

## INFRASTRUCTURAL FUTURES --GRADUATE SEMINAR

Instructor: Orit Halpern

Office Hours: By Appointment

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### Requirements:

Final original project—40%

Presentations on Project/Responses—30%

Classroom participation and attendance—30%

This class is aimed to be an intensive seminar and “studio” in developing methods to map and engage with built environments, design, and infrastructure as contemporary practices of making territory and producing political and governmental action. We will examine how infrastructures shape politics, economics, and society, and how design impacts the future of the planet and human life.

Your job is to be mischevous, entrepreneurial, devious, and what ever other adjective you can imagine to find ways to represent and mis-represent infrastructural logics. This course will meld theory with a series of practical exercises by which you are to learn from example and interrogate your objects of historical and anthropological study. Every student must develop a project, either ethnographic or historical concerning a infrastructure of their choice. The project can be either web based, or it can be a standard paper, however it must include original documentation. This means for ethnographies you must interview someone related to the infrastructure--this could be an administrator, designer, lawyer, human rights group, etc. for the project. If its historical you must access primary (as in archival resources) aspect to the project. Each project will be done in consultation with myself. You may also work with me to develop other models.

Each student must submit weekly responses to the readings (often I give directed assignments, but sometimes its free form). The final project is an independent research project that might take multi-media or standard written form. The work must be the equivalent of writing a 20 page research paper. We can discuss this throughout the class. **Due dates for final projects are December 15.**

**You will also have to workshop and present on your project multiple times. Final presentations are Week11-13. Mid-term presentations will be October 24 and 31.**

### *Week 1 INTRODUCTION*

Reyner Banham: Reyner Loves LA <https://vimeo.com/22488225>

### *Week 2: INTRO TO DESIG and, INFRASTRUCTURAL STUDIES*

Koolhaas, Rem. “Junkspace.” *October* 100, no. Spring (2002): 175-90.

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas, Revised Edition: the Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977. [VenturiScottBrownIzenour](#)

Rittel, Horst W. J., Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning , Policy Sciences, 4:2 (1973:June) p.155

*Recommended:*

Deleuze and Guattari: *Thousand Plateaus*, University of Minnesota Press (1980), “How do you make Yourself a Body without Organs” chapter: [1000Plateaus06BWO](#)

Peter Sloterdijk: Introduction to the theory of Spheres 2014. Spheres. Semiotexte.

[http://www.sed.man.ac.uk/research/marc/news/seminars/latour/COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB\\_Spheres.pdf](http://www.sed.man.ac.uk/research/marc/news/seminars/latour/COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB_Spheres.pdf)

—“Geometry in the Colossal: The Project of Metaphysical Globalization” , *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 2009, volume 27, pp.29-42.

<http://www.envplan.com/epd/editorials/dst2.pdf>

—“The Crystal Palace” [COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB Spheres](#)

—“The Foam City”: [PSloterdijk Foam City](#)

WEEK 2: What is Infrastructure?

Larkin, B. (2013). “The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure”. *The Annual Review of Anthropology*. 42:327-43. <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522>

Toward Information Infrastructure Studies:

Ways of Knowing in a Networked Environment, Geoffrey C. Bowker, Karen Baker, Florence Millerand, and David Ribes

Shannon Mattern, *Urban Dashboards*, Places Journal,

<https://placesjournal.org/article/mission-control-a-history-of-the-urban-dashboard/>

Nicole Starolielski, "Warning: Do Not Dig': Negotiating the Visibility of Critical Infrastructures," *Journal of Visual Culture* 11, no. 1 (2012): 38-57. ([link](#))

Go back on previous week readings.

**Week 3: PLANET**

Jennifer Gabrys, *Program Earth: Environmental Sensing Technologies and the Making of a Computational Planet*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota (2016) Introduction, Conclusion

## WEEK 4: CLIMATE

Daniel Barber, The Form and Climate Research Group, or Scales of Architectural History, *Avery Review*, <http://averyreview.com/issues/15/the-form-and-climate-research-group>

Felicity Scott, "Securing Adjustable Climate",  
<http://averyreview.com/issues/16/securing-adjustable-climate>

Adam Curtis, "All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace", Episode 2:

<https://vimeo.com/groups/96331/videos/80799352>

Nicole Staroseilski, "The Materiality of Media Heat." *International Journal of Communication* 8 (2014): 1–5. ([link](#))

Recommended:

Society and Space Special Issue on life in anthropocene:

<http://epd.sagepub.com/content/32/1.toc>

## Week 5:

### EXTRACTION

Emily Apter, *Overburden*, *E-flux*, May 2017: <http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/accumulation/96423/overburden/>

WJT Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*, (New York: Verso, 2011), Introduction, Chapter Sabotage.

## Week 6: ZONES

Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land* (excerpts)

Keller Easterling: *Zone: The Spatial Softwares of Extrastatecraft*:

<https://placesjournal.org/article/zone-the-spatial-software-of-extrastatecraft/>

Keller Easterling, *Enduring Innocence*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005) Introduction, Chapter 9.

## WEEK 7: POPULATIONS (CLOUDS AND CROWDS)

Bruce Braun and Stephanie Wakefield: <http://societyandspace.com/material/article-extras/theme-section-a-new-apparatus-technology-government-and-the-resilient-city/bruce-braun-and-stephanie-wakefield-inhabiting-the-postapocalyptic-city/>

Sebastian Vehlken: Zootechnologies: Swarming as a Cultural Technique [Theory Culture Society-2013-Vehlken-110-31](#)

Nicholas De Moncheaux, Cybernetic Cities, IN New Geographies: [cyberneticcities](#)

Orit Halpern and Robert Mitchell, "The Smart Mandate" forthcoming Grey Room.

Suggested:

Sabine Hohler, "Population Ecologies", *Distinktion*, no.14, 2007: 45-64.[hohlerpopulationecology](#)

C.S.Holling: Resilience and Sustainability in Ecological Systems:[Holling1973](#)

### **Week 8: LOGISTICS**

Jesse Le Cavalier, "The Restlessness of Objects", Cabinet (2015).

'[Coded Vanilla: Logistical Media and the Determination of Action](#)', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114.1: 135-152. (2015)

Soenke Zehle and Ned Rossiter, '[Mediations of Labor: Algorithmic Architectures, Logistical Media and the Rise of Black Box Politics](#)', in Richard Maxwell (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Labor and Media*, New York: Routledge. (2015)

### **Week 9: SPECULATION**

Saskia Sassen: *Expulsions* (2015)

Introduction, Section 1: The Global City (1989)

Melinda Cooper: "Turbulent Worlds: Financial Markets and Environmental Insecurity", *Theory, Culture and Society* (2010).

Orit Halpern and Gokce Gunel, "Demoing unto Death: Smart Cities, Environment, and "Preemptive Hope", *Fibre Culture* Issue 29, 2017

Lewis, *Flash Boys* (select chapters)

Recommended:

Mike Davis: *City of Quartz* Introduction, Fortress LA, Conclusion.

### **WEEK 10: Bodies and Populations**

Jonathan Crary, *24/7: The Ends of Sleep* (2013).

Week 11: Imaginaries? Alternatives?

Robert Smithson, *Entropy and the New Monuments*, (1966):

[https://www.robertsmithson.com/essays/entropy\\_and.htm](https://www.robertsmithson.com/essays/entropy_and.htm)

Lebbeus Woods, writings, <https://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/> Particularly focus on war and radical reconstruction

Anna Tsing, et. Al. "The Art of Living on a Damaged Planet" (Excerpts).

## PRESENTATIONS START

Week 12-13: Presentations

Final Project is due December 15, 2017.