Course Description:
How did our urban landscape evolve? How can we understand it? What are its problems? How can we solve them? This course is concerned with these questions.

The urban landscape occupies a unique and privileged place in our cultural experience. As a cultural and aesthetic artifact, the urban landscape may be regarded as the vision a society projects about itself into the future. This course considers the forces that have given shape to the urban landscape as it has evolved in modern, industrialized cities over the course of the 20th century. We consider how the ideas of urban planners and architects, the needs of capital, the constraints of the environment, and the actions of differently positioned urban subjects collide to shape urban space. Our task is thus to learn to “read” urban space in the context of social relations and political economies.

The first half of the course examines the development of the modernist and postmodern city through the 20th century, both downtown and in the suburbs. Then the course shifts to considering contemporary notions of “placemaking” and “urban design” as remedies to the failures of the modernist city—social, economic, architectural, and environmental. The notion that altering the physical city to solve apparent social problems will be discussed in light of Toronto case studies.

Requirements and Grading:
Students are expected to participate in class discussions. There will be one mid-term test (short definitions and multiple-choice questions) and two short essays (250 words), and a 2-hour comprehensive exam scheduled during the examination period.

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term test</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Short essays (15+15)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toronto case study</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Note: Penalty for late assignments is 5% of the earned grade for each day late (incl. Sat & Sun.)
Reading Materials:

[1] The following required course book is available for purchase at the Toronto Women’s Bookstore [73 Harbord St., just West of Spadina].


[2] A course reader, containing other required readings for the course, will be available as a photocopied reader from the Canadian Scholars’ Press [180 Bloor Street W, suite 801; order at info@cspi.org].

The reader is also on reserve at the Gerstein Library, King’s College Circle. The

Course Outline and Readings:

Week 1 (Jan. 6): Reading the Urban Landscape: A View From the ‘Future’

Excerpts, Blade Runner.

Week 2 (Jan. 13): The Making of the Modernist City I: The Invention of Town Planning


Week 3 (Jan 20): The Making of the Modernist City II: Architecture as Revolution?


***** Film: Writing on the Wall *****
Week 4 (Jan 27):  The Tragedy of the Modernist City


***** Film: New York: A Documentary *****

Week 5 (Feb. 3):  The Postmodern Urban Landscape


***** Film: Reinventing the City: New York and Los Angeles *****

***** Essay #1 due *****

Week 6 (Feb. 10):  Toronto Case Studies & Test


***** Short test *****

READING WEEK: FEB. 14-18

Week 7 (Feb 24):  Suburbs, Urban Renewal and the Segregated City


Doloros Hayden, “What Would a Non-sexist City Be Like?” in The City Reader, 142-57.


***** Film: Bleeker Street *****

Week 8 (Mar 3): New Urbanism

The Charter of the New Urbanism (on course website)


***** Essay #2 due *****

Week 9 (Mar 10): Nature in the Metropolis


Week 10 (Mar. 17): Reclaiming Public Places


***** Film: Social Life of Small Urban Spaces *****
Week 11 (Mar 24) &  Toronto Case Study Presentations
Week 12 (March 31)

***** Written reports due beginning of class, March 24 *****

Week 13 (April 7): Planning the Just City


Summary of the City of Toronto's Official Plan, 2002 (on Course Website)


Kanishka Goonewardena and Adrian Blackwell, “Poverty of Planning: Tent City and the New Official Plan” (on Course Website).
This course intends to discuss these different aspects of the urban landscape through a combination of lectures, discussions, films and readings. The course is divided into three parts: First, we will explore key theoretical texts on cities. Here we explore the relationship between cities, bodies, everyday life and modernity with the aim of understanding cities as places of contradictions and possibilities. Second, we will look at visions of modern planning, the ideologies, discourses and violence underlying them. And third, we look at a few contemporary texts that explore cities as spaces for