URBAN STUDIES (URBN)

URBN 160a / ARCH 160a, Introduction to Urban Studies  Elihu Rubin
An introduction to key topics, research methods, and practices in urban studies, an interdisciplinary field of inquiry and action rooted in the experience of cities. As physical artifacts, the advent of large cities have reflected rapid industrialization and advanced capitalism. They are inseparable from the organization of economic life; the flourishing of cultures; and the formation of identities. They are also places where power is concentrated and inequalities are (re)produced. Debates around equity are filtered through urban environments, where struggles over jobs, housing, education, mobility, public health, and public safety are front and center. The course is organized as a colloquium with numerous guests. Accessible entirely online, there will also be live, in-person events, with social distancing and face masks/shields, available to students in New Haven.  HU, SO

URBN 200b / ARCH 200b, Scales of Design  Bimal Mendis
Exploration of architecture and urbanism at multiple scales from the human to the world. Consideration of how design influences and shapes the material and conceptual spheres through four distinct subjects: the human, the building, the city, and the world. Examination of the role of architects, as designers, in constructing and shaping the inhabited and urban world. Lectures, readings, reviews and four assignments that address the spatial and visual ramifications of design. Not open to first-year students. Required for all Architecture majors.  HU

URBN 280b / AMST 197b / ARCH 280b / HSAR 219b, American Architecture and Urbanism  Elihu Rubin
Introduction to the study of buildings, architects, architectural styles, and urban landscapes, viewed in their economic, political, social, and cultural contexts, from precolonial times to the present. Topics include: public and private investment in the built environment; the history of housing in America; the organization of architectural practice; race, gender, ethnicity and the right to the city; the social and political nature of city building; and the transnational nature of American architecture.  HU

URBN 304b / AFAM 164b / PLSC 263b, The Politics of "The Wire": HBO's Portrayal of the American City  Allison Harris
This class uses HBO's groundbreaking series "The Wire" to investigate cities, their problems, and their politics. We watch all five seasons of the show as social scientists and use it to learn about important social scientific concepts and theories, and apply those theories to such phenomena as the politics of crime, policing, and local elections. Each week, the assigned readings — articles and book excerpts from political science as well as other social sciences — highlight the social scientific concepts displayed in the assigned episodes and provide context for lectures. All of the assignments work together to expose students to social science, how social science is conducted, and how political science can help us better understand the world around us.  SO

* URBN 314b / ARCH 314b, History of Landscape in Western Europe and the United States: Antiquity to 1950  Warren Fuermann
This course is designed as an introductory survey of the history of landscape architecture and the wider, cultivated landscape in Western Europe and the United States from the Ancient Roman period to mid-twentieth century America. Included in the lectures, presented chronologically, are the gardens of Ancient Rome, medieval Europe, the early and late Italian Renaissance, 17th century France, 18th century Britain, 19th century Britain and America with its public and national parks, and mid-twentieth century America. The course focuses each week on one of these periods, analyzes in detail iconic gardens of the period, and places them within their historical and theoretical context.  HU, RP

* URBN 327a / ARCH 327a, Difference and the City  Justin Moore
Four hundred and odd years after colonialism and racial capitalism brought twenty and odd people from Africa to the dispossessed indigenous land that would become the United States, the structures and systems that generate inequality and white supremacy persist. Our cities and their socioeconomic and built environments continue to exemplify difference. From housing and health to mobility and monuments, cities small and large, north and south, continue to demonstrate intractable disparities. The disparate impacts made apparent by the COVID-19 pandemic and the reinvigorated and global Black Lives Matter movement demanding change are remarkable. Change, of course, is another essential indicator of difference in urban environments, exemplified by the phenomena of disinvestment or gentrification. This course explores how issues like climate change and growing income inequality intersect with politics, culture, gender equality, immigration and migration, technology, and other considerations and forms of disruption.  HU

URBN 341b / ARCH 341b / GLBL 253b / LAST 318b, Globalization Space  Keller Easterling
Infrastructure space as a primary medium of change in global policy. Networks of trade, energy, communication, transportation, spatial products, finance, management, and labor, as well as new strains of political opportunity that reside within their spatial disposition. Case studies include free zones and automated ports around the world, satellite urbanism in South Asia, high-speed rail in Japan and the Middle East, agripoles in southern Spain, fiber optic submarine cable in East Africa, spatial products of tourism in North Korea, and management platforms of the International Organization for Standardization.  HU

URBN 345a / ARCH 345a, Civic Art: Introduction to Urban Design  Alan Plattus
Introduction to the history, analysis, and design of the urban landscape. Principles, processes, and contemporary theories of urban design; relationships between individual buildings, groups of buildings, and their larger physical and cultural contexts. Case studies from New Haven and other world cities.  HU
A methods seminar in urban field geography. Traveling on foot, students engage in on-site study of architecture, urban planning and design, cultural landscapes, and spatial patterns in the city. Learn how to “read” the urban landscape, the intersection of forces that have produced the built environment over time.  

*URBN 353a / ARCH 353a, Urban Lab: Urban Field Geography*  
Elihu Rubin

Understanding the urban environment through methods of research, spatial analysis, and diverse means of representation that address historical, social, political, and environmental issues that consider design at the scale of the entire world. Through timelines, maps, diagrams, collages and film, students frame a unique spatial problem and speculate on urbanization at the global scale. Prerequisites: For non-majors: permission of the instructor is required. For ARCH majors: ARCH 150, 200, and 280.  

*URBN 360b / ARCH 360b, Urban Lab: An Urban World*  
Staff

This seminar introduces and explores Black, indigenous, and other historically marginalized modes of cultural production—collectively referred to here as “fugitive practices.” The course confronts the erasure (and re-centering) of these modes by rethinking the episteme of architecture—questioning history, planning, and urbanism—but also of the body, the design of objects, and making. Modes of sociocultural and aesthetic production explored in the course may include: improvisation in jazz, hip-hop and social dance; textiles of the Modern African Diaspora and indigenous peoples; informal economies; ingenuity in vernacular architecture; and others. The course is structured around seven two-week “modules,” each containing a seminar discussion, a design exercise, and a short written accompaniment. It is conducted in collaboration with a parallel seminar being offered by faculty at Howard University.  

*URBN 414b / ARCH 354b, New York as Incubator of 20th-Century Urbanism: Four Urban Thinkers and the City They Envisioned*  
Joan Ockman

Cities have always been hotbeds of radical ideas and actions. Their cafes and taverns, drawing rooms and universities have been incubators of new ideas, revolutionary ideologies and debate, while their streets and public spaces have been the sites of demonstrations, protests, and uprisings. Since cities are key nodes in larger networks of trade and cultural exchange, these local events have often had a global audience and impact. This seminar explores the interaction of urban space and event, and the media and technologies of revolutionary representation, through case studies of particular cities at transformational moments in their development. These begin with Boston in the 1760s and 1770s, and may include Paris in 1789, 1830, 1848, 1871 and again in 1968, St. Petersburg in 1917, Beijing in 1949 and again in 1989, Havana in 1959, Prague, Berlin and Johannesburg and other cities in 1989, Cairo in 2011, Hong Kong in 2011-12, with Boston in the 1760s and 1770s, and may include Paris in 1789, 1830, 1848, 1871 and again in 1968, St. Petersburg in 1917, Beijing in 1949 and again in 1989, Havana in 1959, Prague, Berlin and Johannesburg and other cities in 1989, Cairo in 2011, Hong Kong in 2011-12, 2014 and 2019, and other urban sites of the Occupy and Black Lives Matter movements. Course work in modern history is recommended.  

*URBN 416a / ARCH 316a, Revolutionary Cities: Protest, Rebellion and Representation in Modern Urban Space*  
Alan Plattus

This seminar is conceived as an argument among four polemical urban thinkers whose respective visions of the city were shaped by their response to the twentieth-century evolution of New York City: Lewis Mumford (1895–1990), Robert Moses (1888–1981), Jane Jacobs (1916–2006), and Rem Koolhaas (1944–). Among the issues that variously preoccupied them (and at times brought them into direct conflict) were housing and infrastructure, social diversity and environmental sustainability, civic representation and urban imagination. New York has been called the capital of the twentieth century. What lessons—what “usable past,” to borrow a concept from Mumford—does New York’s history offer us? And what kind of city is New York becoming in the twenty-first century? The aim of the seminar is twofold: to reconsider the legacy of this quartet of visionary intellectuals; and to trace modern New York’s urban and architectural development.  

*URBN 417b / ARCH 357b, Fugitive Practice: Introducing, Recentering, and Exploring Black and Indigenous Design Methods*  
Jerome Haferd and Curry Hackett

Research and writing colloquium for seniors in the Urban Studies and History, Theory, and Criticism tracks. Under guidance of the instructor and members of the Architecture faculty, students define their research proposals, shape a bibliography, improve research skills, and seek criticism of individual research agendas. Requirements include proposal drafts, comparative case study analyses, presentations to faculty, and the formation of a visual argument. Guest speakers and class trips to exhibitions, lectures, and special collections encourage use of Yale’s resources.  

*URBN 490a / ARCH 490a, Senior Research Colloquium*  
Marta Caldeira

An essay or project in the student’s area of concentration. Students in the history, theory, and criticism track or in the urban studies track pursue independent research with an adviser; this project must terminate in a senior essay.