

ARCH 684-002 - Spring 2017 Graduate Seminar

### Spatial Topologies of Globalized Neoliberal Urbanization

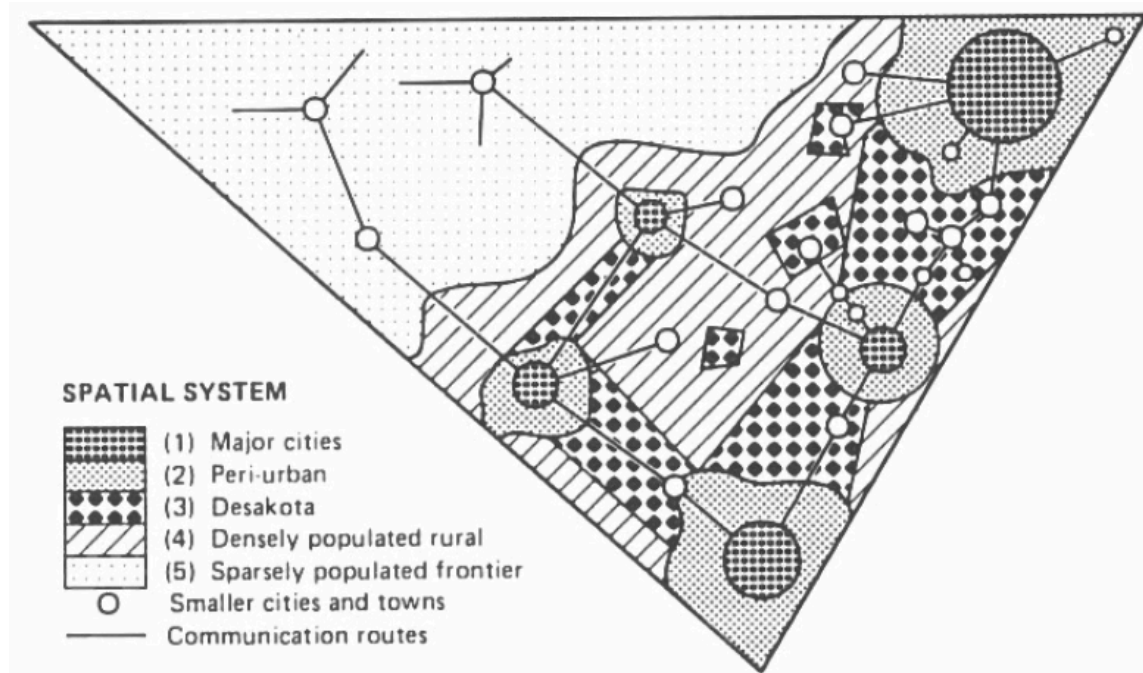
Course Instructor: Adrian Blackwell, [adrian.blackwell@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:adrian.blackwell@uwaterloo.ca)

Class hours: Tuesday 10:00-1:00

Class location: 2026

Office location: 2024

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 (please e-mail the instructor to schedule meetings in advance)



Spatial Configuration of a hypothetical Asian Country, from Terry G. McGee, "The Emergence of *Desakota* Regions in Asia: Expanding a Hypothesis" in Neil Brenner Ed. *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 121-137.

### Tracing the Spatial Topologies of Globalized Neoliberal Urbanization

*Distinctions and differences [can be made] concerning the topological properties of urban space, properties that theoretically constitute a network or system of pertinent oppositions:*

- a. *the private and the public*
- b. *the high and the low*
- c. *the open and the closed*
- d. *the symmetric and asymmetric*
- e. *the dominated and the residual, et cetera.*

Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 87.

In this course we will examine the dynamic forms that urbanization produces in diverse global locations. The course brings together architectural and geographical analyses of spatial form, and draws on both architectural and urban theory, to study the urban topologies that form the contemporary capitalist, or neoliberal, city.

Neoliberalism is an ideology of economic and political governance that was cultivated in think tanks starting in the early 20th century by economists interested in reviving a free market system in the aftermath of its collapse in the late 19th Century. However in practice, neoliberalism did not mean a free market for all exchanges, as liberalism had proposed, but rather it emerged as project to create market-like institutions of

governance in all arenas of daily life.<sup>1</sup> Politicians sympathetic to neoliberal economics gained power in diverse global locations in the 1970s, and since then neoliberalism has risen to become the dominant mode of economic governance around the world. This change has in turn produced novel processes and forms of urbanization, in both cities and in rural territories.

In this course we will examine the ways in which neoliberal urbanization, which intensifies the socio-economic polarizations of capitalist development, produces dynamic and uneven urban forms. These new topologies are constructed to create favorable terms of trade for dominant capitalists in market-like transactions. These topologies of inequality form the fundamental background into which any architectural project is inserted and these backgrounds limit architecture's possibilities. Architectural form is always either an elaboration, or critique of these underlying conditions.

Urban topologies will be explored in both historical and contemporary contexts, using global case studies and scholars, through lectures, readings, reading discussions, and case study presentations. Students will explore these urban topologies themselves in the term project, by studying the sites of their own thesis projects.

The first class will begin with an introduction to the course, followed by a lecture that focuses on the readings and content for the discussions in the following class. Throughout the term we will start each class with a discussion of the student's topological diagrams and the readings for this week, followed by a lecture that focuses on the themes and readings for the next class.

The first five classes will introduce students to key thinkers and ideas of contemporary urban theory, the next 6 classes will be organized around six polarized topologies of Neoliberal Urbanization: ports/borders, infrastructures/moving centers, villages/compounds, the capitalization/appropriation of nature, creativity/mimicry of labour, and the vacancy/exhaustion of landed capital. These topologies each designate expansive territories of contemporary theoretical inquiry and are themselves forces that have concrete formal effects within cities. The final class of the term will be a symposium in which students will present the urban topology of their own thesis site to the class.

The course will function as a laboratory for building tools to better understand the relationships between political and economic processes of globalization and the architectural forms of contemporary urbanization.

#### **Course objectives:**

This course first of all is designed to develop students' knowledge about debates in contemporary urban theory, urban space and processes of urbanization, as well as introduce the key thinkers who have engaged these issues. Secondly it will serve as a laboratory through which to explore contemporary urbanization, through spatial analysis.

#### **Course requirements:**

The seminar will involve close readings of texts each week for 10 weeks from week 2 to week 11. You will be required to have finished at least two of the assigned readings and to participate in all class discussions with an informed perspective on each text. In four classes during the term you will express your engagement with the ideas of the seminar by creating topological diagrams of your own thesis site, which mobilize concepts found in two of the readings that week. You will also make four presentations on a reading based on a diagram you make exploring the reading's conceptual topologies, and raise questions for class discussion.

The term project is a graphical and textual analysis of the urban space you are focusing on in your thesis work, through the framework of one or more of the six topologies of new liberal urbanization that we are studying. This will include at least 4 drawings of the topology and an up to 4000 word critical essay. This final project has three deadlines: A project proposal of 1000 words, an illustrated in class presentation of the key arguments and evidence, and the final written document.

#### **Relative weight and due date for assignments:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1a - Seminar Participation                            | 10%  |
| 1b - 4 topological site diagrams                      | 4 x 5% = 20% due by 6pm the Tuesday before class |
| 1c - 4 presentations of reading's conceptual topology | 4 x 5% = 20% due by 6pm the Tuesday before class |

---

<sup>1</sup> See William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (London: Sage, 2014).

2a - Essay proposal as Topological diagram	10% - due May 30th
2b - In class presentation of research in progress	15% - due at the Student Symposium July 25
2c - Final Essay due	25% - due Aug 1st

### Description of the Course Assignments:

#### Assignment 1 - Seminar participation and reading

Each class will begin with discussion of the readings assigned for that week and the diagrams prepared by each student. After this individual students will introduce the class's three readings, one at a time, and ask the class to answer specific questions about them. The instructor will moderate and focus the ensuing conversation amongst the class comparing the three readings. The class will finish with the instructor introducing next week's class.

##### 1a - Seminar participation 10% in class

*Each Student is expected to have read at least two of the week's assigned texts and to participate during the discussion during each class.* Carefully read the readings for each week, underline important passages, and take notes on its key concepts. Come to class with questions you have about both readings. The primary purpose of the discussions is to engage the content of the readings themselves, in order to explore and better understand the ideas of key theorists of contemporary Asian urbanization. It is important that you engage the content of the readings and not simply your general knowledge of the subjects discussed.

##### 1b – Four diagrams describing the physical topology of your thesis site using concepts found in the readings 4 x 5% = 20% due by 6pm the Tuesday before class

*During the term each student will submit four plan diagrams describing the physical topology of your thesis site using concepts found in the readings.* These diagrams should be made in no smaller than 10 pt font on one 8.5x11" PDF and should mobilize key concepts from at least two of the three readings assigned for that week, while describing the key forms of your chosen thesis site. On a separate sheet place one captioned image of your chosen urban site that illustrates the core ideas you are showing in the diagram. Concepts should be referenced and include page numbers. The days that you will submit these diagrams will be decided on the first day of class. Please submit all files to LEARN and name files as follows: YRMODY\_Lastname\_Lastnameofauthor1\_Lastnameofauthor2, ex: 170509\_Blackwell\_Harvey\_Ong

##### 1c – Four diagrams and presentations of a reading's conceptual topology 4 x 5% = 20% due by 6pm the Tuesday before class

*During the term each student will submit diagrams of a reading's conceptual topology, and present this to the class.* These diagrams should be made in no smaller than 10 pt font on one 8.5x11" PDF and should mobilize key concepts from one of the three readings assigned for that week. Concepts should be referenced and include page numbers. The days that you will submit these diagrams will be decided on the first day of class. Please submit all files to LEARN and name files as follows: YRMODY\_Lastname\_Lastnameofauthor1\_Lastnameofauthor2, ex: 170509\_Blackwell\_Harvey\_Ong

#### Assignment 2 – Topologies of New Liberal Urbanization

The term project involves the investigation the urban context that you are studying in your thesis work - through the lens of one of six topologies of new liberal urbanization that we are studying in the class.

##### 2a - Topological Diagram as essay proposal 10% - due May 30<sup>th</sup>

*Each student will present an essay proposal in the form of an annotated topological diagram of his or her chosen site.* The annotation of the diagrams should be sufficient that a person not familiar with the site can clearly understand the arguments made in the diagram.

##### 2b - In class presentation of research 15% - due at the Student Symposium July 25

*Each student will present their findings as a 10-minute presentation to the class.* All presentations should be accompanied by diagrams illustrating your Topology at 3 scales: Regional Scale (larger than the metropolis, Scale of the Metropolis, and District or neighborhood Scale each on a horizontal format n 8.5 x 11" PDF projected digitally. The purpose of the presentation is to workshop your ideas and to rehearse the form of

the academic paper. It should have a clear thesis and substantial evidence. Following every 3-4 presentations we will have 30 minutes of discussion.

## **2c – Final Project**

25% - due Aug 1<sup>st</sup>

Write a research essay that makes a specific argument about the relationship between the physical form of space and its specific political and economic effects. The essay should be 3500-4000 words in length and include diagrams illustrating your Topology at minimum three scales: Regional Scale, Scale of the Metropolis, District Scale and/or neighbourhood Scale each on a separate 8.5 x 11" horizontal format Sheets.

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

### **Week 1 – May 2 – Course introduction**

#### **Suggested Readings:**

Henri Lefebvre, "Dimensions and Levels" in *The Urban Revolution*, Trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1-22.

Abdoumalik Simone, "It's Just The City After All!" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 40.1 January 2016, 210-218.

Adrian Blackwell, "Shenzhen: Topology of a Neoliberal City" in Rodolphe el-Khoury and Edward Robbins Eds. *Shaping the City: Studies in History, Theory and Urban Design 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (London: Routledge, 2013), 278-311.

### **Week 2 – May 9 – What is Neoliberal urbanization?**

#### **Required Readings:**

David Harvey, "Neoliberalism with Chinese Characteristics" in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 120-151.

Aiwha Ong, "Zoning Technologies in East Asia" in *Neoliberalism As Exception : Migrations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 97-118

Karen Bakker, "The limits of 'neoliberal natures': Debating green neoliberalism" *Progress in Human Geography* 34(6), 2010, 715–735.

#### **Suggested Readings:**

William Davies, "The Promise and Paradox of Competition: Markets, Competitive Agency and Authority" in *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (London: Sage, 2014), 35-69.

Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck And Nik Theodore, "Variegated neoliberalization: geographies, modalities, pathways", *Global Networks* 10, 2 (2010) 182–222

### **Week 3 – May 16 – Global Cities, World Cities, Ordinary Cities**

#### **Required Readings:**

Jennifer Robinson, "Global and World Cities: A view from Off the Map", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 26.3 September 2002, 531-54.

Anyana Roy, "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 35.2 March 2011, 223–38.

Neil Brenner and Christian Schmidt, "Towards a New Epistemology of the Urban" in *CITY*, 2015 Vol. 19, Non. 2–3, 151–182.

**Suggested Readings:**

John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff, "World City formation: An Agenda for Research and Action" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Volume 6.3, September 1982, 309–344.

Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Enabling Economic Intermediation and Bearing Its Costs" *City & Community* 15:2 June 2016, 97-108.

**No class - May 23** - make up for Monday class missed on May 22nd

**Week 4 – May 30 – Uneven Development**

**Required Readings:**

Doreen Massey, "Uneven Development and Spatial Structures" in *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 65-120.

Kanishka Goonewardena, "The Country and the City in the Urban Revolution" in Neil Brenner Ed. *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 218-235.

Shiri Pasternak, Property in Three Registers, Scapegoat: Architecture, Landscape, Political Economy Issue 00, 2010, 10-17.

**Suggested Readings:**

Neil Smith, "Toward a Theory of Uneven Development I: The Dialectic of Geographical Differentiation and Equalization" in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008 [1984]), 132-174.

Neil Smith, "Toward a Theory of Uneven Development II: Spatial Scale and the Seesaw of Capital" in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008 [1984]), 175-205.

**Week 5 – June 6 – Urban Topologies**

**Required Readings:**

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "Planning and Policy" in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe, Minor Compositions, 2013), 71-82.

Anna Secor, "The Topological City", *Urban Geography*, 2013, Vol. 34, No. 4, 430–444.

Ignacio Farias, "The politics of urban assemblages" *City*, Vol. 15, Nos. 3–4, June–August 2011, 365-374.

**Suggested Readings:**

Bob Jessop, "Spatial Fixes, Temporal Fixes and Spatio- Temporal Fixes" in N. Castree and D. Gregory, eds, *David Harvey: a Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 142-166.

Giovanni Arrighi, "Spatial and Other "Fixes" of Historical Capitalism" in *The Journal of World-Systems Research*, X, 2, summer 2004, 527-539

**Part Two – Six topologies of Neoliberal Urbanization**

**Week 6 – June 13 – Ports/Borders**

**Required Readings:**

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "Tracing Insecurities: Notations for an Architectural History of Forced Migration" *The Avery Review* 21, 2017, <http://www.averyreview.com/issues/21/tracing-insecurities>

Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, "Unwalling Citizenship" *The Avery Review* 21, 2017, <http://www.averyreview.com/issues/21/unwalling-citizenship>

Melissa W. Wright, "Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-U.S. Border", *Signs*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (March 2011), pp. 707-731

**Suggested Readings:**

Eyal Weizman – "The Wall: Barrier Archipelagos and the Impossible Politics of Separation" in *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007), 160-182.

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, "Zones, Corridors, And Postdevelopmental Geographies" in *Border As Method, or, The Multiplication of Labour* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 205-242.

**Week 7 – June 20 – Infrastructures/Moving Centers**

**Required Readings:**

Keller Easterling, "Zone: The Spatial Softwares of Extrastatecraft" in *Places*, (June 2012) Jan 2015.

Terry G. McGee, "The Emergence of Desakota Regions in Asia: Expanding a Hypothesis" in Neil Brenner Ed. *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 121-137.

Anyana Roy, "The Infrastructure of Assent: Professions in the Age of Trumpism" *The Avery Review* 21, 2017, <http://www.averyreview.com/issues/21/the-infrastructure-of-assent>

**Suggested Readings:**

Manuel Castells – "The Space of Flows", in *The Rise of the Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Vol. I.* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell 1996). 407-459.

Stephen Graham, "Constructing Premium Network Spaces: Reflections on Infrastructure Networks and Contemporary Urban Development." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Volume 24.1 (March 2000)

**Week 8 – June 27 – Villages/Compounds**

**Required Readings:**

Felicity Scott, "Third World Game" in *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity / Architectures of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Zone Books, 2016), 224-281.

Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics", *Public Culture* 15(1) 2003: 11–40

Abdoumalik Simone And Vyjayanthi Rao, "Securing the Majority: Living through Uncertainty in Jakarta", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 36.2 March 2012, 315–35.

**Suggested Readings:**

Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums: Urban Involution and the Informal Proletariat" in *New Left Review* 26 (March/April 2004), 5-34.

Chris Smith, Ngai Pun, "The dormitory labour regime in China as a site for control and resistance", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* Volume 17:8 (August 2006), 1456-1470.

**Week 9 – July 4 – Exploitation/appropriation (of Nature)**

**Required Readings:**

Matthew Gandy, "Landscapes of Disaster: Water, Modernity, and urban fragmentation in Mumbai" *Environment and Planning A* 2008, volume 40, 108-130.

J. K. Gibson-Graham, Gerda Roelvink, "An Economic Ethics for the Anthropocene", *Antipode* 41(1) 2009, 320–346.

Jason W. Moore, "Toward a singular Metabolism: Epistemic Rifts and Environment-Making in the Capitalist World-Ecology" in *Grounding Metabolism, New Geographies* 06, June 2014.

#### **Suggested Readings:**

Erik Swyngedouw, Maria Kaika and Nikolas Heynen, "Urban Political Ecology: Politicizing the Production of Urban Natures" in Erik Swyngedouw, Maria Kaika, Nikolas Heynen Eds. *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*. (Oxford and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007), 1-20.

Karen Bakker, "The "Commons" Versus the "Commodity": Alter-globalization, Anti-privatization and the Human Right to Water in the Global South", *Antipode* 239 (3) 2007, 430-455.

### **Week 10 – July 11 – Creativity/Mimicry (of Labour)**

#### **Required Readings:**

Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 29, Issue 4, pages 740–770, December 2005

Silvia Lindtner, Anna Greensspan, David Li, "Designed in Shenzhen: Shanzhai Manufacturing and Maker Entrepreneurs", Aarhus 2015 Decennial Conference Proceedings.  
<http://ojs.statsbiblioteket.dk/index.php/ashcc/article/view/21265>

Mabel O. Wilson, Jordan Carver, and Kadambari Baxi "Working globally: The human networks of transnational architectural projects", in Peggy deamer ed. *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 144-158

#### **Suggested Readings:**

Winnie Wong, "After the Copy", *Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1-34.

Maurizio Lazzarato "Immaterial Labor", trans. P. Colilli and E. Emery, in M. Hardt and P. Virno (eds.) *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133-147.

### **Week 11 – July 18 – Vacancy-Exhaustion (of Capital in Land)**

#### **Required Readings:**

You-Tien Hsing "Land and Urban Politics" in *The Great Urban Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5-29.

Rachel Weber, "Edifice Rex: Egos, Assets, and the Financialization of Property Markets" *The Avery Review* 21, 2017, <http://www.averyreview.com/issues/21/edifice-rex>

Saskia Sassen, "Predatory Formations Dressed in Wall Street Suits and Algorithmic Math" *Science, Technology & Society* 22:1 (2017): 1–15

#### **Suggested Readings:**

Gavin Walker, "Primitive Accumulation and the Formation of Difference: On Marx and Schmitt," in *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 23, no. 3 (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 384-404.

Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, "Differential Accumulation and dominant Capital" in *Capital As Power a Study of Order and Creorder* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 305-333.

## **Week 12 – July 25 - Student Symposium**

### **General Notes:**

**Penalties for Late work:** Work submitted after the deadline will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day it is late, unless the student provides a valid doctor's note or addresses a significant personal conflict in advance of the deadline.

**Academic Integrity:** To create and promote a culture of academic integrity, the behavior of all members of the University of Waterloo is based on 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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the graduate officer. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, 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 the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. Once registered with OPD, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during my office hours to discuss your needs.