

Understanding the Post Industrial City / Urban Ideologies in the Media Age

Overview

Architectural/urban culture conventionally defines urban form as a result of the forces of production—a dense centralized core that served the advantages of agglomeration economics. This is the paradigm of the traditional city. That city has by our own experience been transformed. Instead of train lines and trolleys taking workers and managers to downtown jobs or regional shoppers to downtown department stores, modern urbanism is typically a broadly spread network of highways and nodes that Joel Garreau observed positively as the beginning phenomenon called *Edge Cities* and that others today disparage as sprawl. In our research and work, we find that in open societies characterized by free markets and democratic values, urban forms are largely driven by process and are transformed when the process changes.

This is in keeping with larger cultural forces. Forty years ago Marshall McLuhan made the connection between the nature of the media from which we learn and through which we communicate and the way we connect to the world. When the abstraction of reading is the principal tool, we become creatures of the enlightenment, sure of our ability to work from theory to understanding. The scientific revolution based in experience and experiments has led to new means of communication, notably the immediate and visceral television that McLuhan was trying to understand. With television and the world wide web extending our nervous systems, what are the effects on urban form?

This course will examine the forces that are continuing to transform urban form. The spatialization of contemporary life and the physical forms and fabric that support it call into question traditional definitions of ‘urban life’ and ‘city form.’ The seminar's broad context is the interface between the physical/psychological permanence of the existing traditional city and the changing spatial and cultural landscape of a new urban realm defined by consumption culture, new technologies and the media age.

Seminar Focus

Part 1 will develop an understanding of forces that are changing how we live today. These cultural forces will be explored in multiple media and in readings from multiple disciplines. Students will be asked to understand and project how these forces have an impact on urban life.

Part 2 will look at the evolution of American city forms by connecting them to the prevailing forces of the time.

Part 3 will return to the contemporary media age and apply this understanding to actual places for the demographic groups that are the engines of urban growth today.

The conclusion will look at the underlying ideologies that animate how we live today and how policies of “best-worst” places relate to how life is lived.

Schedule & Readings

1 Introduction 1.11

2 Media Age: Identity, Freedom & Cultural Groups 1.18

Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Chapter 1, The Contours of High Modernity, pp. 10-34.
- Chapter 3, The Trajectory of the Self, “Lifestyles and life plans,” pp. 80-88.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1988) *Freedom*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Chapter 4, Freedom, Society and Social System, pp. 71-88.

Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Brian (1982) *The World of Goods*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

- Chapter 3, The Uses of Goods
- Chapter 4, Exclusion, Intrusion

Falk, Pasi and Campbell, Colin (1997) *The Shopping Experience*, London: Sage.

- Chapter 1, Douglas, Mary, In Defense of Shopping, pp. 15-30.

McCracken, Grant (1990) *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Chapter 5, Meaning Manufacture and Movement in the World of Goods, pp. 71-89.

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

3 Media Age: New Orders 1.25

Seabrook, John (2000) *Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing The Marketing of Culture*, New York: Knopf.

- Chapter 1, A Place in the Buzz
- Chapter 2, My Father’s Closet, pp. 52-56
- Chapter 3, From Townhouse to Megastore
- Chapter 6, Sunday in SoHo

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Introduction, pp. 1-7.

McLuhan, Marshall (1969) *Counterblast*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, p. 1-43, 54-69.

Harvard Business Review, July-August 1998

- Pine II, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James, Welcome to the Experience Economy, pp. 97-105

Henkoff, Ronald, Why every red-blooded consumer owns a truck, and a five pound jar off peanut butter, and a personal computer, and a tool belt, and a case off energy-saving light bulbs, and why it all matters on a nearly cosmic scale. *Fortune*, (29 May 1995), p. 86-100.

The Howard Dean Reading List from January 2004 *Wired* is an interesting window into new forms of organization. Divide the readings; each student responsible for one.

- *Out Of Control* by Kevin Kelly
- *The Cluetrain Manifesto* by Chris Locke, Rick Levine, Doc Searls, and David Weinberger
- *Emergence* by Steven Johnson
- *Small Pieces Loosely Joined* by David Weinberger
- *Smart Mobs* by Howard Rheingold
- *Linked* by Albert-László Barabási

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

4 Media Age Presentation 2.1

Assignment Due: Group presentation & individual papers representing each student's part of the work.

5 Past models: Industrial Economy Age 2.8

Hershberg, Theodore, et al. *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century*. (Oxford University Press, 1981)

- Chapter 4 The Journey-to-Work: an Empirical Investigation of Work, Residence and Transportation, Philadelphia, 1850 and 1880).

Dreiser, Theodore, *Trilogy of Desire*, (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1974)

- *The Financier*, Volume One,
- *The Titan*, Volume Two, Chapter 1, The New City, p.1-5.

Fisher, David Hackett, *Paul Revere's Ride*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)

- *The Mission: British Plans, American Preparation*, p. 78-92.

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

6 Past models: Service-Transaction Economy Age 2.15

Castle, Emery N., ed., *The Changing American Countryside: Rural People and Places*. University Press of Kansas, 1995)

- Chapter 3, The Urban Invasion of Rural America: The Emergence of the Galactic City, p. 39-62.

Gans, Herbert, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*, (London: Penguin Press, 1969),

- Preface, v-viii; Introduction, xv-xxiv.
- The Planners of Levittown, p.3-21.
- The Levittowners—and why they came, p. 22-43.
- The Beginnings of Group Life, p. 44- 67.

Garreau, Joel (1991) *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, New York: Doubleday.

- Introduction
- Chapter 1, The Search for the Future Inside Ourselves: Life on the New Frontier
- Chapter 5, Atlanta: The Color of Money or Chapter 6, Phoenix, Shadow Government

Jackson, J.B., *Landscapes: Selected Writings*, ed. Ervin Zube, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970).

- Other Directed Houses, p. 55-72
- The Many Guises of Suburbia, 113-115
- The Almost Perfect Town, 116-131.

Wolfe, Tom, *A Man in Full*, (New York, 1998)

- Hello Out There- 7-Eleven Land, 158-165
- The Lay of the Land, 179 – 200.

<http://server1.fandm.edu/levittown/default.html>: a summary of an exhibit about Levittown's history

www.joanklatcho.com: a photojournalist's record of Levittown today

Miner, Curtis, "Picture Window Paradise", *Pennsylvania Heritage*, Spring 2002, p.12-21.

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

7 Field Trip 2.22

Field trip: Old City to North Philly to Chestnut Hill: hip & cool to de-industrialization to older traditional a monoculture

Meet at NW corner, 2nd & Market Street at 1.45 pm.

Subway to 2nd Street, R-7 to Chestnut Hill, dinner at George Thomas's house, R-8 to Philadelphia

8 Place 3.1

Massey, Doreen (1994) *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

- Chapter 6, A Global Sense of Place, p. 146-156.

Weiss, Michael J. (2000) *The Clustered World: how we live, what we buy, and what it all means about who we are*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

- Introduction: Confessions of a Demographic Detective p. 3-8.
- Chapter 1, Around the Clustered World: An Overview, p. 9-42

Meyerowitz, Joshua (1985) *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*, New York: Oxford University Press.

- Introduction: Behavior in Its Place, pages 1-12.
- Chapter 7, The Separation of Social Place from Physical Place, pp. 115-125.

Business Week, October 19, 1992

Hot Spots: America's New Growth Regions, p. 80-88

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

Spring Break 3.8

9 Best-worst places: Singles/Creative Class 3.15

Florida, Richard (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books.

- Chapter 1, The Transformation of Everyday Life
- Chapter 2, The Creative Ethos
- Chapter 4, The Machine Shop and the Hair Salon
- Chapter 12, The Power of Place

The Economist, December 2001, "The Bridget Jones Economy"

The New York Times, October 14, 2001, Section 6; Page 25; Column 3; Magazine Desk.

- Watters, Ethan, In My Tribe
- see also (optional): Watters, Ethan, (2004) *Urban Tribes: Are Friends the New Family*, New York: Bloomsbury.

Featherstone, Mike (1991) *Consumer Culture and Post-Modernism*, London: Sage.

- Chapter 7, City Cultures and Postmodern Lifestyles, pp. 95-111.

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

10 Best-worst places: Bobos/Retirees 3.22

Brooks, David (2000) *BOBOS in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Introduction
- Chapter 1, The Rise of the Educated Class
- Chapter 2, Consumption
- Chapter 3, Business Life, pp. 103-110
- Chapter 4, Pleasure, pp. 197-217

Rothman, Hal (2001) *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the 21st Century*, New York: Routledge.

- readings to be assigned

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

11 Singles/Creative Class Presentation 3.29

Assignment Due: Group presentation & individual papers representing each students' part of the work.

12 Bobos/Retirees Presentation 4.5

Assignment Due: Group presentation & individual papers representing each student's part of the work.

13 Media Age: Ideologies 4.12

Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

•Chapter 7, The Emergence of Life Politics, pp. 209-231.

McLuhan, Marshall

•readings to be assigned

Each student to select a reading that reflects contemporary ideologies about identity, relationships, resources, place, policies, etc.

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

14 Best-Worst Places: Policies 4.19

Scott, James C. (1999) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press

•readings to be assigned

Anderson, Chris, The Long Tail, *Wired*, Issue 12.10, October 2004,
www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html

Surowiecki, James (2004) *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations*, New York: Doubleday

•readings to be assigned

Assignment Due: 1 page response—a consideration of what the readings together mean

Requirements

1 Readings

The assigned readings are required. Readings inform class discussions and presentations and should be incorporated in your papers. The readings are crucial to succeeding in the course.

Each set of reading will be accompanied by a one page commentary—not a summary, not a book review but rather, your responses to the ideas and methods in the readings. These papers are due in class each week.

2 Team Presentations & Final Paper

Work will include 3 team presentations in class.

Each presentation will be supplemented by an individual paper incorporating each student's research and contribution to the team presentation. These papers are due the day of the presentation. *The assigned readings inform the presentations and should be incorporated in your papers. The readings are crucial to succeeding in the course.*

Each student will prepare a final paper that is due after classes end (details to be announced). It will address a selected aspect of the contemporary city, underlying ideologies and relationship to policies and, your views on how existing cities should respond to contemporary forces.

All Papers Must Be Footnoted with Sources. Failure to use sources will drop you one letter grade!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

3 Notebook

Each student is required to purchase the Sunday *New York Times* and to create a notebook of original clippings that describe aspects of everyday life as the 21st century begins. Originals only will be acceptable. This should cover from 16 January through 17 April and should provide evidence that you have read the paper. We will not accept off-prints from electronic versions of the paper. We will discuss the newspaper each week.

The notebook is due with the final paper (due date to be selected with class).

Selected Media References

Movie References by Theme

Identity: contrast between society based upon tradition and one based upon individuality and self-identity

Amarcord: (1973) enveloping remembrance of life in a traditional European town emphasizing the enduring institutions and timeless situations of home, family, church, school, work.

Kitty Foyle: (1940) struggle between hierarchical Philadelphia culture and democratic narrative of creating self-identity.

Saturday Night Fever: (1977) rejection of life that is the same as preceding generations and centered on family and church. Creation of self-identity through a leisure activity, not through work

Fight Club: (1999) introduction reveals and questions identity defined by the acquisition of goods and branded products and then shifts to personal action.

Relationships: social relationships are rooted in beliefs about human nature. Contrast between societies built by hierarchists, egalitarians or individualists.

The Truman Show: (1998) people are flawed and need help in the form of controls or direction to live together according to a certain plan.

Witness: (1985). The Amish live as a medieval survival that shares the same values and goals but cannot accommodate change or outsiders.

Edward Scissorhands: (1990) The freak/deviant/artist in contrast to the sameness and conformity of suburbia.

High Noon: (1952) the hero standing up for what's right. American archetype of the hero against the group.

The Wild One (1953) , Rebel Without a Cause (1955), The cultural shift occurs from adults as movie subjects to teen-agers and early twenty-somethings trying to figure out who they are.

Resources: Our approach toward resources/needs is based upon our ideas of earth/nature that are culturally constructed.

Apollo 13: (1992) The view of the earth from space in the early space program revealed the unity of earth and suggested its fragility. The space-misadventure suggested limits to human technology.

Shane: (1953) Cattle ranchers and farmers battle for control. A view of hierarchists: Earth/nature is OK within limits. The guys above you (or those who were there first) hold on to their position in the order. Development upsets the controlling group's world.

Chinatown: (1974) battle for control of the water supply in Los Angeles and subsequent development possible. Progressivists view that resources are there to be used. Use skill to increase resources to meet needs. Development responds to market forces. Filmed as ecology movement got underway, the movie also foreshadows the green concerns that earth/nature transformed by human actions is unstable and there is reason to adjust needs to resources.

Medicine Man: (1991) among the worst movies ever made but it poses issue of environmental change for immediate needs versus potential of nature to solve larger medical and social problems.

Additional Movies:

All That Heaving Allows (1955), Douglas Sirk
Bonfire of the Vanities (1990) (book by Tom Wolfe, 1987)
Wall Street (1987)
Reality Bites (1994)
Pleasantville (1998)
Dogtown and Z-Boys (2001)
Far From Heaven (2002)

Television References

Ozzie & Harriet (1952-1966)
Father Knows Best (1954-1960)
Leave It to Beaver (1957-1963)
The Andy Griffin Show (1960-1968)
The Dick Van Dyke Show (1961-1966)
Mary Tyler Moore (1970-1977)
MTV (1981-)
Cheers (1982-1993)
The Simpsons, (1989-)
Seinfeld (1990-1998)
Beverly Hills, 90210 (1990-2000)
The Real World (1992-)
Friends (1994-2004)
Will & Grace (1998-)
Providence (1999-2002)
Ed (2000-2004)
Everwood (2002-)
The OC (2003-)

Web References

www.jcreport.com, www.flavorpill.com, www.earplug.com, www.boldtype.com

Prelinger Archives: <http://www.archive.org/movies/prelinger.php>

Prelinger Archives was founded in 1983 by Rick Prelinger in New York City. Over the next twenty years, it grew into a collection of over 48,000 "ephemeral" (advertising, educational, industrial, and amateur) films. The Internet Archives are public domain films from Prelinger Archives available to all for free downloading and reuse.