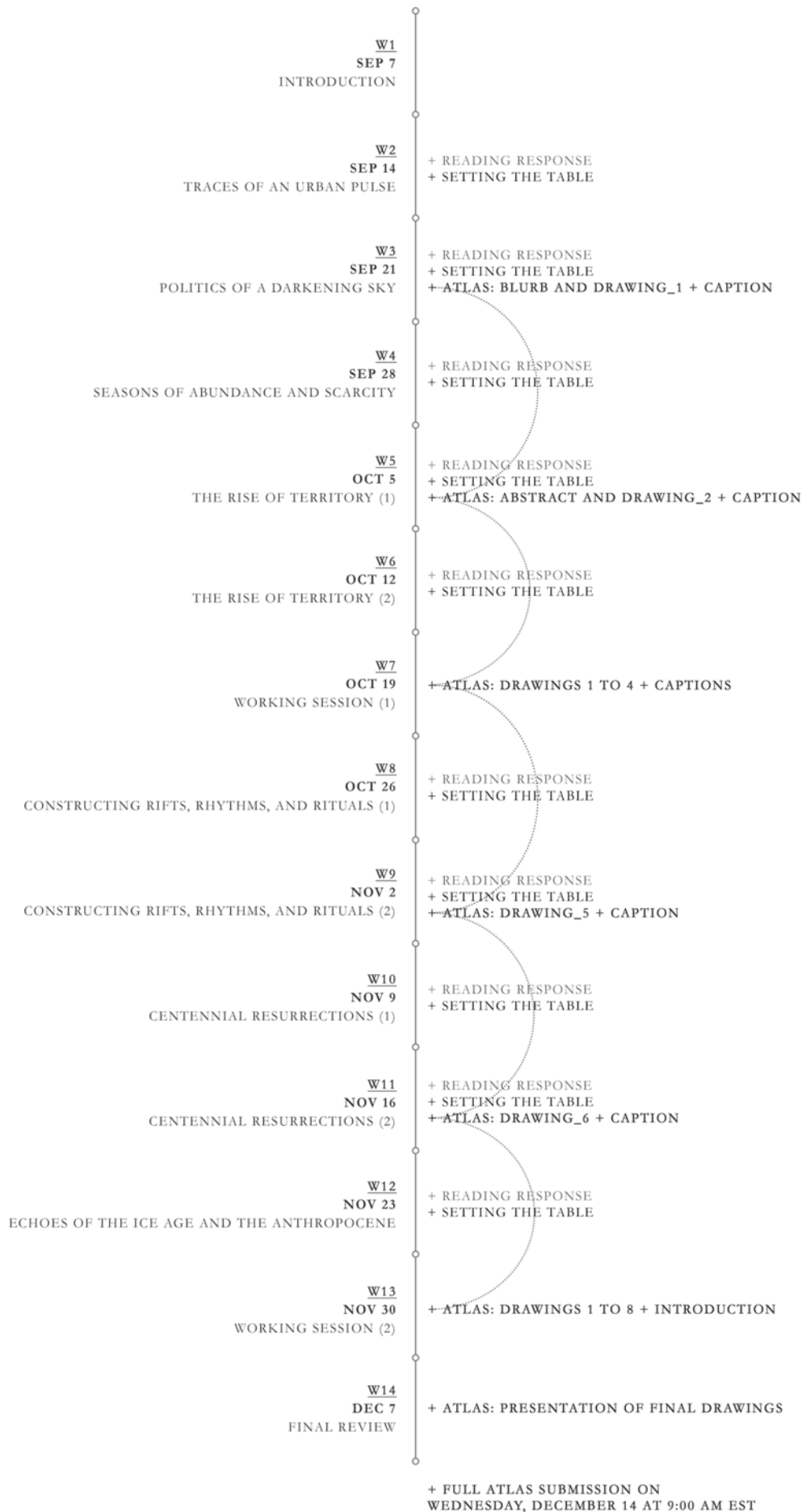
- + Scafe-Smith, Akil. "Going Banana, Becoming Plantain." In *Politics of Food*, edited by Léopold Lambert, The Funambulist:30–35, 2020.
- \* Nightingale, Carl Husemoller. "Camouflaging the Color Line in Chicago." In *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, 295–332. Historical Studies of Urban America. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- / Papanikolaou, Dimitris. "Choreographies of Information." In *Geographies of Information*, edited by Taraneh Meshkani and Ali Fard, 45–55. New Geographies 7. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- ⊖ Schmitt, Carl. "Legal Title to the Land-Appropriation of a New World: Discovery and Occupation." In *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, translated by G. L. Ulmen, First paperback edition., 126–38. New York: Telos Press, 2006.
- Rabbat, Nasser. "Arab Cities and Identity Crisis." In *The Arab City: Architecture & Representation*, edited by Amale Andraos, Nora Akawi, and Caitlin Blanchfield, 40–50. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.
- △ Hsiang, Joyce, and Bimal Mendis. "The City of Seven Billion." In *Island*, edited by Daniel Daou and Pablo Pérez-Ramos, 204–11. New Geographies 6. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2016.
- ⊞ Gugger, Harry, and Bárbara Mações Costa. "Urban-Nature: The Ecology of Planetary Artifice." In *Ecology*, edited by Matteo Ghidoni, 32–40. San Rocco 10, 2014.
- ⊞ Umolu, Yesomi, Inam Kula, Awiwe Mandyanda, and Mario Gooden. "Decolonizing Space: The Case of #RhodesMustFall," and "Appearances and (Non)Erasures: Mapping Confederate Monuments and the Racial Conditionedness of Liberation." In *And Other Such Stories: 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial*, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama, and Paulo Tavares, 75–93. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019.
- △ Harvey, David. "The Production of Spatial Configurations: The Geographical Mobilities of Capital and Labor." In *The Limits to Capital*, New and Fully updated ed., 373–412. London; New York: Verso, 2006.
- Ober, Maya, and Magdalena Goldin. "Polarized Migration." In *Wired Capital*, edited by Justinien Tribillon and Catarina de Almeida Brito, 102–13. Migrant 2. Migrant Journal Press, 2017.
- × Aureli, Pier Vittorio, and Martino Tattara. "The City as Political Form." In *Visionary Power: Producing the Contemporary City*, edited by Christine de Baan, Joachim Declerck, Véronique Patteeuw, and Berlage Instituut, 17–31. Rotterdam: New York, NY: NAI Publishers; Available in North, South and Central America through D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2007.



# WEEK 12: ECHOES OF THE ICE AGE AND THE ANTHROPOCENE

- + Vince, Gaia. "Farmlands." In *Adventures in the Anthropocene: A Journey to the Heart of the Planet We Made*, 106–49. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2014.
- \* Goonewardena, Kanishka. "Planetary Urbanization and Totality." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36, no. 3 (2018): 456–73.
- / TVK - Trévelo & Viger-Kohler. "The Saga of the Giants" and "The Empire Beneath the Sky (Línes)." In *The Earth Is an Architecture*, by Julien Hourcade, Pierre Alain Trévelo, Antoine Viger-Kohler, Alexandre Bullier, David Enon, David Malaud, Mathieu Mercuriali, Océane Ragoucy, and TVK - Trévelo & Viger-Kohler, 15–52, First edition. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2021.
- ⊖ Nightingale, Carl Husemoller. "Part One: Ancestries." In *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, 19–46. Historical Studies of Urban America. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Neumann, Iver B. "Before Belonging." In *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, edited by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galan, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, and Marina Otero Verzier, 311–12. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- △ Salgueiro Barrio, Roi, Aanya Chugh, and Maynard León. "Petrified Metabolism as Urban Artifact." In *Grounding Metabolism*, edited by Daniel Ibañez and Nikos Katsikis, 52–61. New Geographies 6, 2014.
- ⊗ Haraway, Donna Jeanne. "Introduction" and "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene." In *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 1–8, 30–57. Experimental Futures: Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- ⊠ Demos, T. J. "Against the Anthropocene." In *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*, 39–58. Berlin: Sternberg press, 2017.
- △ Mumford, Lewis. "Sanctuary, Village, and Stronghold." In *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*, 3–28. A Harvest Book. San Diego New York London: Harcourt, Inc, 1989.
- De Landa, Manuel. "Geological History: 1000-1700 A.D." and "Biological History: 1000-1700 A.D." In *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*, First paperback edition, Eighth printing, 25–56, 103–34. New York: Swerve Editions, 2014.
- × Graeber, David, and D. Wengrow. "Free People, the Origin of Cultures, and the Advent of Private Property." In *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, First American edition., 120–63. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2021.







## RESPONSIBILITIES

### (1) Weekly Reading Responses and Participation:

In this seminar, reading responses are opportunities for you to consolidate your reactions to, doubts about, or agreements and contentions with the themes and authors presented every week. They are *not* instruments to measure how well you read, or worse, if you've simply completed the assigned readings. Instead, think of them as invitations to compose your thoughts and positions as you prepare for our table discussions. How would *you* like to participate in the conversation? Which ideas or precedents would you like *us* to collectively engage with? These reflections, then, are essential contributions to the quality of our shared debates (and should not be seen, or written, as evidence of individual mastery or performance). They are, ultimately, collective undertakings carried out individually. Please upload your responses (approx. 350-400 words, to the four readings chosen by the presenting group) to Canvas by 10:00 pm on Tuesday.

### (2) Setting *the* Table:

With its gridded desks, front-facing chairs, and purposeful separation between the space of the 'teacher' and that of the 'learner,' our classroom (1-150) is not ideal for shared reflections on the nature of the contemporary city. Besides naturalizing metaphors of spatial hierarchy, the 'standard' arrangement of its objects prescribes social exchanges that govern, and are governed by, a desire for (or an indifference toward) stratification. Fixed into place by prevailing narratives of practicality and undisputed rules of civility, these objects seldom deviate from their assigned positions without jeopardizing the systems that have, for centuries, limited their mobility under the guise of rationalism and authority. Much like the city, then, our classroom is in urgent need of alternative modes of co-authorship and cohabitation.

In Setting *the* Table, the weekly ritual of forming a collective space out of scattered individual desks becomes a practice of formalizing these alternatives, both physically and symbolically. In doing so, the classroom relinquishes its role as a laboratory for the biopsy of the city and becomes a territory in its own right; one that works to mediate between the scale of the body and that of the planet, and between the duration of the class and the timescales that shape other, larger territories. As a mediatory device, then, the collective table (with its designated form, and the social exchanges developing above and below its surface) becomes a microcosm of the city. And in designing and theorizing these exchanges through the themes and positions unfolding throughout the semester, we will experiment with different configurations of, and different functions for, our shared table.

Every week, one person (or group) will be responsible for setting the table and, in doing so, shaping and leading the conversation. The practice of configuring the table (and its function) should not be haphazard but instead rooted in the positions, scales, timescales, and ideas present in the weekly readings. This is less a *presentation* of the readings (as in a conventional slideshow/PowerPoint sense) and more of an active engagement with the theories and ideas made manifest through a critical curation of a collective space; one that makes it easier to visualize, understand, and discuss them. Rather than *describing* the works of the various authors, you must imagine them as bodiless guests whose presence is embodied within the arrangement and performance of the

table—i.e. how it spatializes and encodes their perspectives and contradictions, or how it absorbs some of the urban or territorial conditions they are referring to.

To do this, out of the eleven readings (and themes) available every week, your task is to choose four. This will determine the final weekly reading list for the entire class. You have until Friday afternoon at 4:00 pm to make this choice and notify the TA, who will communicate your choice with the class. This selection should be based on your own interests but also on your ability to form interesting connections between the different works and bring them to the table. This could end up being a collective meal that we share together, a board game, a debate, or even a tournament of some sort—anything so long as it animates the conversation and proposes new (and more productive) modes of engaging with the readings and the city. Remember that this is *not* about creating objects or artifacts for pure aesthetic consumption. Each individual or group will receive a stipend to cover the cost of any required materials, ingredients, printing, etc.

In thinking about the relationship between the city, the authors, and the table, think of how you organize your peers and the objects of the classroom in space. Think about the origins of the ingredients (if it is a meal), the fate of the waste we might produce, the form of the table, and our ability to interact with it (or not). Think about the relationship between the table and the chairs, and about comfort and discomfort. Think about surveillance and eyesight—who sees who (and when), who doesn't see who. Think about the meaning of the table, the borders you create on it, whether it is continuous or not, and why. Think about its carbon footprint, the processes of extraction that were required to build it and the energy needed to ultimately get rid of it. Think about the invisible and forgotten labor mechanisms concealed within its joints and connections. Consider how (and when) it grows or shrinks, its history and its future, its direct and deep timescales, and the like. You are encouraged to meet with me or the TA on the Monday prior to your session to discuss your plans. You will have time during class to configure the table and dismantle it in the end, leaving no trace.

### **(3) The Atlas Project:**

In his lecture *The Thousand and One Nights* for the series *Seven Nights* (1984), Jorge Luis Borges mentions the *Confabulatores Nocturni*—men whose profession it was to tell stories in the night. “Those stories must have been fables,” he said, adding that “...the fact that the wolf spoke with the sheep and the ox with the ass, or the lion with the nightingale” must have enchanted all those who gathered every night around the storytellers. Of interest here is the relationship between the fable and the night. For it is not a coincidence that the *Confabulatores Nocturni* garner a larger audience away from the glaring brightness of the sun when the city slows down and stops bustling mercurially. It is only then that the expanding shadows of nightfall erase the forms of the city and allow the listeners to focus on and revel in the speaker's words, as though lost in the withering flame of a candle. There is something important to be said here about the relationship between darkness and imagination, but more importantly, between the resolution and quality of the story and the time in which it is narrated.

In this semester-long project, your task, ultimately, is to tell an urban story of your choice. This could be the story of an organism, a creature, an individual, an artifact, a building, a neighborhood, or any other human or non-human territory that is impacted by the forces shaping the contemporary city. Just like the *Confabulatores Nocturni*, your mission here is to carefully choose the best scales and timescales through which to chronicle and represent the nuances of your research and the various layers that transform across it. Time, space, and the resolution of your argument go hand in hand here. If the *Confabulatores Nocturni* rely on the absence of visual

stimuli at night to animate their fables, you will rely on drawing and mapping in this project as necessary tools to render visible the chapters of your story. Critical here are practices of mapping and drawing that are not merely descriptive, but that move toward a new representation of the city, ones that cannot exist without your research and investigation. In doing so, avoid conventional cartographic abstraction and focus instead on making legible the frictions, hierarchies, barriers (both visible and invisible), and clashing perspectives surrounding your urban condition.

Your goal by the end of the semester is to produce an atlas of eight maps and drawings, each of which is to be supported by a text of approximately 300 words that prompts a conversation between your work and other authors. Critical here is the sequence of maps and drawings, and how they together employ various timescales to elucidate your urban story. The drawings and corresponding texts should be framed by a critical introduction and conclusion (approx. 500 words each) that highlight several thinkers within your field of investigation and reflect on the potential of your study beyond the time constraints of this semester. Submissions interspersed throughout the semester on a biweekly basis will help steadily scaffold your research towards your final presentation of the Atlas project. Both the TA and I will offer you individual feedback on the drawings, maps, and texts you submit. You will also hear from your peers and invited guests during the working sessions that are dedicated to improving your arguments.

\*Doctoral students enrolled in the 9-credit track: We can together rethink the content and format of the Atlas project on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester.

## **ABSENCE POLICY**

Work in the proseminar will build sequentially. Therefore, student commitment to incremental development on a weekly basis is of great importance. The nature and pace of this class necessitates regular attendance and requires that deadlines are consistently met. Attendance in class and for the duration of all formal reviews is mandatory. Greater than two absences from class without a medical excuse supported by a doctor's note, communication from Student Support Services (S<sup>3</sup>), GradSupport, or verifiable personal emergency could result in grade reduction.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology students are here because of their demonstrated intellectual ability and because of their potential to make a significant contribution to human thought and knowledge. At MIT, students will be given unusual opportunities to do research and undertake scholarships that will advance knowledge in different fields of study. Students will also face many challenges. It is important for MIT students to become familiar with the Institute's policies regarding academic integrity, which are available at the [Academic Integrity at MIT: A Handbook for Students](#).

## **WRITING AND COMMUNICATION CENTER**

The WCC at MIT (Writing and Communication Center) offers *free* one-on-one professional advice from communication experts. The WCC is staffed completely by MIT lecturers. All have advanced degrees. All are experienced college classroom teachers of communication. The WCC helps you strategize about all types of academic and professional writing as well as about all aspects of oral presentations (including practicing classroom presentations & conference talks as well as designing slides). The WCC also helps with all English as Second Language issues, from writing and grammar to pronunciation and conversation practice. The WCC is located in E18-233, 50 Ames Street). To guarantee yourself a time, make an appointment. To register with our online scheduler and to make appointments, go to <https://mit.mywconline.com/>. To access the WCC's many pages of advice about writing and oral presentations, go to <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/>. Check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours and available appointments.

## **DIVERSITY**

MIT values an inclusive environment. We hope to foster a sense of community in this classroom and consider it to be a place where you will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with us.

## GRADING DISTRIBUTION

- 1. Class Participation and Reading Responses.....30%
- 2. Setting the Table.....30%
- 3. Atlas.....40%

## GRADING DEFINITION

The final grade will represent the balance of attendance, participation, engagement in class discussions, incorporating feedback, completion of assignments, individual growth over the semester and quality of work produced in the seminar, with an emphasis on clarity and originality. The following criteria will be used for assessment and evaluation:

- A.** Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.
- B.** Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.
- C.** Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.
- D.** Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.



Photograph from Ward Eldredge, *Kings Canyon National Park* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), p. 33  
Found in Ickx, Wonne. "The Chicago Stump." In *Ecology*, edited by Matteo Ghidoni, 28–31. San Rocco 10, 2014.