

DESIGNING SMART CITIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

NMDD 3880 | COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING COURSE

CROSS LISTED: DIGITAL TECH & EMERGING MEDIA; COMM & CULTURE; URBAN STUDIES; AMERICAN STUDIES

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Smart urbanism represents the rapid integration of digital media and communication technologies into all modes of urban living as well as the reorienting of urban economies toward creative and high-tech industries. While much of smart urban rhetoric focuses on designing efficient and globally competitive cities through data-driven platforms and practices, critics argue it has led to stepped-up surveillance, discrimination, segregation, and economic inequality in urban environments. This class combines a critical introduction to the promises and perils of the smart city with a community-based project focused on designing urban technologies that promote access, empathy, and equity.

Class readings and discussions will explore the New Yorkers and neighborhoods benefiting least from the so called “gig” or “sharing” economy symbolized by digital services like Uber and AirBnB. Instead of designing new technologies for the commercial exchange of resources and services, we will ask how a smart urban design oriented towards social justice could help rework the current flows of wealth, opportunity, and privilege in New York City.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ■ In this course, students will have the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking and design skills in all course requirements.
- Develop an appreciation for, and demonstrate understanding through, oral and written discussion of key concepts and current issues relevant to big data and smart urbanism.
- Develop and demonstrate competency in analyzing issues of digital discrimination, citizenship, literacy, and access in contemporary urban design.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

[NOTE: ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS & MORE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE]

CLASS PARTICIPATION ■ 25% of final grade ■ An assessment of your class participation is made based on your contributions to in-class discussion, group work, and community-engagement. Assessment is not be based on mastery of course content but rather meaningful and consistent engagement in each of these three areas.

ITERATIVE FIELD & READING NOTES ■ 25% of final grade ■ You will keep weekly notes for the course that reflect on your ongoing engagements with the LSNC community in relation to class readings and discussions. These notes will first be constructed individually with Google Sheets and then shared using the Timeline JS program. Each week’s entry is due by the following class.

COURSE REFLECTIONS ■ 25% of final grade ■ You will complete two course reflections of at least 1,000 words each (one as midterm, one as final). Both reflections should distill the key concepts of their designated set of course readings and explore those concepts in relation to the experiences documented in your iterative field & reading notes. More detailed directions for each reflection will be discussed in class and posted to the course site.

PARTICIPATORY PROJECT ■ 25% of final grade ■ The class, in collaboration with the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, will design a series of hands-on workshops that address digital needs expressed by LSNC patrons. The project’s scope, course of action, distribution of labor, and timeline will be negotiated as a group and with our community partners.

COURSE SCHEDULE

[THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE DUE TO THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT'S TIMELINE]

LEGEND:

● READ BY CLASS TIME

○ SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

WEEK 1: TUE, JAN 15 - INTRO TO DSC4SJ

- Bodin, Madeline (2017). [Driving the Smart, Just City](#). Planning Magazine.
- Karasti, Helena. (2010). "Participant Interventionist: Researcher Role Integrating Ethnography and Participatory Design." Proceedings of the 3rd Qualitative Research Conference.
- Detroit Digital Justice Coalition: <http://detroitdjc.org/>

WEEK 2: TUE, JAN 22 - CONNECTING 'SMART' URBANISM WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

- Albino, V., Berardi, U., and Dangelico, R.M. (2015). Smart Cities: Definitions, Dimensions, Performance, and Initiatives. *Journal of Urban Technology* (22)1.
- Rios, Jodi. (2012). "Reconsidering the Margin: Relationships of Difference and Transformative Education" from [Service-Learning in Design and Planning: Educating at the Boundaries](#). 39-54.
- Mitchell, Tania, Donahue, D.M, and Young-Law, C. (2012). "Service-Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness." *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(4). 612-629.
- Mattern, Shannon. (2016). *Instrumental City: The View from Hudson Yards*, circa 2019. *Places Journal*.
- Tabarrok, A. and Rajagopalan, S. (2015). *Designing Private Cities, Open to All*. The New York Times.
- Hudson Yards Redevelopment: <http://hudsonyardsnewyork.com/the-story/new-west-side>

WEEK 3: TUE, JAN 29 - GUEST SPEAKER / LSNC ORIENTATION

WEEK 4: TUE, FEB 4 - THE URBAN (PLAT)FORM

- Lefebvre, Henri. (2003). "Urban Form" from [The Urban Revolution](#). New York: Verso. 115-133.
- Sassen, Saskia. (2006). "Reading the City in a Global Digital Age: The Limits of Topographic Representation." *Selected Papers of Beijing Forum*.
- Glascock, Taylor. (2015) "[The Internet Lives in a Huge Hotel in Manhattan](#)" *The Atlantic*.
- Kitchin, Rob. (2014). "Conceptualizing Data" from [The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and Their Consequences](#). Sage.
- ➔ DUE: Field Notes Check-In

WEEK 5: TUE, FEB 11 - UNEVEN URBAN DEVELOPMENT (I) (SNOW DAY - MOVED TO WEEK 6)

- Harvey, David. (2015). "Uneven Geographical Developments and the Production of Space" from [Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism](#). Oxford University Press.
- Schiller, Dan. (2014). "Network Connectivity and Labor Systems" from [Digital Depression: Information Technology and the Economic Crisis](#). University of Illinois Press.
- Sebastian, Clare. (2019). "[Amazon HQ2 incentives ignite backlash](#)." CNN Business.

WEEK 6: TUE, FEB 19 - NO CLASS (MONDAY SCHEDULE)

WEEK 7: TUE, FEB 26 - UNEVEN URBAN DEVELOPMENT (II)

- Browne, Simone. (2015). "Everybody's Got a Little Light Under the Sun: The Making of the Book of Negroes" from Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness. Duke University Press.
- Delany, Samuel. (2003). "... 3, 2, 1, Contact." Queer Ideas: The Kessler Lectures in Lesbian & Gay Studies. The Feminist Press.
- Sebastian, Clare. (2019). "[Amazon HQ2 incentives ignite backlash](#)." CNN Business.
- Huber, Linda. (2016). "Is New York City's Public Wi-Fi Actually Connecting the Poor?" Vice.

WEEK 8: TUE, MAR 5 - DESIGNING FOR JUSTICE

- Foulkes, Julia L. (2007). "The Other West Side Story: Urbanization and the Arts Meet at Lincoln Center." Amerikastudien. 52 (2).
- Datta, Ayona. (2015). "New urban utopias of postcolonial India: 'Entrepreneurial urbanization' in Dholera smart city, Gujarat." Dialogues in Human Geography.
- Red Hook WiFi: <https://redhookwifi.org/>

WEEK 9: TUE, MAR 12 - IN-CLASS WORKSHOP

- ➔ DUE: Field Notes Check-In (BY CLASS TIME)
- ➔ DUE: Midterm Course Reflection (BY CLASS TIME)

SPRING BREAK: TUE, MAR 19 - NO CLASS

WEEK 10: TUE, MAR 26 - CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGIES & ONTOLOGIES (I)

- Fine, Michelle. (2006). Bearing Witness: Methods for Researching Oppression and Resistance--A Textbook for Critical Research. Social Justice Research 19 (1): 83-108.
- Kirchner, Lauren. (2015). When Discrimination Is Baked Into Algorithms. The Atlantic.
- Researchers for Fair Policing: <http://researchersforfairpolicing.org>
- ➔ DUE: DiscoTech Proposals

WEEK 11: TUE, APR 2 - CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGIES & ONTOLOGIES (II)

- Agnieszka Leszczynski, and Sarah Elwood, Sarah and . (2014). "Feminist Geographies of New Spatial Media" The Canadian Geographer, 59 (1): 12-28.
- Donovan, Gregory. (2014). "Opening Proprietary Ecologies: Participatory Action Design Research with Young People" from Methodological Challenges When Exploring Digital Learning Spaces in Education. Sense.

WEEK 12: TUE, APR 9 - PLATFORM COOPERATIVISM

- Selections from Ours to Hack and to Own:
 - Cherry, Miriam. (2016). Legal and Governance Structures Built to Share.
 - Gregory, Karen. (2016). Can Code Schools Go Cooperative?
 - Shah, Palak. (2016). A Code for Good Work

WEEK 13: TUE, APR 16 - 'SMART' REPRODUCTION

- Katz, Cindi. (2008). "Me and My Monkey: What's Hiding in the Security State." from Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State. Routledge.
- Burns, Ryan and Max Andrucki. (2019). Smart Cities. Who Cares?
- Spigel, Lynn. (2005). Designing the Smart House: Posthuman Domesticity and Conspicuous Production." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.
- Meriwether, K. (2014). How Bright is the Smart Schools Bond Act? *The Gotham Gazette*.
- ➔ DUE: Field Notes Check-In

WEEK 14: TUE, APR 23 - CITIZEN SENSING

- Gabrys, Jennifer. (2008). Programming Environments: Environmentality and Citizen Sensing in the Smart City. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32(1).
- Barns, Sara. (2016). Mine Your Data: Open Data, Digital Strategies and Entrepreneurial Governance by Code. *Urban Geography* 37(4).
- Scheiber, Noam. (2017). How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers' Buttons. *New York Times*.

WEEK 15: TUE, APR 30 - IN-CLASS WORKSHOP

- ➔ DUE: Planning, Promotion, Community Input, and Distribution of Labor for each DiscoTech.

FINAL EXAM PERIOD - TUE, MAY 7 @ 1:30PM

- ➔ DUE: Final Course Reflection
- ➔ DUE: Collaborative Project Archive