ARC 597: BLOW-UP: Scale, Spectacle & Spontaneity in Architecture
Fall Semester 2015
Credit Hours: 3
Class Hours: Thursday, 10am-12:40pm
Instructor: Jordan Geiger
Eligibility: Graduate Students + Undergraduates with advanced standing by permission of the instructor
Course Website: http://cast.b-ap.net/arc597f15/

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A photographed murder scene. A bubble for social gathering. An urban shield. These all share a fascination over the last decades with spontaneous constructions: spaces and situations created often with the help of new media and new technological innovations. But these also respond to new social problems, new ecological crises, new desires for self-governance. This seminar will examine a recent history of "abrupt architectures" and "sudden cities," to understand our current moment's engagement with media and building technologies in architecture and in urbanism. Modern conceptions of time-space - as they engage relativity, speed, communications, rapid prototyping - help to discuss an evolving history of architecture and situated technologies.

This history connects equally to architecture discourse (in the writings of figures such as Siegfried Giedion and Reyner Banham) to media theory (Benjamin, McLuhan) and other fields. The course will therefore draw on a wide range of readings and also video screenings from primary and secondary sources in fields including architecture, media study, art, computer science, philosophy and more. We will consider case studies in design as much for their deployment in space and time as for their physical and formal properties. The seminar will offer core texts for the study of architecture and situated technologies, but for students who enrolled in last fall's "On Speed," the course will accommodate with new group work to supplement repeat material.

Course Work:

Reading Responses:

Each week, you are to write and post to the course website a short response to the assigned readings, very briefly summarizing your understanding of the main arguments and more importantly offering your own personal response to the ideas therein; how the various voices in the week's readings respond to one another; or other issues that you deem noteworthy and may be the foundation for in-class discussions that week.

One-Week Leadership:

At four points during the semester, 4 students will collaboratively prepare a larger presentation and leadership of the week's discussions, after which results will be written and carefully archived into the course website.

This part of your work enables you to work collaboratively, to each write a short form essay, to verbally guide class discussion, and - importantly - to delve much more deeply than usual into a particular topic. You will be supplied with additional readings for this week and are expected to carefully read and prepare to present these back to the group, so that the class readings are better contextualized for everyone.

Final Paper:

Your principle work output for the semester will be one final paper, the focus of which is synthetic and interpretive of the reading content. At the final class session, each student will present for 5 minutes the content and argument of the proposed paper and solicit feedback. The final paper is to be approximately 6000 words in length (double spaced) plus footnotes and bibliography, correctly formatted and due December 17 to the instructor via email.

General Requirements

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to attend the full length of all classes, turn in all assignments, and participate in weekly discussions. Students are responsible for obtaining all hand-outs, information, and notes provided in class. Three tardy arrivals (5 minutes after class begins) will equal one absence. Students who are habitually late or absent from three or more classes will receive a failing grade. If more than one class is missed due to illness you must submit written verification from a physician and notify professor via e-mail or in writing immediately. Written medical documents must be submitted within two weeks of an absence. During class, turn off cell phones, etc. Computers may only be used for in-class presentations. Web surfing or emailing during class is unacceptable.

Grading:

The final grade for the course will be determined by evaluation in the following areas:

In-Class Participation 20%
Reading Responses 5%
One-Week Leadership: 25%
Final Paper: 50%

Students are expected to read all assigned texts and be prepared to discuss them in class. All papers, assignments, and presentations must be completed on time and in full. Written assignments must be handed in typed, double-spaced, and spell-checked with complete references (footnotes, bibliography, illustrations) formatted according to a writing manual of style. There will be no make-up presentations. There will be a penalty that is equivalent to one-half letter grade per day for any work submitted late.

Measurement of Student Performance:

A 93-100 A Clearly stands out as excellent performance
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86 B Grasps subject matter at a level considered to be good to very good
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76 C Demonstrates a satisfactory comprehension of the subject matter
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 60-66 D Quality and quantity of work is below average, marginally acceptable
Failing 59- F Quality and quantity of work is below average and not acceptable

Academic Integrity:

Students are reminded of University Policy regarding Academic Integrity, as stated in the University at Buffalo Undergraduate Catalog 2005-2006:

"The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect for others' academic endeavors. By placing their name on academic work, students certify originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments."
This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following: Students should not cheat on exams. Students should not submit previously completed work as original work. Students should not submit work done for one class to fulfill the requirements of another course without the permission of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Subject to change.

NOTE:
In addition to the weekly schedule below, it is urged that you attend all of the events in the school's calendar of public programs. These will be posted around school, online, and in emails from the administration. Please mark this summary schedule into your calendars today:

September 11
Anderson Gallery
      Eliel & Eero Saarinen: Kleinhans Music Hall
      Exhibition
September 30
      Young Candy
      Liam Young, Tomorrows Thoughts Today and Princeton School of Architecture &
      Stuart Candy, Situation Lab and OCAD University
October 9
      Juhani Pallasmaa, Architect
October 14
      McKim
      McLain Clutter, Master of None and University of Michigan &
      Janette Kim, All of the Above and Syracuse University
October 14 / 7pm
Library Gallery
      McLain Clutter, Hacking Geodemography
      Exhibition Opening
October 21
      Mich'uis
      Michelle Fornabai, Artist-Architect &
      Luis Suárez Mansilla, Suárez Santos Arquitectos, Bilbao
October 26-30
      The Clarkson Chair in Planning: Todd Swanstrom, University of Missouri-St. Louis
November 9 / 6pm
Greatbatch Pavilion
      Martino Stierli, MoMA NYC
November 18 / 6pm
Library Gallery
      Exhibition Launch & Discussion:
      New Faculty Books, with Iker Gil, MAS Context and MAS Studio, Chicago

Week	Date	Topic / Readings & Assignments [Screenings]
1	September 3	**Introductions** / Situated Technologies; Scale, Spectacle and Spontaneity [Charlie Chaplin, Modern Times]
2	September 10	**Research and "Space-Time"** / Kazys Varnelis, Is there research in the studio? Javier Arbona, The Rise of the DARists Siegfried Giedion, Excerpts "Space-Time," from Space, Time and Architecture, and "Movement," from Mechanization Takes Command

3   September 17   **Media** /
Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction
Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Message

4   September 24   **Feedback: Cybernetics** /
Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics in History
Gordon Pask, The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics
Stafford Beer, The Disregarded Tools of Modern Man

5   October 1   **Dromology: Paul Virilio** /
1977: Unable Bodies, from Speed and Politics
1984: The Overexposed City, from The Lost Dimension
2012: Excerpts, from The Administration of Fear

6   October 8   **Situations and Spectacles** /
Guy Debord, Excerpts from The Society of the Spectacle
Guy Debord, Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation
Lucy Suchman, Preface and Situated Actions, from Plans and Situated Actions

7   October 15   **Pervasive Computing** / **+ GROUP 1 WEEK'S LEADERSHIP**
Mark Weiser, The Computer for the 21st Century
Anthony Dunne, The Electronic as Post-Optimal Object

ₙ **GROUP 1 Reads and Introduces:**
Interactivity
JCR Licklider, Man-Computer Symbiosis
Myron Krueger, Responsive Environments
Nicholas Negroponte, Architecture Machine

8   October 22   **Consciousness** /
Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"
Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "The Railway Journey"
(Recommended: Sanford Kwinter, "The Singular and the Complex")

[EVENING SCREENING: Michelangelo Antonioni, BLOW-UP]

9   October 29   **Body** / **+ GROUP 2 WEEK'S LEADERSHIP**
Manfred Clynes & Nathan Kline, "Cyborgs and Space"
Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"
Willliam J. Mitchell, "Wireless Bipeds"

ₙ **GROUP 2 Reads and Introduces:**
N. Katharine Hayles, Excerpts from How We Became Posthuman

10   November 5   **Bubbles** /
P. Reyner Banham, "A Home is not a House"
Felicity Scott, "Blow-Up"
Hadas Steiner, "Bubbles: The Triumph of Software"
Buckminster Fuller, Scientific Dwelling Service, from Nine Chains to the Moon
(Recommended: Ant Farm, Inflatocookbook)

[Ant Farm, Media Burn]

11 November 12 **Mobs** / **+ GROUP 3 WEEK'S LEADERSHIP**
Howard Rheingold, Smart Mobs: The Power of the Mobile Many, from Smart Mobs
Jordan Geiger, Entr'acte
Anthony Townsend, The Real Social Life of Wireless Public Spaces

    ₊ **GROUP 3 Reads and Introduces:**
        Elias Canetti, Excerpts from Crowds and Power
        Critical Art Ensemble, Electronic Civil Disobedience

                [William Whyte, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces]

12 November 19 **World** / **+ GROUP 4 WEEK'S LEADERSHIP**
Laura Kurgan, "Representation and the Necessity of Interpretation"
Benjamin Bratton, "Cloud Megastructures and Platform Utopias"
(Recommended: Keller Easterling, "Zone")

    ₊ **GROUP 4 Reads and Introduces: BIG AND LARGE**
        Rem Koolhaas, Bigness, or the problem of Large
        Jordan Geiger, Niagora

                [Eames Office, Powers of Ten]
            [BONUS EVENING SCREENING: The Truman Show]

13 Thanksgiving

14 December 3 **Final Presentations**