

Course: Space, Design, Everyday Practice
Faculty: Jilly Traganou

Who makes space? Does space consist only of designed artifacts? What role does collective imagination play in the way we perceive spaces close and remote? How local is the space we inhabit in our daily reality? How can you as a user, activist, artist or designer participate in the shaping of spaces that matter: the design of your local library, the revitalization of public spaces, the planning of a refugee camp? The class will ask such questions emphasizing the intertwined notions of production, consumption, appropriation and imagination in local and global spatial politics. Addressing multiple spatial scales from those of interior and architecture to urban and wider geographical spaces, the course will scrutinize the role of various stakeholders in processes of spatial production and use: politicians, planners, architects, designers, builders, residents, tourists, marketers, journalists and activists. The course will emphasize spatial issues that emerge in the process of globalization, particularly as they are shaped by conditions of intense demographic mobility, global media circulation, environmental degradation, and weakening of the nation-state on one hand, but also a rise in trans-national and activist initiatives that aim at counterbalancing the effect of top-down strategies and acts. Class topics will include: spatial identity and notions of multiple belonging taking as a case study New York and its multi-cultural neighborhoods; architecture and media-spaces for global mega-events (such as the Olympic Games) as a means of shaping local and global identities; restructuring of Beijing's urban space and its effect on China and the world; reclaiming of public spaces by activist artists/designers and communities of interest after processes of privatization that drained public spaces from their democratic potential; urban and territorial activism by multi-disciplinary groups such as CUP (New York) and Stalker (Italy). Students will be assessed based on writing assignments and project-based inquiries. The readings of the class will include texts by Henri Lefebvre, Michel De Certeau, Arjun Appadurai, Anthony Appiah, Mike Davis, and others.