

Critical Urban Sociology after 1968

SOCI 40240/1 (92895)

Thursdays, 11:20am to 2:20pm (remote: Zoom)

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This seminar surveys the core traditions of critical urban social science of the last half-century, and their major contributions to theory development and concrete research on contemporary global urbanization. We focus in particular on approaches to urban studies that explore capitalist forms of urbanization, their expressions in historical regimes of urban development, their implications for sociospatial configurations within and beyond metropolitan regions, their mediations through state institutions and sociopolitical contestation, and their connections to the remaking of nonhuman landscapes and ecologies on a planetary scale. The course will devote particular attention to research traditions that investigate processes of urban restructuring in relation to a range of contemporary global transformations—including geoeconomic restructuring; neoliberalization and the remaking of state power; the consolidation of new forms of sociospatial division and uneven development (including specific patterns of class, gender and racial polarization); financialization and cascading global financial crises; the consolidation of global supply chains and new patterns of industrial development in the global South; the proliferation of planetary ecological crises under the “Capitalocene”; and the explosion of new forms of urban insurgency against neoliberal austerity, racial injustice and ecological self-destruction.

This reading-intensive seminar is intended to introduce Ph.D. students and other aspiring urbanists to the foundations of critical urban studies and to provide a broad survey of major themes, methods and debates in this dynamic, interdisciplinary and global research field. This is a “foundations” course oriented towards doctoral students and others interested in undertaking advanced scholarship in the field of critical urban studies, in relation to a broad range of sites and scales of investigation. The seminar is a strongly recommended prerequisite for those interested in taking more specialized urban courses, in contributing to the future work of the Urban Theory Lab-Chicago and/or in developing original research projects in the field of critical urban studies. Ph.D. students who might be interested in working with the instructor on a future exam or thesis are especially encouraged to take this course. If space is available, non-doctoral students may be admitted to the course with the instructor's permission. Please attend the first class for details.

Prerequisites

- This course is reading-intensive and theory-heavy. Students should be prepared to read complex, densely argued texts with appropriate care, focus and perseverance. Previous engagement with contemporary critical/radical social theory, especially theories of capitalist development, imperialism and uneven spatial development, will be especially helpful.

Requirements

- *Regular attendance and active participation* in all sessions. Since we only meet once per week (9 classes total), this is a mandatory requirement (exceptions only in case of emergency).

If you are confronting any issues that are impeding your studies this term, please reach out to the instructor so that appropriate support can be found.

- *Intensive preparation* for all discussions by reading all assigned texts carefully and comprehensively in advance. The practice and discipline of reading is central to our work.
- Meet all *deadlines* for writing assignments, as specified below.
- *6 reaction papers (RPs)*. These are 1-paragraph (250-300 word) responses to / reflections on the week's readings, to be submitted by 5pm each Wednesday of the term, starting in Week 2. These texts will be compiled into a single document by a member of the seminar and will then be made available for everyone in the class to read *in advance* of our weekly meeting.

There are two weeks in which no RP is due. The first is 10/29, when your first analytical essay is due (see below). The timing of the second "no RP week" is up to each student: you may skip the RP during one other week of your choosing (please let the instructor know when).

- *Two analytical essays*. These are about 7 pages each (approximately 2500 words). Deadlines are 10/29 and 12/10. Essay topics will be distributed one week in advance of the due date.

Note: some Sociology Ph.D. students will be taking this course to fulfill part of the department's comprehensive exam requirement. For these students, the course requirements are mostly as specified above. However, the second analytical essay assignment will differ slightly (details to be explained in class).

Grading

- 25% Attendance and participation

- 25% Reaction papers
- 25% Analytical essay #1
- 25% Analytical essay #2

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course, as well as a referral to the Dean of Students. Plagiarism is the accidental or intentional copying of phrases or sentences without proper citation to the author or source. This may include published texts, material found on the internet or the work of students and colleagues.

Be sure to document the exact sources of everything you write down in your notes; use quotation marks if you are quoting anything, be it a phrase or a sentence. These are essential habits to “lock in” now to avoid making any future mistakes in this regard, whether as graduate students or in future professional / academic contexts.

Readings

All readings will be made available as PDF files on our Canvas site. In some cases, we will be reading entire books, or large portions of them. Students are encouraged, but not required, to acquire their own copies of these materials.

Major journals in the field of critical urban and regional research

- *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*
- *Urban Studies*
- *Regional Studies*
- *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*
- *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*
- *Political Geography*
- *Urban Geography*
- *Economic Geography*
- *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*
- *Journal of Urban Affairs*
- *Urban Affairs Quarterly*
- *European Urban and Regional Studies*
- *Progress in Human Geography*
- *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*
- *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers*
- *City and Community*

- CITY

Schedule of readings

Detailed reading lists and suggestions for further reading will be provided on a weekly basis in relation to the following week's agenda. Given the large amount of assigned readings, the instructor will also offer a brief overview of the following week's work + suggestions on the most essential "focus texts" at the end of each class.

Week 1: October 1

Introduction and overview

This week we discuss the general *problematique* of the class as well as course administration and requirements. We will use the second part of our meeting to read and discuss several short texts that engage some of the core issues we will be exploring.

- David Harvey, "The right to the city," *IJURR*, 27, 4, 2003, 939-941.
- Peter Taylor and R. E. Lang, "The shock of the new: 100 concepts describing recent urban change," *Environment and Planning A*, 36, 2004, 951-958.
- Brandi T. Summers, "What Black America knows about Quarantine," *New York Times*, 15 May 2020.

Week 2: 8 October

Urban social science as critique

This week offers essential background foundations for deciphering post-1968 approaches to critical urban research. We open with Karl Marx's classic chapter on "primitive accumulation" from volume 1 of *Capital*. We then consider: Friedrich Engels' analysis of class polarization and the housing question in mid-19th century Manchester (1845 / 1872); W. E. B. Du Bois' account of the "color line" and racialized modernity in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899); and Frantz Fanon's account of colonialism and spatial violence in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). We will also consider related scholarly commentaries on these thinkers by other critical urban scholars.

(1) Marx

- Karl Marx, "Part Eight: So-Called Primitive Accumulation," *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, volume 1, trans. By Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976 [1867]), 873-942.
- Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, "Urbs in Rure: Historical enclosure and the Extended Urbanization of the Countryside," in Neil Brenner ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 236-259.

(2) Engels

- Friedrich Engels, "Preface," "Introduction," "The Industrial Proletariat," and "The Great Towns," in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Leipzig, 1845), available at: www.marxists.org
- Friedrich Engels, "How the bourgeoisie solves the housing question," in *The Housing Question* (Leipzig, 1872), available at www.marxists.org.
- Henri Lefebvre, "The Situation of the Working Class in England," and "Engels and Utopia," in *Marxist Thought and the City*, trans. Robert Bononno. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1 [197?], 3-18, 95-108..

(3) Du Bois

- W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007 [1899]), Chs. 1-2, 4, 7, 10-12, 15, 18.
- Kevin Loughran, "The Philadelphia Negro and the canon of classical urban theory," *Du Bois Review* 12, 2 (2015): 249-267.

(4) Fanon

- Frantz Fanon, "Concerning violence," in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963 [1961]), 35-106.
- Stephan Kipfer, "Fanon and space: colonization, urbanization and liberation from the colonial to the global city," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25 (2007): 701-26.

Week 3: October 15

Urban ideologies, old and new

This week considers the proposition that much of mainstream urban studies represents a form of *spatial ideology*. To this end, we consider a selection of classic texts from the Chicago School of urban sociology in the early 20th century, followed by some of the ferocious critiques of that approach that were elaborated by the young Manuel Castells in the 1970s. We then consider some of the attacks on urban spatial ideologies that were elaborated around the same time by David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre. Finally, we consider more recent critiques of contemporary "urban age" ideologies and other triumphalist narratives on early 21st century urbanization.

(0) Background: Ideology and knowledge

- Henri Lefebvre, "Ideology and the sociology of knowledge," *The Sociology of Marx*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, 59-88.

(1) Chicago School background / classic readings

- Robert E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment," in *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925, 1-47.
- Ernest Burgess, "The growth of the city: an introduction to a research project," in *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925, 47-62.
- Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a way of life," *American Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1, (1938): 1-24.

Also recommended:

- Robert Park, "Human Ecology," *American Journal of Sociology*, 41, 1 (1936): 1-15.
- Louis Wirth, "Human Ecology," *American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 6 (1945): 483-488.

(2) The Castells critique

- Manuel Castells, "Is there an urban sociology?" and "Theory and ideology in urban sociology," in Chris Pickvance ed., *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays*. London: Methuen, 1976, 33-84.
- Manuel Castells, "The urban ideology," in *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976, 73-112, esp. 73-85.

(3) Marxist urban theory and the critique of urban ideologies

- David Harvey, "Revolutionary and counter-revolutionary theory in geography and the problem of ghetto formation," *Antipode*, 4, 2 (1972): 1-13.

- David Harvey, "Population, resources and the ideology of science," *Economic Geography*, 50, 3 (1974): 256-277.
- David Harvey, "On planning the ideology of planning," in *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, 165-184.
- Henri Lefebvre, "Reflections on the politics of space," in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, edited by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009 [1974]), 167-184.

(4) The 'urban age' as spatial ideology

- Brendan Gleeson, "What role for social science in the 'urban age'?", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37, 5 (2013): 1839-1851.
- Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid, "The 'urban age' in question," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38, 3 (2014): 731-755.

Week 4: 10/22

Urban Marxism

This week gives us the opportunity to read carefully some of the key works by some of the founding figures of Marxist urban studies: Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, as well as (more briefly) Manuel Castells. We will also consider several important engagements with what was then termed "Third World urbanization" that build upon some of the same Marxian foundations. Key issues include the link between capitalism, industrialization and urbanization, the conceptualization of urbanization, the rhythms of urban restructuring, the production of urban sociospatial divisions, the relationship between urbanization, demographic change and class struggle, the state's role in the management of spatial development and the analysis of crisis formation and its spatial consequences.

This week's readings could easily occupy us for an entire semester or year—but this is an opportunity to begin to get acquainted with some of the foundational works of this field of scholarship.

Analytical essay #1: topics to be distributed

- Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 200 [1970]. Selections: Ch. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, Conclusion.
- Andy Merrifield, "Metropolitan birth pangs—reflections on Henri Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution*," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, 3 (2005): 693-702.
- David Harvey, "The urbanization of capital," in *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, 17-58.
- David Harvey, "Cities or urbanization?," *CITY*, 1, 1-2 (1996): 38-61.
- David Harvey, "The place of urban politics in the geography of uneven capitalist development," in *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, 125-164.
- Manuel Castells, "Urban crisis, political process and urban theory," "Collective consumption and urban contradictions in advanced capitalism," and "Conclusion: the new frontiers of urban research," in *City, Class, Power*, trans. Elizabeth Lebas. New York: Macmillan, 1978, 1-36, 174-182.
- Janet Abu-Lughod, "Development and urbanization," *Habitat International* 2, 5-6 (1977), 417-426.
- David Slater, "Towards a political economy of urbanization in peripheral capitalism: problems of theory and method with illustrations from Latin America," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2, 1-3 (1978): 26-52.

Weeks 5 and 6: October 29 and November 5

The 'restructuring' debate(s) and the explosion of spaces: a 2-week foray

Much of radical or critical urban studies emerged in the context of tumultuous transformations of cities, metropolitan regions, territories and the world economy as a whole in the 1970s. The problem of "urban restructuring" has thus long been a central focal point for theorization, methodological innovation and concrete research. During the next two weeks, we consider several waves and streams of debate on post-1970s capitalist restructuring, with specific reference to five interconnected research streams:

- (1) industrial decline and urban-regional restructuring;
- (2) the rise of **new industrial spaces**;
- (3) the production of **new regulatory spaces** / new forms of **urban governance**;
- (4) the production of **new spatial divisions**; and
- (5) the rise of **new urban social movements**.

These readings are framed around debates on the question of how cities and metropolitan regions articulate to broader patterns of uneven spatial development under contemporary capitalism. We will proceed as follows.

- **For Week 5**, we will all read the below selections, which represent "classic" contributions to the vast literatures on the aforementioned topics.
- **For Week 6**, we will divide into 5 teams (2-3 students each), associated with each of the 5 aforementioned topics. Each of the teams which will be responsible for:
 - (a) Selecting and reading 5 key articles on their research field from *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* and/or *Urban Studies*; and
 - (b) Reporting to the entire class about the key agendas, insights and open questions they found in those articles. This should be a 10 min presentation that also poses broader questions about post-1980s urban transformations for class discussion.
 - (c) Each team will also be asked, by the beginning of Week 6 (Monday 2 November) to suggest at least one article on their research stream for the entire class to read. This PDF can be sent to the instructor for uploading to Canvas.

Week 5 readings

Background: uneven spatial development and the politics of space

- Edward W. Soja, "Regions in context: spatiality, periodicity and the historical geography of the regional question," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 3, 2 (1985): 175-90.
1. Industrial decline
 - Doreen Massey, "Industrial restructuring versus the cities," "In what sense a regional problem?, and "Uneven development: Social change and spatial divisions of labor" in *Space, Place, Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 25-66, 86-114—chapters originally published in 1978, 1979 and 1988.
 2. New industrial spaces
 - Michael Storper, "The transition to flexible specialization in the US film industry: external economies, the division of labor and the crossing of industrial divide," in Ash Amin, *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 195-226.
 - Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, "Neo-Marshallian nodes in global networks," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*,
 3. The production of new regulatory spaces / new forms of urban governance
 - David Harvey, "From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation of urban governance in late capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler* 71, 1 (1989): 3-17.
 - Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Jungle law breaks out: neoliberalism and the global-local disorder," *Area* 26, 4 (1994): 317-326.
 - Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism,'" *Antipode*, 34, 3 (2002): 349-379.
 4. The production of new spatial divisions
 - Neil Smith, "New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as a global urban strategy," *Antipode*, 34, 3 (2002): 427-450.

- Loic Wacquant, "The rise of advanced marginality: notes on its nature and implications," *Acta Sociologica*, 39, 2 (1996): 121-139.
- Ananya Roy, "Slumdog cities: rethinking subaltern urbanism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35, 2 (2011): 223-238.

5. The rise of new urban social movements

- Margit Mayer, "The 'right to the city' in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements," *CITY*, 13, 2-3 (2009): 362-374.
- Bettina Köhler and Markus Wissen, "Glocalizing protest: urban conflicts and global social movements," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27, 4 (2003): 942-951.
- Margit Mayer, "First world urban activism: beyond austerity urbanism and creative city politics," *CITY*, 17, 1 (2013): 5-19.

Also recommended: Margit Mayer, Catharina Thörn and Håkan Thörn eds, *Urban Uprisings: Challenging Neoliberalism in Europe* (London: Palgrave, 2016).

Analytical essay #1: due Monday November 2

Week 6: November 5

The core reading for each group is listed in *blue*.

1. New spaces of industrial decline

- Schlichtman, John Joe. 2009. "The Niche City Idea: How a Declining Manufacturing Center Exploited the Opportunities of Globalization." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(1):105–25. doi: [10.1111/j.1468-2427.2009.00839.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2009.00839.x).
- Hackworth, Jason. 2018. "Race and the Production of Extreme Land Abandonment in the American Rust Belt." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(1):51–73. doi: [10.1111/1468-2427.12588](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12588).
- Storper, Michael, and Richard Walker. 1983. "The Theory of Labour and the Theory of Location." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 7(1):1–43. doi: [10.1111/j.1468-2427.1983.tb00581.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.1983.tb00581.x).

2. New industrial spaces

- Scott, A.J. 1988. "Flexible Production Systems and Regional Development: the Rise of New Industrial Spaces in North America and Western Europe" in *IJURR* (12)2: pp. 171-186.
- Danyluk, M. 2019. "Fungible Space: Competition and Volatility in the Global Logistics Network" in *IJURR* (43)1: pp. 94-111.
- Jung, N. 2013. "Relational Governance and the Formation of a New Economic Space: The Case of Teheran Valley, Seoul, Korea" in *IJURR* (37)4: pp. 1233-53.

Optional Readings

- Cidell, J. 2011. "Distribution Centers among the Rooftops: The Global Logistics Network Meets the Suburban Spatial Imaginary" in *IJURR* (35)4: pp. 832-51.
- Curran, W. 2010. "In Defense of Old Industrial Spaces: Manufacturing, Creativity, and Innovation in Williamsburg, Brooklyn" in *IJURR* (34)4: pp. 871-85.

3. New spaces of urban governance

- Melo, M. A., & Baiocchi, G. (2006). *Deliberative democracy and local governance: towards a new agenda*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30(3), 587-600.

- Blatter, J. (2004). From 'spaces of place' to 'spaces of flows'? Territorial and functional governance in cross-border regions in Europe and North America. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(3), 530-548.
- Holden, M. (2011). Public participation and local sustainability: Questioning a common agenda in urban governance. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(2), 312-329.
- Acey, Charisma Shonté. "Silence and Voice in Nigeria's Hybrid Urban Water Markets: Implications for Local Governance of Public Goods." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2018, pp. 313–336., doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12715.
- Cornea, Natasha, et al. "Ponds, Power and Institutions: The Everyday Governance of Accessing Urban Water Bodies in a Small Bengali City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2016, pp. 395–409., doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12377.

4. New urban spatial divisions

- [Marco Garrido, "How interpersions affects class relations," *IJURR* 42, 3 \(2018\), 442-460.](#)
- Sara Safransky (2019) "Geographies of Algorithmic Violence: Redlining the Smart City"
- Austin Zeiderman (2018) "Beyond the Enclave of Urban Theory"

5. Urban Social movements

- Bayat, A. (2012). Politics in the City-Inside-Out. *City and Society*, 24(2), 110-128.
- [Belda-Miquel, S., Peris Blanes, & Frediani, A. \(2016\). Institutionalization and Depoliticization of the Right to the City. *IJURR*, 40\(2\), 321-339.](#)
- Nogueira, M. (2020). Preserving the (right kind of) city: The urban politics of the middle classes in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. *Urban Studies*, 57(10), 2163-2180.
- Pettit, H. (2018). Hopeful City: Meritocracy and Affect in Global Cairo. *IJURR*, 42(6), 1048-1064.

Week 7: November 12

Global-local connections and disjunctures—theorizations, analyses and debates

Debates on “globalization” and urban restructuring exploded during the 1990s and into the 2000s. Increasingly, the worldwide context was considered to be an essential parameter for urban research, and worldwide intercity networks became a major focal point for investigation and debate. Today, we explore classic contributions and debates associated with several key authors or teams of authors who have contributed to these literatures. These include: *Saskia Sassen*, one of the founding figures of global cities research (along with John Friedmann of UCLA); the work of the GaWC (*Globalization and World Cities*) group at Loughborough University (led by Peter J. Taylor), which produced a major theoretical and empirical advance on Sassen’s framework in the 2000s; the work of *Stephen Graham*, who with his long-time collaborator Simon Marvin connected debates on globalized urbanization to the analysis of new digital and infrastructural geographies; *Jennifer Robinson*, whose critique of global city theory set out an influential research agenda on postcolonial urbanism; *Mike Davis*, who offered a counterpoint to those debates with reference to the proliferation of “slums” (self-produced built environments) in the global South; and the parallel counter-perspectives on “worlding cities” developed by Berkeley urbanists *Ananya Roy* and *Aihwa Ong*, which likewise produced a powerful reframing of earlier rounds of global urban research.

Once again, we are covering a massive intellectual territory in a single week; all of the authors considered here have produced major scholarly monographs as well as many streams of scholarly articles that deserve careful, detailed attention. For present purposes, students will gain orientation regarding some of the major thinkers whose work defined this field of study and some of the debates their work has provoked. Along with the below articles, major book-length monographs, along with other material, by these authors are also available for perusal—or close scrutiny—on Canvas.

- Saskia Sassen, “Cities and communities in the global economy,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 39, 5 (1996), 929-639.
- Saskia Sassen, “New frontiers facing urban sociology at the Millennium,” *British Journal of Sociology* 1, 51, January/March (2000) 143-159.
- Jonathan Beaverstock, Richard G. Smith and Peter J. Taylor, “World-city network: A new metageography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, 1 (2000), 123-134.
- Stephen Graham, “Constructing premium network spaces: reflections on infrastructure networks and contemporary urban development,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Development* 24, 1 (2000), 183-2000.

- Jennifer Robinson, "Global and world cities: a view from off the map," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, 3 (2002), 541-553.
- Mike Davis, "Planet of slums: Urban involution and the informal proletariat," *New Left Review* 26, March/April (2004), 5-34.
- Selections from: Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong eds., *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 2011.
 - Aihwa Ong, "Worlding cities, or the art of being global," 1-26.
 - Ananya Roy, "Conclusion: Postcolonial urbanism: speed, hysteria, mass dreams," 307-335.

Recommended books

- Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Peter J. Taylor, *World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2006.

Week 8: November 19

Cities in the Anthropocene / Capitalocene

How is capitalist urbanization connected to the remaking of planetary ecologies in the contemporary period, which has recently been labelled the “Anthropocene” or, in Jason Moore's strong critical counterpoint, the “Capitalocene.” How might we understand cities' relation to broader metabolic processes and transformations, related to the production and circulation of labor, food, water, energy, materials and waste? Engagement with such issues has a long history in urban studies, dating back to the 19th century but also including prominent mid-20th century engagements by authors such as Lewis Mumford and Ian McHarg, among others. Here, we consider more recent theoretical approaches to “urban political ecology” (UPE) with reference to the work of authors such as Erik Swyngedouw, Maria Kaika, Tim Luke and Matthew Gandy, as well as new generations of critical thinkers who are working on such questions. We will also engage more recent writings on urban environmental governance, especially in relation to proliferating climate emergencies and associated struggles for climate justice (for instance, around the Green New Deal).

The same disclaimer provided on previous weeks applies here: this is a massive literature that is too broad to cover exhaustively in a single week. But we will use this opportunity to gain orientation in a complex, diverse, exciting and hugely urgent literature that arguably represents one of the most dynamic streams of urban research today.

Note: texts in blue are the most essential during our 1-week “deep dive” into this vast literature.

Foundations

- *Selections from In the Nature of Cities*, edited by Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw. New York: Routledge, 2006, 1-39. Note: PDF of entire book is available on Canvas.

Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw, “Urban political ecology: politicizing the production of urban natures,” 1-19.

[Erik Swyngedouw, “Metabolic urbanization: the making of cyborg cities,” 20-39.](#)

- [Matthew Gandy, “Cyborg urbanization: complexity and monstrosity in the contemporary city,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, 1 \(2005\), 26-49.](#)
- Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw, “Fetishizing the modern city: the phantasmagoria of urban technological networks,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 1 (2000), 120-138.

- Timothy Luke, "Global cities vs. 'global cities': rethinking contemporary urbanism as political ecology," *Studies in Political Economy* 76 (2003), 11-33

Debates and elaborations

- Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, "Urbanizing urban political ecology: a critique of methodological cityism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, 1 (2015), 16-27.
- Timothy W. Luke, "Urbanism as cyborganicity: tracking the materialities of the Anthropocene," *New Geographies: Grounding Metabolism*, edited by Nikos Katsikis and Daniel Ibanez, Harvard University GSD, 38-51.
- Yannis Tzaninis, Tait Mandler, Maria Kaika and Roger Keil, "Moving urban political ecology beyond the 'urbanization of nature'," *Progress in Human Geography*, 2020. DOI: 10.1177/0309132520903350.
- Neil Brenner and Nikos Katsikis, "Operational landscapes: hinterlands of the Capitalocene," *AD/Architectural Design* 1 (2020), 22-31.

Urban environmental governance, climate emergencies and struggles for climate justice

- Harriet Bulkeley, "Cities and the governing of climate change," *Annual Review of Environmental Resources* 35 (2010), 229-253.
- Ray Hudson, "Resilient regions in an uncertain world: wishful thinking or a practical reality," *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 3 (2010), 11-25.
- Lawrence J. Vale, "The politics of resilient cities: whose resilience and whose city," *Building Research and Information* 42, 2 (2014), 191-201.
- David Wachsmuth, Daniel Aldana Cohen and Hillary Angelo, "Expand the frontiers of urban sustainability," *Nature* 25 August 2016, 391-393.
- Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, "Why does everyone think cities can save the planet?," *Urban Studies*, 57, 11 (2020), 2201-2221.
- Daniel Aldana Cohen, "Confronting the urban climate emergency: critical urban studies in the age of a Green New Deal," *CITY* 24, 1-2 (2020), 52-64.

- Kian Goh, "Urbanising climate justice: constructing scales and politicizing difference," *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*. doi:10.1093/cjres/rsaa010
- Damian White, "Just transitions/design for transitions: Preliminary notes on a design politics for a Green New Deal," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 31, 2 (2020), 20-39.

Week 9: December 3

New urban spaces--openings and horizons

This week discusses recent debates on critical urban theory through readings of authors associated variously with approaches to planetary urbanization, postcolonial urbanization, subaltern urbanization and assemblage urbanism. For each of these approaches, we track their epistemological foundations, core conceptualizations, methodological tactics as well as concrete research applications. This class will also be an opportunity to review several recent heated exchanges on the nature of urban theory that have recently appeared in key journals such as *IJURR* and *Urban Studies*.

Analytical essay #2: topics to be distributed

Analytical essay #2: due on 12/10