

## **LIB 2205/ARCH 2205: LEARNING PLACES: UNDERSTANDING THE CITY**

1 classroom hour, 4 lab/studio hours, 3 credits

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### **Course Description**

This special topics course offers an interdisciplinary approach to investigating our built environment using case studies of specific places in the city. This course combines physical examination with information research and data collection using methodologies developed in multiple disciplines. Students from a variety of departments engage in on-site exploration and in-depth research of a location in New York City.

*Manifesto:* The world is at a crisis point because of mismanagement of resources and the destruction of places. Rampant consumerism and lack of care for our local and world communities have contributed to this crisis. We strive to better understand the threats to local ecosystems and the resulting risks to human health, acknowledge the ways in which urban environments have become sites of inequality, envision a just and environmentally sound future, and creatively advocate for revitalization.

*My actions are my only true belongings.*

*I cannot escape the consequences of my actions.*

*My actions are the ground upon which I stand.*

- Thich Nhat Hanh

### **Course Context**

This course is an Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts and Sciences Course that applies toward the BTech/BS General Education Common Core College Option requirements. **Prerequisites:** ENG 1101 and any Flexible Core Course.

### **Course Materials**

You'll need: a sketch pad/notebook; a 3b-4b pencil; a camera for site visits; \$20-30 for field trips.

Required readings are all free and accessible via Openlab. A **password** is required to access readings not available online. **ONLINE READINGS PASSWORD: s1tespec1f1c**

### **Course Structure**

This course combines a series of research seminars with fieldwork, site visits and documentation, and on and off campus research. A combination of individual and team assignments as well as class participation are the basis for the final grade. The culmination of the weekly assignments is a collaborative, scaffolded research/performance project.

## **Land Acknowledgement**

We'd like to acknowledge that New York City is built on unceded land of the Lenape people—past, present, and future. We acknowledge that The New York City College of Technology is among the thousands of institutions and businesses in this city that were founded upon exclusions and erasures of indigenous people, including the Lenape who were displaced from this land. This acknowledgement demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the legacies of settler colonialism. During this course we will learn about, critically examine, and intervene in the conditions in which colonial politics and capital industry have thrived. (adapted from statement: <http://landacknowledgements.org/>)

## **Assignments**

### ***Reading Responses and reflections (Notebook)***

Students will respond to readings and capture observations and reflections in a notebook that is collected and graded at the end of the semester. Specific writing prompts related to readings and site visits will be discussed in class. In their notebooks, students should demonstrate their capacity to think critically, analyze texts, and synthesize course content.

### ***Site Reports***

Students will complete three site reports related to themes introduced in class. The reports will be completed after a visit to a specific site in New York City. Students will record observations about the site and respond to questions that require critical thinking. Students will also research social, demographic, or historical information about the site to deepen their understanding of the place and the social context in which it exists.

## **Final Project**

### ***Annotated Bibliography***

Use your annotated bibliography to record research conducted on the history of the selected issue, the place where the performance occurs, and performative strategies used. Include a minimum of 2 sources per group member. MLA format.

### ***Performance Intervention***

Working in teams, students will choose an urban location where a specific environmental, economic, or human rights issue needs addressing. First, students will identify the connection between the local man-made objects, technologies, and activities that threaten the quality of human life and/or the natural world. Next students will compose a research question that will reveal information about the physical elements of the site and generate data related to inequalities and dangers.

Using the archive of current and historic strategies and interventions for inspiration, students will create and participate in a live, public performance event that takes place at the site of investigation. In order to be successful, the performance must:

1. Be designed to ignite change, generate awareness of, or create a critical conversation about the misuse of resources and the environment and the resulting negative effects on human life and society

2. Creatively incorporate these themes and the designed and natural elements of the site into the performance

### ***Documentation and OpenLab Project Site***

Each group will create an OpenLab project site, containing an introduction to the project, a summary of research findings, an annotated bibliography and citations for all additional sources consulted, planning and promotional documents related to the performance event, documentation of the live event in the form of a photo essay, and anticipated outcomes of your performative intervention including the impact on audiences and the urban environment.

### ***In-class Presentation***

Each group will prepare a 20-25 minute presentation on their final project. You should display your work on OpenLab project site and discuss all the elements there. Every member of the group must participate in the presentation. Importantly, the presentation is a moment to conduct a reflection on the different stages of development, performance, and documentation. Think about the successes and shortcomings of the performance. Why were certain aspects successful and why did certain aspects fall short of expectations? What might you have done differently if you could do it again? The presentation is not about convincing the audience that the performance was a complete success. Rather, it is about showing that you can think critically about your own work.

### **Grading**

Final grade will be determined according to the following:

5%	Citizenship
45%	Site Documentation Reports (3)
10%	Notebook entries (reading reflections, notes, sketches, site observations, etc)
10%	Final Project: Performance
10%	Final Project: Annotated Bibliography
10%	Final Project: OpenLab Project Site
10%	Final Project: In-Class Presentation

### **Note about Grading**

Profs. Almeida and Swift evaluate all graded assignments together. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

## **Citizenship**

Citizenship means arriving to class on time and prepared, participating in large and small group discussions actively, attentively, and effectively, refraining from distracting or negative behavior in class, and consistently engaging and investing in the work of the course and in your own development as a researcher, writer, and thinker. Engage fully in the work. Collaborate willingly. Listen and adapt. Put your heart into the work. No phones in class!

## **Attendance Policy**

It is the conviction of Profs. Almeida and Swift that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class. Students who miss a scheduled presentation, field trip, or exam due to illness or medically-related emergencies will be referred to the Center for Student Accessibility (CSA). The CSA will review any documentation requested and give the student a letter to share with the relevant instructor if accommodations need to be made. The only excused absences we will accept are those that come from CSA.

## **CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity**

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty when using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

## **Accessibility and Accommodations**

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility at 300 Jay Street room L-237, 718 260 5143, or <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/>

## **General Education Learning Outcomes / Assessment Methods**

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
Upon successful completion of this course the student shall be able to:	To evaluate the students' achievement of the learning objectives, the professor will do the following:

1. Develop, purposefully connect and integrate knowledge from a range of architectural, urban studies, information science, and other disciplinary perspectives presented in the course.	1. Review the final report to evaluate integrative, multidisciplinary thinking.
2. Utilize skills in inquiry/analysis to derive meaning from experience as well as gather information from observation.	2. Review the students' research notes and diagrams.
3. Integrate information literacies by gathering, interpreting, evaluating and applying information discerningly from a variety of sources.	3. Review the students' research methodology proposal and bibliography to evaluate critical thinking and analysis across disciplines.

### **Interdisciplinary Learning Outcomes / Assessment Methods**

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
Upon successful completion of this course the student shall be able to:	To evaluate the students' achievement of the learning objectives, the professor will do the following:
1. Purposefully connect and integrate across discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems.	1. Review student reflections and the final report to evaluate integrative, multidisciplinary thinking.
2. Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries.	2. Review student reflections and the final report to evaluate integrative, multidisciplinary thinking.
3. Comprehend factors inherent in complex problems.	3. Review the students' research methodology proposal and bibliography to evaluate critical thinking and analysis across disciplines.
4. Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively.	4. Review the students research notes and diagrams; Review the final report to evaluate critical thinking, effective communication, and effective collaboration.
5. Become flexible thinkers.	5. Review the students' notes, sketches, and photographs to evaluate the discovery process.

### **Course Intended Learning Outcomes / Assessment Methods**

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>
Upon successful completion of this course the student shall be able to:	To evaluate the students' achievement of the learning objectives, the professor will do the following:
1. Use the city as a laboratory for learning.	1. Review the students' notes, sketches, and photographs to evaluate the care of observation and the reflection of important issues discovered.
2. Develop a methodological approach to research.	2. Review the students' research methodology proposal and bibliography to evaluate critical thinking and analysis across disciplines.

3. Understand the cultural, social and economic processes that guide the physical development of the built environment.	3. Review the students research notes and diagrams; Review the final report to evaluate integrative, multidisciplinary thinking.
4. Use analytical skills to investigate places.	4. Review the students' notes, sketches, and photographs to evaluate the care of observation and the reflection of important issues discovered.
5. Develop, document, catalogue, and organize information to make it accessible to the public.	5. Review the students' notes, sketches, and photographs to evaluate the care of observation and the reflection of important issues discovered; Review the final report to evaluate integrative, multidisciplinary thinking.
6. Apply observational skills to research and analysis.	6. Review the students' notes, sketches, and photographs to evaluate the care of observation and the reflection of important issues discovered.

### Required Readings, Videos, Podcasts

Aktar, Ayan. "The Antidote to Digital Dehumanization? Live Theater." *The New York Times*. Dec. 29, 2017.

Alexiou, Joseph. "Prologue." *Gowanus : Brooklyn's Curious Canal*. NYU Press, 2015.

Baker, Kevin. "Where our New World Begins: Politics, Power, and the Green New Deal." *Harpers*. May 2019.

Boal, Augusto. "Invisible Theater," in Cohen-Cruz, Jan, ed. *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (121-124). London: Routledge, 2008.

Boyd, Andrew, and Dave Oswald Mitchell. *Beautiful Trouble : A Toolbox for Revolution*. New York: OR, 2012. Ebook. (Library Login required for off-campus access)

"Bread and Puppet Cheap Art Manifesto:" <http://breadandpuppet.org/cheap-art/why-cheap-art-manifesto>

"Bread and Puppet Theater Podcast" (Audio Interference): <https://interferencearchive.org/audio-interference-46-bread-and-puppet-theater/>

Ching, Francis D.K. *Design Drawing*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley, 2010. (Excerpts)

Cohen-Cruz, Jan. "Introduction." *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (1-6). London: Routledge, 2008

Curtis, Kimberly. "Climate Refugees Explained." *UN Dispatch*, April 24, 2017.

Del Signore, John. "Spotting Signs of Life on the Poisoned Waters of Newtown Creek." *Gothamist*, May 1, 2018.

Dowling, Kathleen, Laura Marte Piccini, and Matthew Schofield. *The Show Must Go On! American Theater in the Great Depression*. *Digital Public Library of America*. February 2014. (Excerpts)

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*. Beacon Press, 2014. (Excerpts)

*Emergency Index: An Annual Documentation of Performance Practice*. Vol 6. Ugly Duckling Press, 2017. (Excerpts)

Federal Theatre Project, 1935-1939. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/federal-theatre-project-1935-to-1939/about-this-collection/>

Floradewan, Sheik. "CUNY Students and Staff Call for More Funding in City Hall Rally." *The Ticker*. 1 April 2019.

Gage, Beverley. "Reading the Classic Novel That Predicted Trump." *New York Times*. Jan. 17, 2017.

Knight, Sam. "Does Extinction Rebellion Have the Solution to the Climate Crisis?" *The New Yorker*. 21 July 2019.

Leatherbarrow, David. "Architecture's Unscripted Performance." in Kolarevic, Branko, and Ali Malkawi, eds. *Performative Architecture: Beyond Instrumentality*. Routledge, 2005. 5-20.

LES Community Gardens (Audio Interference Podcast): <https://interferencearchive.org/audio-interference-47-lower-east-side-community-gardens/>

McLaughlin, John. "Newtown Creek Restoration Ecology." [Presentation]. NYC Office of Ecological Services. Feb 2014.

Nagel, Rebecca. "This Land," Crooked Media (June 24, 2019). Episode 4, The Treaty and Episode 5, The Land Grab

Newkirk II, Vann R. "Trump's EPA Concludes Environmental Racism is Real." *The Atlantic*. Feb 28, 2018.

Next Epoch Seed Library (Video): <https://vimeo.com/195514276>

Novick, Ilana. "Learning from Decolonize This Place." *Hyperallergic*. 9 Jan 2017.

Quinn, Anna. "'Clean it Before you Rezone it,' Gowanus Activists Tell City." *Patch*. 22 May 2019.

Reeves, Carolyn. "Climate Change Theatre is LIT: A Study on the Performing Arts and Climate Change Engagement." *Howlround*. 27 March 2019.

Reverend Billy Videos:

Exorcism of Monsanto

Freakstorm: Future of the People's Climate March

Freakstorm: Climate Changes Reverend Billy

Stachura, Rick. "Are Playgrounds the Site of New York City's Next Big Land Grab?" *CityLab*. April 2, 2019

Shepard, Peggy. "Building Justice: NYC's Sacrifice Zones and the Environmental Legacy of Racial Injustice." *City Limits*. 10 Oct 2016.

Smith, Phil. *Counter-Tourism: The Handbook*. Devon: Triarchy, 1993. Ebook. (Library Login required for off-campus access)

Tobocman, Seth. *War in the Neighborhood: a graphic novel*. AK Press, 1999. (Excerpts)

van Heeswijk, Jeanne. "The Artist Will have to Decide who to Serve," in Phillips, Fulya and Cruz, eds. *Actors, Agents and Attendants; Social Housing—Housing the Social: Art, Property and Spatial Justice*. 2012. (PDF)

Waller, Marguerite. "Border Boda or Divorce Fronterizo?" in Cohen-Cruz, Jan, ed. *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (86-89). London: Routledge, 2008.

Weinstein. "Stage and Audience." in Aronson, Arnold, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Scenography*. Routledge, 2017. (Read pp. 19-26) (PDF)

Yeginsu, Ceylan. "Climate Protests in London Occupy Major Landmarks." *The New York Times* (April 17, 2019).