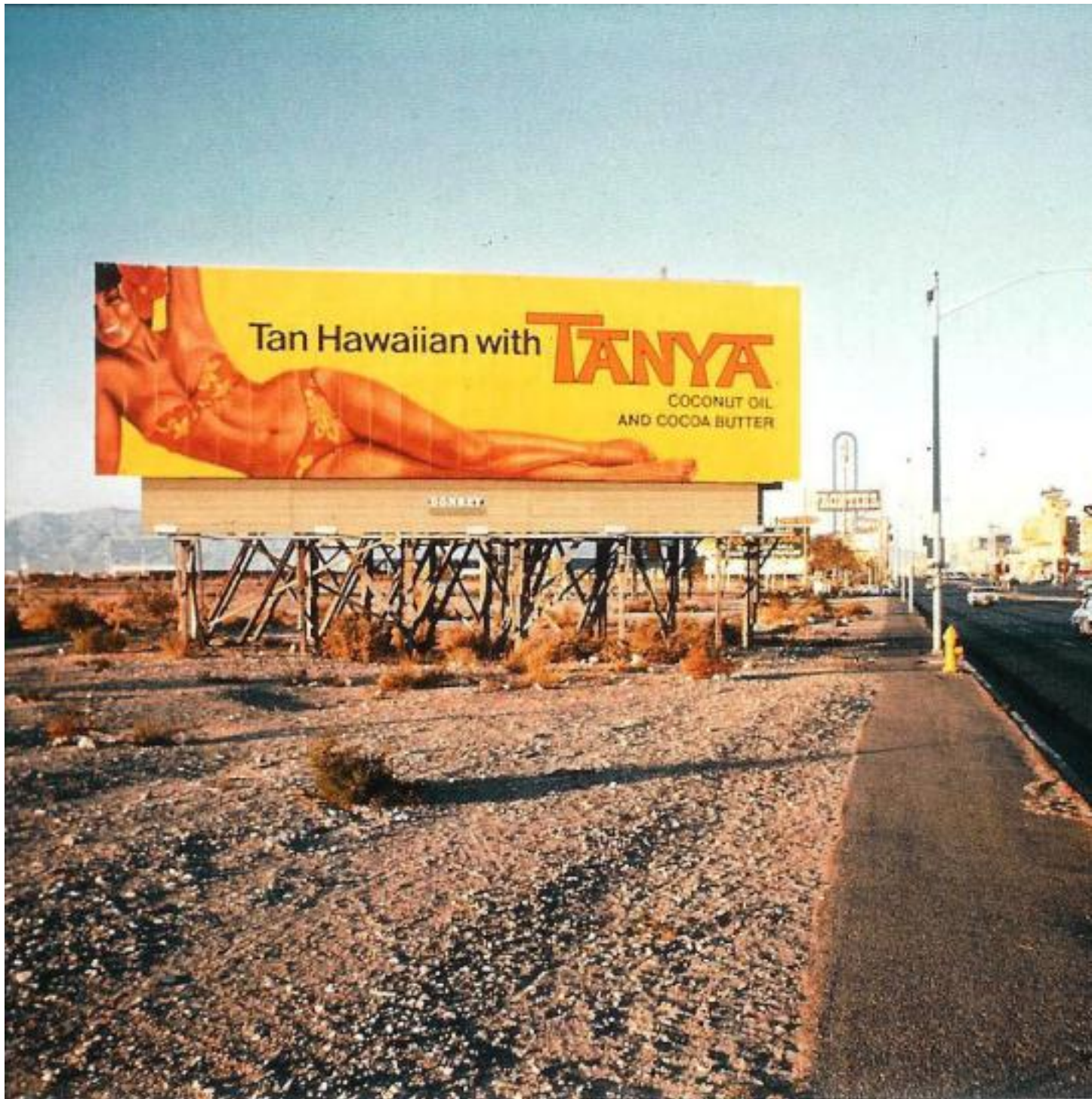


Syllabus



DESIGN, POLITICS, SOCIETY

Whether by providing agitprop for revolutionary movements, an aesthetics of empire, or a language for numerous avant-gardes, design has changed the world. But how? Why? And under what conditions? This course proposes a consideration of design as an historical agent, a contested category, and a practice.

Casting a wide net, the course will consider a range of geographical locations ("West," "East," "North," "South," and contact zones between these constructed categories). We will examine not only designed objects (e.g., industrial design, decorative arts, graphic design, fashion) but also spaces (e.g., architecture, interiors, landscapes, urban settings) and systems (e.g., environment, economy, communications, services, governments). Together we will ask: What is design? How does it relate to society, history, economy, and politics? Students will get to engage with how histories of the past inform our contemporary media saturated lives, and experiment with new ways to do history through use of digital media, visual materials, and aesthetic practices.

Requirements:

Please show up and speak up. You have a reading response or small assignment due every week on Monday.

1) On weeks when you are going to a museum you are to write a two page response to the show you saw describing its organization, the theme of the show, and major features about the curation that you noticed. These are due, by e-mail on Thursday. Questions to guide you: what ideas of history were operating in the show? What types of objects were chosen? How were people engaging with the material? How was the show designed architecturally and in terms of layout—notice things like colors, is it an open space, or closed into corridors, what types of information were you given? Think about the difference between institutions architecturally, aesthetically, in terms of users? How do you think the curatorial vision and how people respond to it link up? Are they the same or different?

2) On weeks where there is no museum visit you are to write a 1-2 page response to the readings or the assignments I give out that is due on Monday. You can use these assignments to help you with your final project by discussing regularly how the reading impacted your thinking about your topic of study, about the history of design, and how those histories impact contemporary environments, processes, and objects—from cell phones, to tests, to security systems? I will also offer questions to guide you.

Some weeks I will ask you to describe, draw, or otherwise (maybe do sound recordings) investigate an architecture, interface, or environment that impacts your daily life and relates to particular readings. Sometimes I will ask you to come up with counter-examples, of designs or technologies that do not operate as the readings depict. Or to think about the intention of designers and the way people actually use a space. These will be handed out at least two weeks ahead and are posted on-line in the class website.

These above assignments, attendance and class participation constitute 65% of your grade. You are allowed to miss two weekly assignments, but you are not allowed to miss ANY of the museum visits. Every other assignment you miss will be a reduction of your grade. Doing everything will guarantee you a decent grade and even extra credit.

3) You are to develop one major independent or group project that is to be presented in class and involves putting together a blog and a research paper. You are to choose by March 25 a site, object, or other “designed” environment—be creative—it can be anything from your cell-phone, to sensors, to drones. You can choose something from the museums and sites we visit. You can even be super creative and link these sites to or research (for example in the CCA archives) and write about fantastical worlds—either in fiction, or perhaps plans for cities, architectures, etc. that were never built. You can also do a history of alternative uses of a site—for example how certain parks have served as spaces for protest and control, or how people have taken over and reworked older objects—factories, lofts, etc. for new purposes. You are to figure out how to document this topic. Take pictures, collect recordings, find images. You must create a blog where you collect this material. You are also to develop a timeline, and think about the history of this object, where does it come from? Who developed it? What contributed to its development? No technology, building, or designed object comes from nowhere, everyone likes to version, your job is to build an archive (a creative one) and curate a history of this object. You are then to write an equivalent to a 15-20 page document about it. I am open to any creative projects or thesis projects, but you must do a fair amount of writing and research.

You are to **present** your final paper to the class in a 10-15 minute prepared presentation that will occur in the last month of class.

The paper and presentation are 35% of your grade.

4) Absences: After 4 absences, any further absence without excuse will lead to a 10% grade reduction (automatically) each time. Please don't do it. I dislike giving bad grades.

DATES THAT MATTER:

Mid-term review February 20-27th (I'll give feedback on your blogs and class performance).

Final Project Proposals due March 25

Final Projects are due May 12

Week 1 INTRODUCTION

Reyner Banham: Reyner Loves LA <https://vimeo.com/22488225>

Week 2: INTRO TO DESIGN STUDIES

Koolhaas, Rem. “Junkspace.” *October* 100, no. Spring (2002): 175-90.

Koolhaas, Delirious New York (excerpts)

ASSIGNMENT:

You are to go to a shopping mall, spend some time, half an hour or an hour, observe people, take some photos, you will be asked to upload your images into a google folder.

Recommended:

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas, Revised Edition: the Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* Cambridge: MIT Press, just the introduction

1977.[VenturiScottBrownIzenour](#)

Rittel, Horst W. J., Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning , *Policy Sciences*, 4:2 (1973:June) p.155

Deleuze and Guattari: *Thousand Plateaus*, University of Minnesota Press (1980), "How do you make Yourself a Body without Organs" chapter: [1000Plateaus06BWO](#)

Peter Sloterdijk: Introduction to the theory of Spheres 2014. Spheres. Semiotexte.

http://www.sed.man.ac.uk/research/marc/news/seminars/latour/COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB_Spheres.pdf

–"Geometry in the Colossal: The Project of Metaphysical Globalization" , *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 2009, volume 27, pp.29-42.

<http://www.envplan.com/epd/editorials/dst2.pdf>

–"The Crystal Palace" [COSMOGRAM-INTER-GB_Spheres](#)

–"The Foam City":[PSloterdijk Foam City](#)

WEEK 3: POWER, ECONOMY, AND DESIGN

Michael Foucault, "panopticism"[panopticism](#)

Orit Halpern, *Cloudy Architectures*,

<http://mobile.continentcontinent.cc/index.php/continent/article/view/205>

John Harwood, *the Interface:IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945-1976*,

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (2011) Introduction

Screening: Chaplin, "Modern Times", Screening: Harun Farocki, "Image of the World and Inscription of War"

Assignment: how is work designed today? As part of your response think about what constitutes labor in our present and pick systems to discuss—it can be your phone, facebook, gyms, think about how its "designed" to shape the body, to shape work and economy, to shape politics and society, and what types of machines help us think about ourselves in the present. Pictures etc. are always welcome if you have ideas.

RECOMMENDED:

Fredrick Winslow Taylor "The Principles of Scientific Management" (on-line)

Anson Rabinbach, "The Political Economy of Labor Power", "Time and Motion: Etienne Jules Marey and the Mechanics of the Body", "The Science of Work and the Social Question", from *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press (1990).

WEEK 4: MODERNISM???

The Futurists Manifesto by F.T. Marinetti: <http://bactra.org/T4PM/futurist-manifesto.html>

MOMA: The Bauhaus, workshops of modernity (on-line exhibition)

David Harvey, [The Condition of Post-modernity](#) (introduction)

Decolonize Design: <https://www.decolonisingdesign.com/resources/>

Frantz Fanon: On National Culture

Fanon, Frantz. "The Lived Experience of the Black Man." In *Black Skin, White Masks*, 89-119. New York: Grove Press.

Edward Said, ***Orientalism***, introduction

WEEK 5: ZONES AND TERRITORIES:

Keller Easterling: Zone: The Spatial Softwares of Extrastatecraft:
<https://placesjournal.org/article/zone-the-spatial-softwares-of-extrastatecraft/>

Eyal Weizmann, *Hollow Land*, New York: Verso (2012) excerpts

ASSIGNMENT: VISIT DCH GALLERY: Jasmina Cibic, Respond to the show in lieu of the readings.

WEEK 6: ZONES AND TERRITORIES CONTINUED: Colonialism and Decolonization

Felicity Scott: Outlaw Territories New York: Zone Press (2016). Excerpts

Mike Davis, City of Quartz excerpts.

Ant Farm, "Media Van.08 (Time Capsule) San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/multimedia/audio/aop_tour_410

TBD: Readings from special issues on Technosphere and Forensic Architecture

ASSIGNMENT: Discuss the ways you think territory is being produced in Montreal. Pick a housing complex, condo development, university, or just a park or mall and discuss how space is controlled, who is allowed in and out, how is exclusion built spatially. Discuss using examples from the last two weeks.

WEEK 7: Decolonizing Design?

Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility*, (New York: Routledge, 2007) (excerpts)

TBA

ASSIGNMENT: Visit the CCA exhibition on post-modernism and architecture to discuss the concept of the modern/architecture/ and the way ideas of architecture support ideas of progress, utopia, direction, etc.

WEEK 8: PLANETARY DESIGNS

PLEASE SKIM THROUGH "THE OPERATING MANUAL FOR SPACESHIP EARTH" Buckminster Fuller: [operatingmanual_bf](#)

Daniel Barber, The Form and Climate Research Group, or Scales of Architectural History, Avery Review, <http://averyreview.com/issues/15/the-form-and-climate-research-group>

Felicity Scott, "Securing Adjustable Climate", <http://averyreview.com/issues/16/securing-adjustable-climate>

Yuri Furuhashi: "Climactic Media"

POSSIBLE FIELDTRIPS: LaChine Canal and Port infrastructures

WEEK 9: PLANETARY DESIGNS (cont.)/LOGISTICS

Scales of the Earth, New Geographies, Harvard University Press, Issue #4, 2011.

Jennifer Gabrys, "Programmable Earth" (Excerpts)/Geo-engineering

Jesse Le Cavalier, "The Restlessness of Objects", Cabinet (2015).

RECOMMENDED:

ALL AVAILABLE FROM CCA SITE: <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/> JUST SCROLL TO THE BOTTOM

"Glimpses of Nuclear Ontario": <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/19/the-planet-is-the-client/40788/glimpses-of-nuclear-ontario>

"The Planet is the Client": <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/19/the-planet-is-the-client/40943/hostile-docile>

"From Commodity to Community": <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/19/the-planet-is-the-client/41046/from-commodity-to-community>

"Troubled Waters": <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/11/nature-reorganized/41148/troubled-waters>

Check out the projects in "The Planet is a Client": <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/19/the-planet-is-the-client/33730/how-to-make-seed-bombs>

WEEK 10: SPECULATIVE DESIGNS

Orit Halpern and Gokce Gunel, "Demoing unto Death: Smart Cities, Environment, and Preemptive Hope": <http://twentynine.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-215-demoing-unto-death-smart-cities-environment-and-preemptive-hope/>

Foster + Partners: <https://www.fosterandpartners.com/>

TBA

WEEK 11: Speculative Design (cont.)

Yuval Harari, *Homo Deus*, Introduction

Liam Cole: Automated Environments (on-line projects)

TBA

WEEK 12-15: PRESENTATIONS