# POST- PRE-RUIN CITIES
## Course Syllabus

## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the School of Architecture is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River. While thinking about precarious sites at risk of disappearance, we do not need to look far. This is where traditional relationships of Indigenous peoples to the land continue to be disturbed, and sometimes severed, through colonial policies and broken treaties. To learn more about the history of the Haldimand Tract and Haudenosaunee land rights, please visit Protect the Tract.

## FACULTY FACILITATOR

Fiona Lim Tung (she/her)          flimtung@uwaterloo.ca

## INTRODUCTION | QUESTIONS

The rise and fall of cities was a common occurrence throughout history, with decline acknowledged as a typical phase in the long term ebb and flow of a settlement. This reality was disrupted by the period of rapid urban expansion ushered in by the industrial era. As agriculture became mechanized, rural populations fled to cities at the promise of job opportunities and better living conditions.[1] The lure of the ever-growing city accelerated from that point, and the power, prosperity, and potential that these urban centres began to represent turned architecture into a tool to build bigger and "better."

While the focus for the past two hundred years has been on density and urbanization, **the growth that has long been overlooked is the number of cities around the world that quietly face population crises and are heading towards possible ruin**. A declining or non-existent population base creates social, economic and ecological effects including fewer social supports and infrastructural maintenance due to a reduced tax base, increased social isolation, the decline of a traditional knowledge base, and the abandonment of buildings and land. During the period between 1980 and 2010, approximately 40% of American cities saw significant population loss.[2] In Japan, it has been predicted that by 2040 close to half of its cities, towns, and villages will be "extinct."[3] While these numbers appear extreme, this pattern is consistent across former industrial countries. Although urban growth continues, the world's population is expected to plateau by the end of the century, and processes of global urbanization will soon be balanced by processes of decline.[4] **Developing strategies for how to address this phenomenon will become a pressing issue in our very near future.**

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[1] Rieniets, Tim. Atlas of Shrinking Cities, "Urban Shrinkage": 30
[2] Hartt, Maxwell. (2019) "The Prevalence of Prosperous Shrinking Cities", Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 109:5, 1651-1670,
[3] Masuda, H. (2014), *"The Death of Regional Cities: A Horrendous Simulation", Japan Foreign Policy Forum, No. 18, available at:* http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/pdf/2014/vol18/DJweb_18_pol_01.pdf
[4] Oswalt, Philipp. *Atlas of Shrinking Cities*: 6

There is no single, precise term that describes this condition because the causes, processes, and outcomes vary widely. Among the terms coined to refer to this broad phenomenon are *phantom urbanism* (Reinier de Graaf), *zombie urbanism* (Jonny Aspen via Matthew Soules), *ghost urbanism/towns*, and "*local extinctions*" (Hiroya Masuda). Each suggests places whose ominous (lack of) future is a foregone conclusion. The most common term used to describe this phenomenon is *shrinking cities*. **While the cities themselves are not shrinking, they share post-growth characteristics of population- and economic-based decline.**

Around the world, demographic shifts are underway, geopolitical strife and social unrest are increasing, and finite amounts of raw material and fossil fuel can not sustain continuing growth. To avert climate catastrophe and social collapse, society must transition to a phase where its main imperative is not economic growth. The concept of post-growth is a critical one in the discussion of shrinking cities. Soon, post-growth will become the norm rather than a stigmatized phenomenon. These pre-ruin cities, already deep into the process of decline, may provide a window into how to design for environmental and social resiliency in a post-growth era. Architecture's extractive practices have led to calls to end new construction. Housing has become an investment rather than a basic human right, creating an affordability crisis. At the same time, these pre-ruin cities are full of vacant land and buildings, and municipal and regional governments anxious to attract new inhabitants. The pandemic has also normalized telecommuting and lured many urbanites to rural communities. **Is the pre-ruin city an untapped opportunity that could be a solution in a post-growth world**?

Very broadly speaking, this studio focuses on revitalization, and focuses on places that have been forgotten or neglected. While there are many causes for the pre-ruin city, this studio will look primarily at those where user agency was involved. Since the term project will involve the design of a post-growth proposal, we will look at cities that remain generally liveable (vs environmental disasters or wars which might damage the infrastructure and buildings of city, rendering it uninhabitable). These cities are in a precarious stage of pre-ruin, where without intervention of some sort, they are at risk of becoming, in Masuda's words, "extinct".

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The first project of the term will look broadly at pre-ruin cities around the world, and map the varying reasons for loss. This will be followed by mapping the effects of decline. This might involve cataloguing vacant buildings, existing and/or disappearing vernacular traditions, human/wildlife frictions, and the emergence of new social and ecological relationships. Finally, the term project will involve the design of recommendations and strategies for how the pre-ruin city might revitalize and become a model for a post-growth world. This course is designed to provide students agency in designing a term project that is in line with their own research interests, i.e., choosing their location of study, the scale at which they wish to work (regional, municipal, architectural), and the nature of the term project, e.g., a design proposal for the reuse of a vacant building, policy proposals, tourism and marketing proposals, partnerships with stakeholders, acupunctural proposals for small interventions, speculative futures, etc.

This problem is not one that can be solved by architecture alone, and multidisciplinary approaches are welcome. **Whatever approach you choose to take, you will be making a proposal for the post-pre-ruin city.** These strategies should be seen as **acts of care** to mend and tend to the places and people that have experienced long periods of neglect.

The studio's structure is intended as a supportive and nimble framework for the class to explore their work together, while collectively fostering the diverse trajectories of individual projects.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course looks at the spatial, demographic, and ecological transformations and potentials in the pre-ruin city.

The successful completion of this course requires a rigorous exploration of the following:

1. the causes, processes, and outcomes of the pre-ruin city;
2. the development of a clear, compelling, and comprehensive research and/or design proposal;
3. the design and implementation of a clear and effective research and/or design methodology;
4. the visual formation of a position on the histories, political context, ecologies, communities, and built environments that shape site; and
5. the development of a visual language and design approach specific to research topic.

## EVALUATION

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| **P1: Pre-Ruins** | 20% |
| **P2: Ruins** | 30% |
| **P3: Post- Pre-Ruins** | 50% |

A detailed breakdown with submission details will be distributed with each project.

## FAIR CONTINGENCIES AND COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION

To provide contingency for unforeseen circumstances, the facilitator may modify course topics and/or assessments and/or weight and/or deadlines following discussion with students. In the event of further challenges, the facilitator will work with the School to find reasonable and fair solutions that respect the rights and workloads of students, staff, and faculty.

If you are facing challenges that are affecting more than one course, please contact the undergraduate or graduate office. They will review your case and coordinate a reasonable and fair plan in consultation with appropriate parties (e.g., Instructors, Department Undergraduate Studies Committee, Chair, AccessAbility Services, Engineering Counselling services).

## LATE WORK

Students seeking accommodations due to COVID-19, are to follow COVID-19-related accommodations as outlined by the university here.

## COVID-19 SPECIAL STATEMENT

Given the continuously evolving situation around COVID-19, students are to refer to the University of Waterloo's developing information resource page for up-to-date information on academic updates, health services, important dates, co-op, accommodation rules and other university level responses to COVID-19.

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to Campus Wellness and Counselling Services. We understand that these circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. Good2Talk is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITMENT

At the School of Architecture, we are committed to foster and support equity, diversity and inclusion. We recognize however, that discrimination does occur, sometimes through an isolated act, but also through practices and policies that must be changed. If you experience discrimination, micro-aggression, or other forms of racism, sexism, discrimination against LGBTQ2S+, or disability, there are different pathways to report them:

> **a)** If you feel comfortable bringing this up directly with the faculty, staff or student who has said or done something offensive, we invite you, or a friend, to speak directly with this person. People make mistakes and dealing them directly in the present may be the most effective means of addressing the issue.
> **b)** you can reach out to the undergraduate office (Nicole Guenther or Maya Przybylski), graduate office (Tina Davidson or Lola Sheppard), or Director (Anne Bordeleau). If you contact any of these people in confidence, they are bound to preserve your anonymity and follow up on your report.
> **c)** You may also choose to report centrally to the Equity Office. The Equity Office can be reached by emailing equity@uwaterloo.ca. More information on the functions and services of the equity office can be found here.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

**Academic integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

**Appeals:** A decision made, or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals.

**Note for students with disabilities:** AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

## SCHEDULE

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| **1** | **Mon May 2** | Course Introduction<br>**P1 ASSIGNED** | **Th May 5** | P1 Consults / Work Session |
| **2** | **Mon May 9** | P1 Consults / Work Session | **Th May 12** | P1 Consults / Work Session |
| **3** | *Mon May 16* | *\*P1 Due* | *Th May 19* | *P1 Presentations*<br>*P2 Assigned* |
| **4** | ***Mon May 23*** | **VICTORIA DAY (NO CLASS)** | **Th May 26** | P2 Consults / Work Session |
| **5** | **Mon May 30** | P2 Consults / Work Session | **Th June 2** | P2 Consults / Work Session |
| **6** | **Mon June 6** | P2 Consults / Work Session | **Th June 9** | P2 Consults / Work Session |
| **7** | *Mon June 13* | *\*P2 Due* | *Th June 16* | *P2 Review* |
| **8** | **Mon June 20** | **P3 Assigned**<br>Group Discussions | **Th June 23** | P3 Consults / Work Session |
| **9** | **Mon June 27** | P3 Consults / Work Session | **Th June 30** | P3 Consults / Work Session |
| **10** | **Mon July 4** | P3 Consults / Work Session | **Th July 7** | P3 Consults / Work Session |
| **11** | *Mon July 11* | *P3 Interim Review* | **Th July 14** | P3 Consults / Work Session |
| **12** | **Mon July 18** | P3 Consults / Work Session | **Th July 21** | P3 Consults / Work Session |
| **13** | **Mon July 25** | P3 Consults / Work Session | *Fr July 29* | *Final Review*<br>*\*P3 Due Thurs July 28 10:00pm* |

*\*A detailed schedule will be provided with each project. This schedule is a nimble framework and may adjust if needed through discussion and consensus with the class.*