CIEE in Barcelona, Spain

Course name: Future Cities Seminar
Course number: ARCH 3002 BASP
Programs offering course: Barcelona Global Architecture and Design
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Spring 2019

Course Description

The contemporary city, the urban phenomenon or the metropolis have been of central and growing interest for the academic community for the past couple of decades. The urban phenomenon and its transformation represent a change in the urban global equilibrium as well as the materialization of globalization. As Bocquet notes: “metropolises are also seen as places where the state of the relationship between global trends, space and society are most legible and their effects, both physical and social, for better or for worse, most spectacular” (2013).

These ever expanding megacities, that have embraced unlimited growth, generate a situation where problems, that were once concentrated and confined to well-defined urban patterns, are no longer relating to traditional urban theories or models. Moreover, the city becomes increasingly complex. It appears that a direct relationship between activities and places no longer exists. In parallel to the accelerated and shocking speed of growth and size, the distribution of densities, land uses and morphologically differentiated areas is no longer defined. Each possible form of this evermore complex urban context brings with it its own set of social, economic and environmental consequences.

In this scenario, along with the current situation of the global crisis, a new sense of social and economic values has emerged, changing the goals of transformation, and making society, the environment and landscape the clue themes of ethical, economic and political debates (Ricci, 2012).

“Perhaps more so than ever before, the shape of cities, how much land they occupy, how much energy they consume, how their transport infrastructure is organized and where people are housed - [...] - all affect the environmental, economic and social sustainability of global society. One of the overriding realizations of the Urban Age is that cities are not just concentrations of problems - which they are - but they are also where problems can be solved” (Burdett et al., 2007).

In this framework, understanding the contemporary urban phenomenon, its effects, and the problematics that arise from it, are fundamental for the formation of young architects today. In this sense, the concept of this seminar is to explore, from a critical point of view, the contemporary urban phenomenon, as well as the new paradigms and models
of urban thinking and perspective that emerge with it. This exploration will be undertaken both generally speaking on a global scale and specifically in reference to the particular case of Barcelona. Hence, the students will be asked to critically apply the knowledge they gain through the development of the seminar, also thanks to the interventions of international experts, to their case study, Barcelona, implementing learning by doing approach.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course students will have an overview of the contemporary urban phenomenon, with a specific interest in the Mediterranean context, considered by many to be the cradle of civilization. They will understand the issues, challenges and opportunities that arise from this growing phenomenon in a comprehensive framework (cultural, social, sustainable, political, etc.). Moreover, the students will have obtained a critical overview of the new urban paradigms and approaches towards the sustainable development of our future habitat, as well as developing a basis for the construction of their personal approach.

- Students will be able to critically communicate ideas about cities, urban and community development, participation, social space and built environment.
- Students will be able to conduct urban investigations and present their findings coherently in verbal and written formats.
- Students should be able to respond to site characteristics in a meaningful way.
- Students should be able to learn from relevant precedents.
- Students should understand the relationship of architecture to allied disciplines and the importance of interdisciplinary work.
- Students will be able to work productively in a group.

**Course Prerequisites**

None.

**Methods of Instruction**

In class presentations and discussions; readings; site visits; extempore in class exercises.

In order to face and fully grasp the complexities of the contemporary urban phenomenon, the course will follow a macro-methodology, or structure, divided into 5 parts: CONTEXT, PROGRAM, CONCEPT, VISION and PROCESS. The students, as the development phases for future projects, could eventually adopt these.

- CONTEXT is dedicated to the critical analysis, collection and preliminary interpretation of data, as well as the general sense/feeling of the context under
examination - varying from the generalized context of the contemporary city, to Barcelona, and the Besos Project Site;

- PROGRAM outlines the objectives of urban scale projects, understanding their transformability through the critical construction and interpretation of data;
- CONCEPT underlines the essential structure of interventions, elaborating and understanding the synthesis of conceptual proposals;
- VISION focuses on the spatial configuration that urban proposals take on, understanding the proposed and obtained quality of change;
- PROCESS elaborates the technicalities, modalities, time factors, costs, tools and strategies necessary for the implementation of proposals.

During each of these phases, the course will be developed thanks to a learning by doing philosophy, in particular through brief talks - also with external experts, towards the implementation of the students' knowledge framework, in class discussions and debates, towards the development of the students critical approach, in class exercises, allowing the students the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained, and site/project visits.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Class Participation: 30%
2. Presentations and in class exercises: 40%
3. Final presentation and e-book: 30%

**Course Requirements**

**CIEE Barcelona Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and prepared for the day’s class activities. CIEE does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences, whether due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and/or other impediments. You are considered responsible of managing your own absences. Please keep in mind that exams, paper submission dates, presentations and any other course work deadlines cannot be changed.

No academic penalty will be applied if students miss up to 3 class sessions. If students miss up to 5 class sessions, students’ final course grade will drop 5 points out of 100 on the CIEE grade scale for each additional absence beyond 3 (for example a 95 will become a 90 if they reach the 4th absence, and an 85 if they reach the 5th absence). **Students will automatically fail the course if they miss more than 20% of total class hours (i.e. if they exceed 5 absences).**

For students who miss up to 20% of the total course hours due to extenuating circumstances, the Academic Director may allow for exceptions to the local attendance policy based on documentation such as proof of bereavement, religious observances, hospitalization etc.
Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to the class will be considered absent for a day.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**
**Orientation Week**
Presentation of Studio, Seminar and Workshop Syllabi

**Week 2**
**Seminar outline introduction**
**Introduction to Urbanism, Models and Strategies**
Figures of the contemporary urban phenomenon.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**
What is Urbanism? Urban Planning?
What are the issues/factors/paradigms of the contemporary city?
Is it possible to define the contemporary urban phenomenon (limits/characteristics/factors)?
With respect to the dynamicity of the contemporary urban phenomenon, what are the implications/effects on urban and architectural design?

**IN CLASS EXERCISE:**
Study of the Urban Age Glossary (The Endless City)
Create our own Glossary

**Week 3**
**Multi city coast.**
The evolving forms and structures of the Mediterranean Multi-City. New models of urban thinking and perspective.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**
How can I represent the contemporary urban phenomenon (dynamics/factors)?

**IN CLASS EXERCISE:**
Mapping the city, first approach to Barcelona: Diagram City

**HOMEWORK READINGS:** 10 Lessons of Solà- Morales + CRITICAL CONCLUSIONS

**Week 4**
**Barcelona, an urbanism workshop**

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**
Critical confrontation between Session 03 in class exercise and the 10 lessons of Solà- Morales
PRESENTATION_READINGS: 10 Lessons of Solà- Morales
CRITICAL CONCLUSIONS

Week 5
Tour of Barcelona

OPEN DISCUSSION:
Relationships between strategies, planning and outcomes

Intro to PROGRAM

HOMEWORK_READINGS:
Recetas Urbanas, urban occupation
Gali + Batlle i Roig, Valle de Can Joan
West 8, Central Waterfront
Stross Landscape Urbanism, Lower Don river
Field Operations, Lake Ontario Park

Week 6
Beyond Urbanism
Landscape and Ecological Urbanism
Guest Speaker

OPEN DISCUSSION:

PRESENTATION_READINGS:
Recetas Urbanas, urban occupation
Gali + Batlle i Roig, Valle de Can Joan
West 8, Central Waterfront
Stross Landscape Urbanism, Lower Don river
Field Operations, Lake Ontario Park

Week 7
TOUR:
Tarragona, L’Hort Del Circ
refarmthecity.org Coop
Urban Agriculture, Strategies for city resilience
with: Hernani Dias and Olga

OPEN DISCUSSION:
Relationships between theory and practice

HOMEWORK_READINGS:
Field Operations + Diller-Scofidio, The High Line
Landraum, Agropolis
Field Operations, Fresh Kills Landfill
Chris Reed, Detroit Future City - detroitworksproject.com
MRIO Arquitectos + West 8, Rio Manzanares Masterplan

Week 8
Introduction to New Paradigms: Recycle (ReCITYing)
OPEN DISCUSSION:

PRESENTATION_READINGS: projects
Field Operations + Diller-Scofidio, The High Line
Landraum, Agropolis
Field Operations, Fresh Kills Landfill
Chris Reed, Detroit Future City - detroitworksproject.com
MRIO Arquitectos + West 8, Rio Manzanares Masterplan

Week 9
IN CLASS EXERCISE (WORKSHOP):
Recycle Barcelona - Concept

Week 10
VISION
PRESENTATION OF IN CLASS EXERCISE (WORKSHOP):
Recycle Barcelona - Concept
Invited external Jury

VISION
IN CLASS EXERCISE AND OPEN DISCUSSION:
Michel Desvigne, Ile Seguin prefiguration garden
Parking Day
Guerrilla marketing-gardening
Nikola Basic, Piazza del Sole + Organo del Mare
Ecosistema Urbano, Ecoboulevard

Week 7
Introduction to Guest Speaker: Dr. Joan Maroto (UPC)
Social Participation
Participatory process in the development of architectural and urban design

OPEN DISCUSSION:
What is city governance?
Bottom-up Processes, hopes and outcomes?
Can one be without the other?

HOMEWORK_DEBATE: Bottom-up Processes vs Top Down
Processes
Students will represent each party; the judge will be an external invited guest

Week 12
Barcelona 5.0
The Next City

OPEN DISCUSSION:
What is the future of the contemporary urban phenomenon?
What are the central issues?
How can we imagine shaping this future city?

**PRESENTATION_DEBATE:** Bottom-up Processes vs Top Down Processes
Students will represent each party the judge will be an external invited guest

**Week 13**
PREPARATION FINAL PRESENTATIONS
In class work in preparation of Final presentations and e-book

**Week 14**
Break // PUBLIC HOLIDAY

**Week 15**
FINAL PRESENTATIONS OF SEMINAR
**e-book submission**

Official Program End Date
Farewell Dinner

**Readings**

**Selection of Suggested readings:**

AA. VV., New Geographies 4: Scales of the Earth, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 2011
Bianchetti C., Abitare la città contemporanea, Skira, Milano, 2003
Burdett R., Living the Endless City, Phaidon, New York, 2007
Gausa M., Multi-Barcelona. Hiper-Catalunya. Strategie per una nuova geo-urbanità, List, Trento, 2005
Gausa M., OPEN: Arquitectura y ciudad contemporánea. Teoría e historia de un cambio, Acatr, Barcelona, 2010
Guallart V., Geo-Logics, Geography Information Architecture, Actar, Barcelona, 2008
Koolhaas R., Boeri S. and Kwinter S., Mutations, Actar, Barcelona, 2001
Mehta S., Maximum City, Penguin, London, 2004
SPECIFIC bibliography for project readings:


Daskalakis G., Waldheim C., Young C. (editors, 2001), Stalking Detroit, Actar Editorial, Barcelona.


Mostafavi M., Doherty G. (editors, 2010), Ecological Urbanism, Lars Muller, Baden, Switzerland.


