**Urban Theory Lab Research Practicum**

**EMERGENT URBANIZATIONS**
**NEW TERRITORIES OF URBAN/AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION**

9:00-9:15am | Introduction by instructors

9:15-10:15am | Sugar and Rice
- “From Farm to Favela,” by Stefano Trevisan and Sarah Zou.
- “Rice Optics,” by Malika Leiper and Ryan Thomas.

10:30-11:30am | Desakota regions and Specialized Agrarian Industrial Districts
- “Desakota,” by Ziwei Zhang and Kuangyu Xiong.
- “Trading on Terroir,” by Mariel Collard and Stefan Norgaard.

11:45am-12:45pm | Precision agriculture and nitrogen fertilizer
- “Data Fix,” by Benjamin Notkin and Timothy Ravis.
- “Nitrogen fertilizer treadmill,” by Saul Levin and Henna Mahmood.

2:00-3:00pm | Livestock and palm oil
- “Cattle, Culture and Capital,” by Evan Hazelett and Ayesha Mehrotra.
- “Smallholder development and extractive logics,” by Rui Su and Géraud Bablon.

3:15-4:15pm | Corridor urbanization and agrarian logistics networks
- “Corridor Urbanization,” by José Carlos Fernández Salas and Samantha Saona.
- “The global agrarian-urban process under the international logistics system,” by Renyi Zhang and Zijing Wang.

4:30-5:15pm | Roundtable discussion

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**Spring 2019 Colloquium | Profs. Sai Balakrishnan and Neil Brenner**
**Harvard Graduate School of Design | Gund Hall, Porticos 122, May 9th 2019**

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#calories delivery rate of agricultural production and submersible cables. Images by the U of Minnesota Global Landscapes Initiative and TaleGeography. Montage by Benjamin Notkin and Timothy Ravis.
“As scholars struggle to decipher current forms of urbanization, they are forced to confront the limitations of inherited approaches to urban questions, and consequently, to face the difficult challenge of inventing new theories, concepts, methods and cartographies that may better illuminate emergent spatial conditions, their contradictions and their implications.”
Annual research practicum

2013: Extreme territories 1
2014: Extreme territories 2
2015: Extreme territories 3
2016: Extreme territories 4
2018: Energetics of urbanization
2019: Agro-industrial transformations
Courses

Emergent Urbanizations: Challenges for Theory, Method, and Research

This course proceeds from a simple premise: new patterns and pathways of urbanization are emerging around the world, and these transformations require a radical rethinking of inherited approaches to urban theory and research. A major site of investigation for the course is the urbanization of the hinterland / countryside, and the concomitant remaking of inherited agrarian environments across much of the global South, during the last three decades. In these zones, as elsewhere, post 1980s processes of global integration, economic liberalization, and infrastructural development have led to fundamental changes in the nature of the rural-urban interface.
“the” city
At the outset of the twentieth century, 10% of the population lived in cities.

In 2000, around 50% of the world population lives in cities.

In 2025, the number of city-dwellers could reach 5 billion individuals (two thirds of them in poor countries).

Source: Global Urban Observatory

Rem Koolhaas, *Mutations* (based on UN data)
The World Is Spiky

Globalization has changed the economic playing field, but hasn’t leveled it.

Population

Urban areas house half of all the world’s people, and continue to grow in both rich and poor countries.
The ‘urban’

To what degree is this inherited, “city-centric” dispositif of urban theory an adequate basis for deciphering contemporary transformations?
“As scholars struggle to decipher current forms of urbanization, they are forced to confront the limitations of inherited approaches to urban questions, and consequently, to face the difficult challenge of inventing new theories, concepts, methods and cartographies that may better illuminate emergent spatial conditions, their contradictions and their implications.”
Proposition 1

The city is not a settlement type or a spatial form—but one element in a broader, uneven process of urbanization (city vs. urban)
henri lefebvre
la révolution urbaine

idées/gallimard

Henri Lefebvre
A Critical Introduction

ANDY MERRIFIELD

forward by Robert budsberg
Proposition 2

Urban restructuring is not simply a mutation of city space but a multiscalar process of “implosion” and “explosion” that encompasses diverse territories, landscapes, scales and ecologies.
"I'LL BEGIN WITH THE FOLLOWING HYPOTHESIS:

SOCIETY HAS BEEN COMPLETELY URBANIZED."

—HENRI LEFEBVRE, LA RÉVOLUTION URBaine (1970)

NEIL BRENNER IS PROFESSOR OF URBAN THEORY AND DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN

FACULTY LAB AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN (GSD), HARVARD UNIVERSITY.
Proposition 3

The “hinterland question” (and associated metabolic transformations) must be internalized into the very heart of the theory of urbanization.
Concentrated / extended urbanization

a useful conceptual distinction for urban theory
The agglomeration question
concentrated
urbanization

The hinterland question
extended
urbanization
Concentrated urbanization
the moment of implosion:
node, agglomeration, metropolis, region

Extended urbanization
the moment of explosion:
operational landscapes that support
and result from agglomeration.
EXTENDED URBANIZATION
Mount Whaleback Iron Ore Mine, Pilbara, Western Australia

Source: DigitalGlobe
The Cuajone Mine (copper), Peruvian Andres, Peru
Source: DigitalGlobe
Iron Ore mine tailings pond, Negaunee, Michigan, USA
Source: DigitalGlobe
Precision agriculture, Minnesota, USA
Source: USGS
Phosphate mining zone, Central Florida, USA
Source: USGS
Harris Cattle Ranch, San Joaquin Valley, California, USA

Source: DigitalGlobe
Alfa Sentral offshore gas platform, North Sea
Port of Long Beach, USA
Source: DigitalGlobe
Agro-industrial transformations

Urban/non-urban boundary slippage

New infrastructures of agrarian industrialization

New logistics spaces

Ongoing forms of land grabbing, dispossession and depeasantization
An emergent planetary fabric of urbanization

Source: Nikos Katsikis, Urban Theory Lab, Harvard GSD
Work sequence

Part 1: Deep dives into theoretical literatures on urbanization, agrarian change and urban/agrarian interfaces

Part 2: Probes / research teams (Commodity chains group + Spatial sites group)

Part 3: Drills – further elaborations
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#locational delivery ratios of agricultural production and submarine cables. Images by the U-of-Minnesota Global Landscapes Initiative and TinkGeography. Montage by Benjamin Notkin and Timothy Ravis.