

PHUM1805

Section S01, CRN 27354

Reading time: 5 mins.

Making the Invisible Visible: Global Urban Typologies in the 20th and 21st Century

*Seminar on the analysis and publication of underrepresented urban environments
(post-socialist cities in Eurasia and post-colonial cities in sub-Saharan Africa)*

This Public Humanities seminar (cross-listed with Urban Studies and History of Art and Architecture) presents tools for urban analysis. It introduces the students to knowledge distribution via book publishing today. Prof. Meuser, an architect, architectural historian, and publisher, is one of the few to have made the entire architecture of Sub-Saharan Africa, remote cities in post-Soviet Eurasia, or North-Korean capital Pyongyang accessible to a broad audience.

Urban typologies as a tool to analyze, clarify, compare and provide solutions have become more critical than ever. The urbanization process of the industrial era has set into motion a dramatic change in human life on planet earth. On the edge of the 20th to the 21st Century, agglomerations have evolved into megacities whose number of inhabitants equals that of states elsewhere. By 2050, major cities in sub-Saharan Africa will have doubled the number of their citizens. On the other hand, some cities in post-socialist regions have shrunk dramatically. Which analytical and prognostic tools will help provide a sustainable and prosperous future for them?

The course will introduce students to researching, analyzing, selecting, writing about global urban environments, and reviewing academic books. They will learn about the process of publishing on global issues in the digital age, collaborating with authors on all five continents, with financial, cultural, political, and artistic concerns that accompany such undertakings.

One of the analytical tools to be explored is urban typologization. Although cities are located on different continents, they may have similar typological characteristics. Some typologies have been developed during the late 19th Century until the mid 20th Century, whereas others are a product of the post-industrial present. Students will learn to sharpen their focus on the abstract analysis method.

Besides Prof. Meuser's massive publishing program in this field, lectures will introduce students to the world of book publishing in a digital age, developments in recent history, and suggest paths towards a sustainable future. The students shall be qualified to specify criteria for analyzing future events in urban developments. As a highlight of the course, a virtual city of a digital world will be analyzed using the same criteria the students have previously studied analog cities.

Brown University is committed to the full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours.

For more information, please contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu. Students in need of short-term academic advice or support, can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College office.

Over 14 weeks, students will spend 2 1/2 hours per week in class (35 hours total). Required reading for the seminar meetings is expected to take approximately 7 hours per week (98 hours). Each learner's research and preparation for the presentation of visual material and leading discussion is expected to take about 7 hours. In addition, writing and researching weekly response essays and the final paper is estimated at approximately 50 hours over the term.

Instructor: Philipp Meuser

Requirements: Weekly reading responses, attendance, participation in discussion (30% of grade). One short essay on a city typology of student's choice – to be discussed in class. (each 30% of grade). One more extended essay about a city to be selected acc. to the course progress – to prove the student's ability to transfer the abstract parameters of typologies to any city. Each text with a length of about 3,500 words (40% of grade).

Reading material: Several books (see below) will be on reserve at the Rockefeller Library. Additional reading material will be made available in class as hard copies.

Location: This class takes place at 357 Benefit Street at the Center for Public Humanities.

Meeting: Tuesdays: 4:00-6:30.

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00 and by appointment (at 357 Benefit Street at the Center for Public Humanities)

Preliminary Schedule

Sessions 1-3: General Understanding of Writing about Urban Typologies (3 sessions)

1.) Tuesday, 1 February 2022 (shopping period)

Objectives of and Expectations to the Course PHUM1805

Introduction and outline of the seminar, discussion with students

2.) Tuesday, 8 February 2022 (end of shopping period)

Making the Invisible Visible: The Architectural Guide as a Book Genre

Lecture, discussion, students' input

3.) Tuesday, 15 February 2022

Western and Non-Western Urban Typologies: How to Learn "Reading Cities"

Lecture, discussion, students' input

No seminar on Tuesday 22 February 2022 (long weekend)

Sessions 4-6: From the Post-Socialist City to the Eurasian City (3 sessions)

4.) Tuesday, 1 March 2022

The Typology of the Socialist City. The Example of Pyongyang, North Korea

Lecture, discussion, students' input

5.) Tuesday, 8 March 2022

The Typology of the Eurasian City. The Example of Moscow, Russia

Lecture, discussion, students' input

6.) Tuesday, 15 March 2022

The Typology of the Eurasian City. The Example of Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Lecture, discussion, students' input

Session 7: Workshop

7.) Tuesday, 22 March 2022

Writing on Cities. Concepts, Methods, and Graphic Tools

Workshop with students and presentation of own ideas

No seminar on Tuesday 29 March (Spring break)

Sessions 8-10: From the Post-Colonial City to the African City

8.) Tuesday, 5 April 2022

The Typology of the African City: Urban Areas of the Pre-Colonial Period

Lecture, discussion, students' input

9.) Tuesday, 12 April 2022

The Typology of the African City: Colonial/Post-Colonial Cities

Lecture, discussion, students' input

10.) Tuesday, 19 April 2022

The Typology of the African City: Urban Villages and Transit Cities of Today

Lecture, Student's input, discussion

Sessions 11-13: Editing and Publishing of the Seminar's Content

11.) Tuesday, 26 April 2022

How to Review a Book about Architecture and Urban Design

Short lecture, student's input, discussion

12.) Tuesday, 3 May 2022

The concept for a Book about Architecture and Urban Design

Short lecture, student's input, discussion

13.) Tuesday, 10 May 2022

Books about Architecture and Urban Design: Proposals by Students

Final presentation and awarding the top three concepts

Deadline for submitting the final concept: Tuesday, 17 May 2022

Reading material:

Required:

Meuser, Philipp (ed.): Architectural Guide Pyongyang. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2012

Meuser, Philipp (ed.): Architectural Guide Astana. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2015

Meuser, Philipp/Dalbai, Adil/Mukasa, Livingston (ed.): Theorising Architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Perspectives, Questions, and Concepts. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2021

Recommended (available in class or the JNBC's library):

Adjaye, David: African Metropolitan Architecture. Edited by Peter Allison. London: Thames and Hudson, 2011

Bodenschatz, Harald et al.: Unfinished Metropolis. 2 Vols. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2020

Chenal, Jérôme: The West African City. Urban Scale and Models of Urban Planning. Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2013

Coulibaly, Souleymane et al.: Eurasian Cities. New Realities along the Silk Road. Washington: The World Bank, 2012

Hinse, Ton: The Morphology of the Times. European Cities and their Historical Growth. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2014

Meuser, Philipp: Seismic Modernism. Architecture and Housing in Soviet Tashkent. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2016

Meuser, Philipp/Dalbai, Adil (ed.): Architectural Guide Sub-Saharan Africa. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2021

Myers, Garth: African Cities. Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice, London/New York City: Zed Books, 2011

Nunes Silva, Carlos (ed.): Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa. Colonial and Post-Colonial Planning Cultures. New York/London: Routledge, 2015

Sonne, Wolfgang: Urbanity and Density in 20th-Century Urban Design. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2017

Snopek, Kuba: Belyayev Forever. A Soviet Microrayon on its Way to the UNESCO List. Berlin: DOM publishers, 2015