

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Landscape Architecture

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Architecture, Inequality, Landscapes of Justice

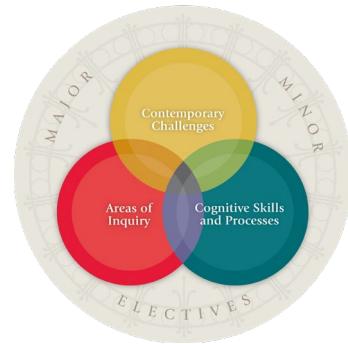
Anita Bakshi

Fall 2025

Tuesdays 12:10 – 3:10

Blake Hall, Room 148

ab1332@sebs.rutgers.edu



COURSE DESCRIPTION

From this seminar participants will gain an understanding of how the built environment is created and the stratified composition of the contemporary city. The course explores the production of the physical terrain, including housing, public space, environmental systems, transportation, and other infrastructure. We will look at the connection between these material manifestations and social justice issues by exploring how the city constructs inequality, disparity, access, wealth, safety, health, and identity. The course investigates the various means, systems, and technologies through which these are constructed, especially taking into account power. How is power distributed in the planning process, and what actions and techniques are citizens using to take control of this process?

The first few weeks are spent looking closely at divided cities, where such dynamics are rendered obvious and explicit; the same phenomena are then later explored in the environments that surround us today in New Jersey and New York. We will discuss a number of spatial practices, including planning, redevelopment, heritage management, urban security, the privatization of public space, and various other mechanisms of division and exclusion. We will consider terms that are commonly used to discuss urban questions, including: 'power and resistance,' the 'right to the city,' and 'shared space.' Each topic area / lecture module concludes with a discussion of possibilities and strategies for intervention.

Main Learning Goal: CCd - Analyze contemporary issues of social justice.

Learning Goals

- Gain an understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and political forces underlying urban planning and development.
- Recognize the role of urban planning and redevelopment practices in dividing urban populations, including their effects on the inclusion or exclusion of certain populations and the nature of planned and unplanned 'shared space.'
- Engage in investigations of the construction of urban systems and think critically about how spaces are represented.

EVALUATION

Class Assignments	10%	Due: every week
Discussion Posts	20%	Due: every week
City Guide Rough Draft	10%	Due: late October
City Stratifications Guidebook	30%	Due: early November
Presentations	10%	Due: early November
Final Guidebook	20%	Due: December (last day of class)

Class Assignments

Each student will be required to comment on / discuss the week's readings and topics once during the course of the semester. Connections should be made between the readings and contemporary urban issues in the town that the student is exploring for their City Guide, or to New Jersey / New York more broadly. A number of small, in-class assignments will be given throughout the semester – these are listed for each week in the Class Schedule.

Student DISCUSSIONs

Short weekly DISCUSSION posts will focus on specific questions or issues from the readings. These will also help you prepare the larger assignments, as you will be asked to connect your chosen research site with the lectures and readings through the DISCUSSION posts. DISCUSSIONs will be graded based on on-time completion of the post, the coverage of required topics as listed in the DISCUSSION post assignment, and connection made to the assigned readings.

City Stratifications Guidebook

Using maps, images, and text create a 10-page 'Travel Guide' of your home town or other selected town/neighborhood of interest in New Jersey or New York City. In addition to information about urban history and important tourist sites, **add** other layers of information about how health, safety, inequality, identity, or wealth (and other relevant layers) have been created and are expressed in your city. To do this, you will need to consult scholarly accounts, local newspapers, and census data. In addition, you might take photographs, visit the local historical society, speak with local community organizations, or speak to family members about their memories. One visit to a **virtual** local meeting in your town is required. This could be a council meeting, planning board meeting, zoning board meeting, design review meeting, or cultural heritage commission meeting. Use the images, text, maps, and quotations in your guidebook. This will be presented in class.

Presentations

10-minute presentations will be scheduled for the middle of the semester. Students will present their 'travel guide' and paper topics for class discussion.

Final Guidebook

A final City Guidebook PDF, with an expanded section (3-5 additional pages) will be due at the end of the semester.

Academic integrity policy

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. Rutgers academic integrity site:
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

City Stratifications Guidebook

For inspiration, look at some examples of existing city guides, and think about how you can adjust the format to work for the particular social justice story (or stories) you think it is important to tell.

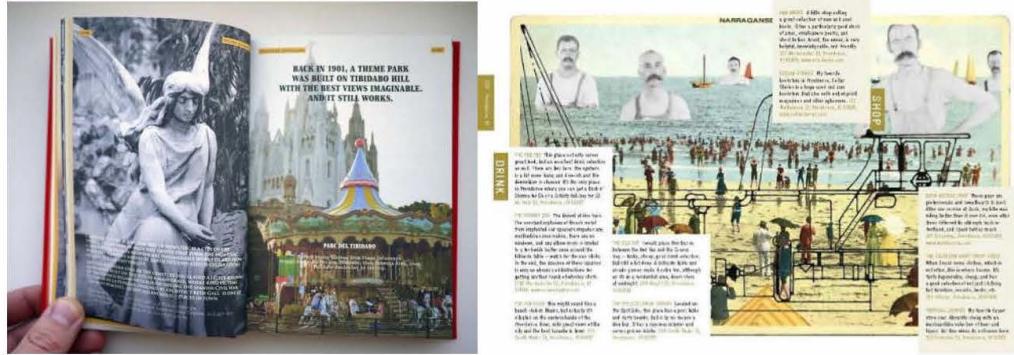
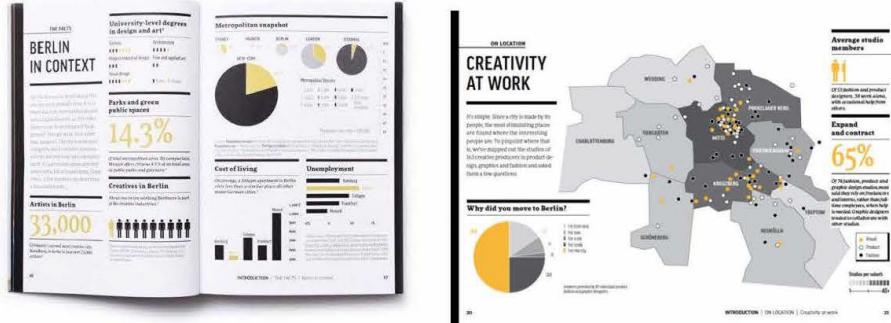
[Wildsam Guides](#)

[CITIx60 City Guide](#)

[Le Cool's Weird and Wonderful Guides](#)

[Graphic USA: An Alternative Guide to 25 Cities](#)

[The Design Guide Series](#)



COURSE SCHEDULE

ARCHITECTURE & INEQUALITY Fall 2025

PLANNING		
WEEK 1 Sept. 2	Course Introduction Opening Discussion about Technology / Communication / Education / Inequality	
WEEK 2 Sept. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do cities become divided? • What is the history of urban segregation? • How is division instituted in cities today ? 	
	LECTURE Introduction Mechanisms of Exclusion and Control Divided Cities & Conflict Infrastructure in Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Nicosia,	
	NARRATIVE <i>Family Stories about Partition</i>	
WEEK 3 Sept. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do/ how much do people want to share space? • Are cities today becoming more or less segregated? • How is urban citizenship created and communicated? How is the message delivered of who belongs? • What does the right to the city mean? 	
	LECTURE Shared Space Citizenship & Belonging Redevelopment Projects Spaces of Consumerism	READINGS <i>Why Belfast Residents want to keep their Peace Wall, Irish Times, 2019.</i> <i>The Peace Walls at the Center of Unrest in Northern Ireland, Failed Architecture, 2021.</i>
WEEK 4 Sept. 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who builds the city? • What actual role do designers and planners play? • Where is there room for resistance / the ability to change normal modes of spatial production? 	

PLANNING			
	LECTURE Planning & Power Building the Corporate Downtown Power and Planning Community Engagement Strategies	READINGS Laura Lawson, et.al., <i>Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity</i> , 2017. Intro & Chapter #1, Pages 1-44. NARRATIVE <i>Woodstock 1999 – Viewing & Discussion</i>	
HOUSING, LAND & WEALTH			
WEEK 5 Sept. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does housing play in achieving the American dream ? • How is housing security or precarity distributed in the US today? • What historical legacies inform what housing looks like today? • Is gentrification inevitable? 	READINGS Matthew Desmond. <i>Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City</i> , 2017. Chapters #1-3. Pages 1-43 Sharon Zukin, "How Brooklyn Became Cool" <i>Naked City</i> , 2010. Pages 35-61. IN CLASS EXERCISE Mapping Inequality website https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58 Look at the materials on the Urban Displacement Project website. What might deter gentrification? https://www.urbandisplacement.org	
WEEK 6 Oct. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it possible to create social housing in the USA? • How can land be taken out of the real estate market and kept in community land trusts? • How can designers create buildings and open space for new social formations? 	LECTURE Land Tenure Community Land Trusts Case Study: Dudley Street, Boston Case Study: South Bronx Unite Social Housing Case Study: BIGYard, Berlin Case Study: Alt Erlaa, Vienna	READINGS People's Policy Project. <i>A Plan to Solve the Housing Crisis through Social Housing</i> . 2018. (Policy Paper) Community Land Trusts in <i>Urban Omnibus</i> , 2018. Redesigning the Housing Market, in <i>Assemble Papers</i> , 2019. IN CLASS EXERCISE Analyze shared living experiences

PLANNING					
WEEK 7 Oct. 14	FIELD WORK - SOCIAL CAMERA EXERCISE IN YOUR TOWN				
ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH					
WEEK 8 Oct. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does location affect public health? • What strategies can combat lack of access to healthy food in the city? • What does food justice mean and how can it be achieved? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">LECTURE</th><th style="width: 50%;">READINGS</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 10px;"> Access to Healthy Environments Food Systems / Urban Agriculture Case Studies : Bronx, Via Verde Chicago Mobile Markets Detroit, Oakland Avenue Farm Health Care Provision Case Study: Alameda firehouse health clinics </td><td style="padding: 10px;"> Garrett Broad, <i>More Than Just Food: Food Justice and Community Change</i>, 2016. Chapter #2, Pages 33-60. DUE TODAY – ROUGH DRAFT OF CITY GUIDES IN CLASS EXERCISE In class today present a rough draft of your City Stratifications Guidebook. Include a minimum of 4 printed pages from your guidebook. Present in small groups and then we will gather for a final discussion for the whole class. </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	LECTURE	READINGS	Access to Healthy Environments Food Systems / Urban Agriculture Case Studies : Bronx, Via Verde Chicago Mobile Markets Detroit, Oakland Avenue Farm Health Care Provision Case Study: Alameda firehouse health clinics	Garrett Broad, <i>More Than Just Food: Food Justice and Community Change</i> , 2016. Chapter #2, Pages 33-60. DUE TODAY – ROUGH DRAFT OF CITY GUIDES IN CLASS EXERCISE In class today present a rough draft of your City Stratifications Guidebook. Include a minimum of 4 printed pages from your guidebook. Present in small groups and then we will gather for a final discussion for the whole class.
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WEEK 9 Oct. 28	FIELD WORK - SYSTEMATIC SOCIAL OBSERVATION (New Brunswick or your City Guide Town)				
WEEK 10 Nov. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are communities affected by industrial pollution and contamination? • How does the public health landscape of American cities connect to a history of industrial zoning? • What are the connections between race and contamination? • How does contamination affect cultural practices and connections to the landscape? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">LECTURE</th><th style="width: 50%;">READINGS</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 10px;"> Environmental Justice History of Industrial Zoning Superfund Program New York City Public Health Native American Land and Laws Case Study: Ringwood, New Jersey </td><td style="padding: 10px;"> Julie Sze, <i>Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice</i>, 2006. Chapter #2, Pages 49-90. Nick Estes, <i>Our History is the Future</i>, 2019 1 Chapter, Pages 1-23. IN CLASS EXERCISE Analyze the <i>Our Land, Our Stories</i> digital exhibit and EJ resources for NJ & NY https://our-land-our-stories.libraries.rutgers.edu/ </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	LECTURE	READINGS	Environmental Justice History of Industrial Zoning Superfund Program New York City Public Health Native American Land and Laws Case Study: Ringwood, New Jersey	Julie Sze, <i>Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice</i> , 2006. Chapter #2, Pages 49-90. Nick Estes, <i>Our History is the Future</i> , 2019 1 Chapter, Pages 1-23. IN CLASS EXERCISE Analyze the <i>Our Land, Our Stories</i> digital exhibit and EJ resources for NJ & NY https://our-land-our-stories.libraries.rutgers.edu/
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<u>PLANNING</u>				
WEEK 11 Nov. 11	IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF CITY STRATIFICATIONS GUIDEBOOK			
WEEK 12 Nov. 18	IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF CITY STRATIFICATIONS GUIDEBOOK			
WEEK 13 Nov. 25	NO CLASS TODAY – TUESDAY BECOMES THURSDAY Thanksgiving Break			
WEEK 14 Dec. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should we commemorate difficult and contested histories? • Can memorials be designed to be part of active practices and as tools of community organizing? • Whose heritage is commemorated? • Can one memorial reflect multiple viewpoints? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> LECTURE Memorials Statue Removal / Addition? Memorial as Participation, Performance, or as Community Organizing Tool. Civil War Memorials Native American Memorials Slave Trade Memorials </td><td style="width: 50%; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> READINGS Anita Bakshi. <i>Topographies of Memories</i>. 2017. Chapter #6. Pages 209-259. Andrea R. Roberts . Haunting as Agency: A Critical Cultural Landscape Approach to Making Black Labor Visible in Sugar Land, Texas Southern Poverty Law Center. <i>Whose Heritage? A Report on Public Symbols of the Confederacy</i> </td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">IN CLASS EXERCISE Develop some (very quick & very rough) ideas for a memorial in the city you worked on for your Guidebook.</p>		LECTURE Memorials Statue Removal / Addition? Memorial as Participation, Performance, or as Community Organizing Tool. Civil War Memorials Native American Memorials Slave Trade Memorials	READINGS Anita Bakshi. <i>Topographies of Memories</i> . 2017. Chapter #6. Pages 209-259. Andrea R. Roberts . Haunting as Agency: A Critical Cultural Landscape Approach to Making Black Labor Visible in Sugar Land, Texas Southern Poverty Law Center. <i>Whose Heritage? A Report on Public Symbols of the Confederacy</i>
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WEEK 15 Dec. 9	<p style="text-align: center;">Last Day of ClassTying it all together...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DUE TODAY – Final City Stratifications Guidebook</p>			