

Urban Assemblages (UD 61005)
Room: AR3M11B

Fall 2014
Thursday, 9:00-11:50am
Adjunct Lecturer Deen Sharp
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Urban Arrangements offers students an introduction to the concept of assemblage (or agencement [arrangement]) in the context of urban studies. In Urban Studies the concept of assemblage and related work derived from Actor-Network-Theory is credited with transforming and challenging conventional understandings of the object of study. Some of the most important texts coming out of urban studies over the past decade have utilized, both explicitly and implicitly, an agencement approach.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course students will demonstrate an understanding of:

1. Introduction to the foundations of Agencement and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) and its importance for urban studies;
2. An overview of the key texts and arguments in “arrangement” urbanism;
3. How to engage with humanities research and academic texts.

At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Clearly and concisely synthesize academic arguments;
2. Present arguments in front of an audience;
3. Engage, analyse and critique academic texts and concepts;
4. Think critically and analytically;
5. Construct a research project.

Requirements

In this course you will be expected to do all of the following:

1. Read all readings carefully and come to class prepared to discuss them. The success of this class depends largely on the degree of preparation of participants.
2. In order to ensure that reading is done well, and to facilitate class discussion, you must produce a minimum 1-page single spaced commentary on the readings each week (unless stated otherwise in the syllabus). Your commentaries should provide an analysis of the assigned texts, this entails an: outline of the argument the paper makes; attempt to critique the argument made; what are some of the main points of the readings and what kinds of questions did the readings pose for you?; note weaknesses or gaps in their logic or reasoning. [There are 10 commentaries due in total. Each participants is permitted to miss TWO commentaries ONLY across the length of the semester, each one after that will result in a deduction of 5 marks of the total grade.]. **Commentaries are due as noted on the syllabus.**
3. At some point in the class you will be responsible for introducing the assigned readings. There are 10 presentations that will be done throughout the semester and each student has to participate in one. The presentation should provide an outline of the main argument and an identification of the key issues or questions for discussion. Presentations should be maximum 15-20 minutes in length.

4. A final (maximum) 20 page research paper.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances whatsoever, and will entail an immediate zero (0%) grade on the assignment in question, with no opportunity to compensate. Students are expected to understand the difference between proper citation and plagiarism.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and attendance: 40%

Weekly commentaries: 30%

Final paper: 30%

Main textbooks for the course:

Amin, A., and N. Thrift. 2002. *Cities : Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Farias, Ignacio, and Thomas Bender. 2010. *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London; New York: Routledge.

Week 1

Class 1: Thursday August 28

Introduction to Urban Studies and Actor Network Theory

Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network-theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. (Part 1)

Mumford, Lewis. 1937. "What is a City". *Architectural Record*.

Week 2

Class 2: Thursday September 4

Introduction to ANT

Presentation (1) by:

Commentaries (1) due

Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network-theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. (Part 1)

Week 3

Class 3: Thursday September 11

Introduction to ANT

Presentation (2) by:

Commentaries (2) due

Farias, Ignacio, and Thomas Bender. 2010. *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London; New York: Routledge.

Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network-theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. (Part 2)

Week 4

Class 4: Thursday September 18
ANT and Urban Studies: Towards a Flat Ontology

Presentation (3) by:
Commentaries (3) due

Farias, Ignacio, and Thomas Bender. 2010. *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London; New York: Routledge. (Part 1).

Week 5

Thursday September 25 NO CLASS

Week 6

ANT and Urban Studies: Non-human urban ecologies and the Multiple City

Class 5: Thursday October 2

Presentation (4) by:
Commentaries (4) due

Farias, Ignacio, and Thomas Bender. 2010. *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London; New York: Routledge. (Part 2 and 3).

Week 7

Infrastructure
Essay ideas due

Class 6: Thursday October 9

Presentation (5) by:
Commentaries (5) due

Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. 2001. *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. Routledge.

Week 8

Class 7: Thursday October 16

Presentation (6) by:
Commentaries (6) due

Hommels, Anique. 2005. "Studying Obduracy in the City: Toward a Productive Fusion between Technology Studies and Urban Studies." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 30 (3): 323–51.

McFarlane, Colin. 2011. "The City as Assemblage: Dwelling and Urban Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29 (4): 649–71.

Week 9

Annotated bibliography due

Class 8: Thursday October 23

Presentation (7) by:
Commentaries (7) due

Latour, Bruno. 2012. "Paris, Invisible City: The Plasma." *City, Culture and Society* 3 (2): 91–93.

Petrescu, Doina. 2012. "Relationscapes: Mapping Agencies of Relational Practice in Architecture." *City, Culture and Society* 3 (2): 135–40. doi:10.1016/j.ccs.2012.06.011.

Yaneva, Albena. 2012. "City, Culture and Society Special Issue (Vol. 3 – Issue 2), 2012: Traceable Cities." *City, Culture and Society* 3 (2): 87–89.

Week 10

No Class

Week 11

Class Presentation of Essay Outlines

Class 9: Thursday November 6

Presentation (8) by:

Commentaries (8) due

Amin, A., and N. Thrift. 2002. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Week 12

Class 10: Thursday November 13

Presentation (9) by:

Commentaries (9) due

Beauregard, R. A. 2012. "Planning with Things." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 32 (2): 182–90.

Bijker, Wiebe E., Thomas Parke Hughes, and Trevor J. Pinch. 1987. *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*. MIT Press.

Blok, Anders. 2013. "Urban Green Assemblages." *Science & Technology Studies* 26 (1): 5–24.

Lecomte, Jeremy. 2013. "Beyond Indefinite Extension: About Bruno Latour and Urban Space." *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 21 (4): 462–78. doi:10.1111/1469-8676.12044.

Week 13

Class 11: Thursday November 20

Presentation (10) by:

Commentaries (10) due

Moore, Steven A. 2001. *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Week 14

Class 12: Thursday November 27

Yaneva, Albena. 2009. *Made by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: An Ethnography of Design*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

Week 15

FINAL Paper presentations

Class 13: Thursday December 4

Week 16

FINAL Paper presentations

Class 14: Thursday December 11