

	<b>UD 601</b>	<b>Studio I: Introduction to Methods &amp; Techniques</b>
<b>Fall 2006</b>		

**Credits:** 5  
**Type of Course:** Design Studio  
**Class Meetings:** Mondays and Thursdays  
**Prerequisites:** See Bulletin  
**Enrollment Capacity:** 12  
**Instructor:** Meta Brunzema, tel. (212) 643 0218, email: mbrunzem@pratt.edu  
**Time and Location:** 2 p.m. to 5:20 p.m., Higgins Hall Center, 2nd floor mezzanine

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#### **Course Overview:**

This course focuses on the methods and techniques for analysis of urban areas. The assignments involve site visits, the development of land use, transportation conditions and image maps and the studies of the constraints and opportunities for change. A format is then established for categorizing the issues affecting life and business in an area and then isolating the problems, developing alternate improvements or solutions and weighing the benefits and costs from varying points-of-view.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Develop critical perspectives on key contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political factors which play a role in the city's evolution.
- Understand a range of flexible and responsive developmental mechanisms, design controls, tools, and non-reductive mapping and implementation techniques critical to developing design methods affecting change in cities over time. Learn to use interactive digital design and research tools in a critical manner.
- Gain urban design and research skills by developing a studio project for a New York City site.
- Learn collaborative planning and design skills

#### **Course Requirements:**

- Students will need to complete their assignments and projects.
- Attendance, lively participation and collaborative attitude in class are mandatory.
- More than two unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the class.

#### **Methods of Assessment/Grades:**

Grades will range from A to F based on:

- Quality, timely completion and originality of final project 60%
- Project development during semester 20%
- Performance - graphic and verbal - at desk critiques and reviews 20%

Pratt Institute School of Architecture  
Graduate Architecture & Urban Design Program  
**Semester Schedule: UD 601 – Fall 2006** (page2)

- Week 1            8/28 & 8/31
- Studio presentations /selection (8/28)
  - Introduction to Studio and Project #1- site visit: dumbo (8/31).
- Week 2            (9/4 Labor Day - no class) & 9/7
- Mini-lecture/ discussion & Review of bridge analysis (9/7)
- Week 3            9/11 & 9/14 Mini-lecture: Urban Economic development mechanisms (9/11)
- Pin-up requirement: (9/14)
- Week 4            9/18 & 9/21
- Possible meeting with Local reps. and desk critiques
  - Mini-lecture: Urban Social / Cultural issues (9/21)
- Week 5            9/25 & 9/28
- Pin-up with guest critics – Exercise 2 (9/28)
    - Requirements: concept & program diagrams/ model, site plan & sections 1/16"=1'-0",
    - Plans, sections, elevations 1/8"=1'-0"
- Week 6            10/2 & 10/5
- Desk critiques.
- Week 7            10/9 & 10/12
- Desk critiques.
- Week 8            10/16 & 10/19
- Mid-term review with guest critics (10/19) - Exercises 1,2 and 3
    - Requirements: concept & program diagrams/ model, site plan & sections 1/16"=1'-0",
    - Plans, sections, elevations & 3-D rendering or model 1/8"=1'-0"
- Week 9            10/23 & 10/26
- Desk critiques.
- Week 10           10/30 & 11/2
- Desk critiques.
- Week 11           11/6 & 11/9
- Desk critiques.
- Week 12           11/13 & 11/16
- Desk critiques; Pin-up with guest critics – Exercise 4 (11/16).
- Week 13           11/20 & (11/23 Thanksgiving - no class)
- Desk critiques.
- Week 14           11/27 & 11/30
- Desk critiques.
- Week 15           Final review week – review TBD
- Final review with guest critics (TBD)
    - Requirements: concept & program diagrams/ model, site plan & sections 1/16"=1'-0",
    - Plans, sections, elevations & 3-D model 1/4"=1'-0" – MSPowerPoint & booklet

Fall 2006

UD 601 Studio I: Introduction to Methods & Techniques

Instructor: Meta Brunzema

*“The city, if this term is still to hold any meaning, should be considered a vibrant manifestation of constructive and deconstructive energies...”*  
(Peter Lang, *Urban Ecology, Detroit and Beyond*, 2005)

### **Studio abstract**

This Urban Design studio will look at Brooklyn’s East River Waterfront to investigate relationships between urbanism, infrastructure, and ecology within a spatial/political framework. In an effort to create legible spatial and social organizations that serve human and ecological diversity in new ways, we will become urban opportunists – mediating, orchestrating, and re-organizing the urban waterfront fabric.

Urban Design, now more than ever, must become a part of consequential, political imagination.

### **Urban Waterfront issues**

Urban waterfront sites - in most parts of the developed world - are areas of great complexity and multiple conflicts. Along the waterfront, the rapid decline of the industrial era has prompted a debate over property, control and allocation of social and recreational resources. 20<sup>th</sup> century public infrastructures, such as ports, bridges, highways, housing projects have created a striated environment which limits urban connectivity - and cause the formation of segregated social and economic areas. In addition, this debate is intertwined with environmental questions over the threats and potentials of the coastal environment in a post-Katrina era. In light of these issues and looking to the future, the organization of urban coastal areas needs to be re-examined.

### **The Dumbo/Vinegar Hill setting**

The *dumbo improvement district’s* recent initiative to improve, re-connect and market the DUMBO area will provide a framework for the studio work. We will critically look at both sides of the Manhattan Bridge. Here, one can recognize a number of pertinent urban waterfront issues:

The Dumbo/Vinegar Hill area has severe environmental problems, ranging from low air quality and extensive flooding. The scale of both the industrial buildings and the massive bridge and tunnel infrastructure limits urban flows and connectivity. In addition, the high-priced real estate in Dumbo has led to loss in social diversity – which (ironically) has prompted the property owners to offer low-cost art gallery and performance spaces to artists. In a pattern that can also be recognized on waterfronts worldwide, shrinking and growing communities live side by side – increasing the social and economic divide.

However, the presence of extensive publicly-owned bridge and highway infrastructure as well as fragments of publicly owned lands offer an unparalleled opportunity for diversifying and transforming the area and creating new kinds of urban configurations.

The “Bridge Park II” as well as other sites along the Manhattan Bridge will serve to test our new urban models.

Fall 2006	UD 601 Studio I: Introduction to Methods & Techniques
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At the beginning of the semester there will be a series of “mini-lectures/ discussions”. The topics will touch on the key regulatory and political factors that shape urban design in a metropolitan setting like New York City. See semester schedule.

### Methods & Techniques

*“...the world is a plural condition; there is no one world ...Not one, but many segregated worlds...”*  
(Keller Easterling, *enduring innocence- global architecture and its political masquerades*, 2005)

Rather than separating the elements of the City into stratified layers or using a technical filter, we will look at the City as a series of dynamic socio-political constructs in which space and politics are intertwined. Urban design is never neutral; this semester we will use several “lenses” to analyze and redefine the urban fabric:

1) To generate potential and connectivity between site, form and materiality we will use contemporary mapping and analytical techniques – using dynamic computer modeling, Geographic Information Systems, and satellite photography. Instead of focusing on representations of morphological elements or graphic abstractions of the city, we will use an ecological approach that redefines the distinctions between natural and man-made constructs:

We will examine and model urban water systems and test their efficiency and constraints. Its agents and organizers are property owners and public infrastructure providers.

In an effort to create a new way of classifying and manipulating urban form, we will also examine materiality and the institutions that organize and distribute it. Brick, stone, glass etc... can be examined at many levels...in their assembled state...or in various states of decay, as molecular elements or energy systems...Its agents are the development, construction, deconstruction and transportation industries.

2) To engage the social/ political context, we will look at a new role for the public property. The idea is to expand the role of publicly owned sites, (i.e. like “Bridge Park II”) to absorb and mediate urban pressures, making them engines for new social and material organizations.

### **Exercise 1** Non-reductive Analysis - (1 week) group project

Create a non-reductive analysis of the Manhattan Bridge. It is a publicly owned infrastructure which both connects and divides the area. Understand it as a transitory and multivalent space – an aggregate of shifting scales (neighborhood, city, and region) as well as a historical, spatial and political construct. Rather than registering what we already know about the site, document the unfamiliar - fluid reciprocities and interlocking events - the dynamics of stakeholders and agents of control.

Fall 2006

UD 601 Studio I: Introduction to Methods & Techniques

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## **Methods & Techniques (cont'd)**

### **Exercise 2** Ecologies

Create a new dynamic site plan for the Dumbo and Vinegar hill area. Show how the city reorganizes itself as it responds to an infinite number of economic, social and environmental pressures.

Rather than documenting the site with categorical distinctions such as use, building type, block morphology, infrastructure etc... we will use an ecological approach to the documentation. Both fluid and solid elements of the City will be understood as interrelated systems generating and dispensing energy and waste.

- A) urban water systems (natural and man-made watersheds)
- B) urban material systems (brick, stone, steel in various states of assembly and decay...)

How can you reorganize these large assemblages of "stuff"??

### **Exercise 3** Control systems

Create a political map of Dumbo and Vinegar hill area that shows the patterns of ownership and control as they relate to building use and density. Evaluate the potential for future development and demolition. Who owns what here? What are the pressures on the land? Document and analyze the cost benefits of subsidized and spaces. How is "artsy cultural neighborhood" myth upheld??

### **Exercise 4** Catalysts & Mediators

In this phase, the students will examine how to precisely intervene in the design process itself. We will be looking at self imposed design constraints that will allow us to re-assemble and re-organize the material documented in the previous exercises. Here the goal would be to mediate the social, economic and environmental stratification using the publicly owned sites near the Manhattan Bridge and to create a more diverse and equitable environment.

## **Bibliography**

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- Mostafavi, Mohsen et.al. ed.; "Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape" AA Public.,2004
- Shane, David Grahame; "Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modeling in Architecture, Urban Design and City Theory", Wiley & Sons, 2005
- Waldheim, Charles ed.; "The Landscape Urbanism Reader" Princeton Architectural Press, 2006