

Term Paper Requirements

There are two options to satisfy the requirements of this subject:

1. 9 credits: A paper of about 10 to 15 pages: Based on a topic discussed in lectures.
2. 12 credits: A paper of about 18 to 25 pages: Research topic chosen by student.

Term Paper Time Table

Stage One

Prepare proposal -- one or two pages in length - outlining the content of the proposed paper, including sources consulted. (Indicate 9 or 12 units). Week 8.

Stage Two

Sign up to meet with instructor. Week 10.

Stage Three

Complete paper. Week 26.

Term Paper Subject

Among the most disappointing papers have been those that have stuck to description of cities, or parts of cities, without pinning these descriptions to some hypothesis or argument. It is possible, of course, to derive hypotheses from interesting data, if you keep on developing categories for understanding the data and finally say something valuable about it all. In social science, this is often called "grounded theory." More commonly one has a hypothesis -- a puzzling question, an unexplored problem, a curious relationship -- and finds the appropriate data to validate (or not) the hypothesis. Whichever way you choose to work -- inductively or deductively -- the intellectual structure should be based on argument, be linked, and be as clear as possible. Remember that designing is a valuable mode of inquiry, and that, as architects, many of you have or should have valuable design skills which you can bring to bear in a paper for this subject.

There are many valid, unexplored topics in line with the general exploration of the subject, i.e., what are theories of the form of cities which deal with both their spatial, experienced form, and the social environment of these forms. Here are some which students have pursued in the past:

Case Studies of Cities

Case studies of cities in which it is possible to demonstrate specific relationships between form and society, either today or historically. Often these relationships are clearer under conditions of dramatic change, as in the change from colonial to post-colonial cities, or in

the reaction of urban society to sudden stress. Here the problem is often one of finding the data, but Boston and Cambridge have good libraries, if you can do the digging.
Examples:

Droege, P. "Floating Cities." 1977.

King, G. "Poston, Arizona, 1924-1945: An Illustrated Case Study of a Temporary Settlement." 1977.

Ebbe, K. "Freedom to Control: City Form as an Expression of Colonial Domination." (Leopoldville and Kinshasha), 1978.

Aldrete-Haas, J. A. "The Formation of the Built Environment: The Case of a Colonial Proletaria in Mexico City." 1979.

Devol, J. "The Death of a New Eden." 1979.

Ferreira, F. "Portuguese and Spanish Colonial Cities in Latin America: A First Comparative Approach." 1980.

Murray, S. "Historical Land Use Patterns in the United States of America." 1980.

Morse, S. "Urban Form for Rural Development: Colonization in the Brazilian Amazon." 1981.

Lin, Y. Y. "The Impact of Commercial Force on Urban Form: The Case of K'ai-feng, China." 1981.

Mulla, A. "Historical Settlement Patterns in Mombasa." 1981.

Kousoulas, G. "Allusion and Allegory: Aphorisms of a Capital." 1984.

Christofidou, E. "The Development of Nicosia, Capital of Cyprus." 1985.

Shah, B. "Changing Spatial Order and New Conformity: Katmandu, Nepal." 1987.

Purwono, E. "Transformation of a Former Colonial City: A Case Study of Jakarta." 1988.

Margoles, C. "The South African City: Emancipation or Prison?" 1988.

Wolfson, M. "City as Myth: Phoenix, Arizona." 1989.

Rojas, J. "Observations of Tokyo." 1990.

Havens, G. "Dublin: Capital of Colonial Ireland." 1991.

Kanakar, A. "Varanasi: The Holy City." 1991.

Campanella, T. J. "Sanctuary in the Wilderness, City by the Sea, Gravesend, Long Island, 1643." 1992.

Shea, C. E. "Samarkand: 'Mirror of the World'." 1993.

Eastley, L. "Mormon Communities and the Building of the Earthly Kingdom." 1993.

Hurley, T. C. "The Lights are Out in the City on the Hill: Wayland, Massachusetts." 1994.

Sarkin, G. "Berlin Crossroads - The Case of Potsdammerplatz." 1994.

Kodama, T. "The Formation of Kobe." 1995.

Askalan, R. "Beirut: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." 1995.

McHugh, E. T. "Warsaw: A Study of Memory, History and National Identity in the Reconstruction of the City." 1996.

Carrera, F. "Campo Santa Maria Formosa, Venice, Italy." 1997.

Kosebay, Y. "Representing Language of Nasuh's 16th Century Istanbul-Galata Miniature Painting." 1997.

Turkel, J. A. "Barrow, Alaska: The Most Improbable Town in America." 1998.

Tian, L. L. "The Concept of Home in the City of Helsinki." 1998.

Apigian, M. "Landscapes of Convergence: San Diego-Tijuana." 1999.

Mathema, K. "Tourism and City Form: The Kathmandu Valley." 1999.

Switzky, J. "The Instant City of San Francisco and Theories on the Form of 'Boomtowns'." 2000.

Pitts, E. "Tlingit Village and House Organization." 2000.

Spencer, C. "Urban Renewal: Its Effects on the Physical Form and Thinking of Downtown Schenectady." 2001.

Gillespie, J. "Las Vegas: Mythical Frontier Oasis or Paradigmatic American City?" 2002.

Ferguson, T. "Krier & Koolhaas." 2002.

Resnick, N. "The Derailment of Detroit." 2003.

More Deeply-researched Aspects of a Topic

More deeply-researched aspects of a topic which has been discussed in the class lectures. Here the task is to examine an aspect of a topic critically, to solidify vague but provocative notions, or to use the paper to strengthen your own interest in a special area. You either have to find more detailed information, or be able to arrange arguments in a different way. Examples:

McFarlan III, E. "Alexander: The Language and the Ideology." 1977.

Polton, R. "Socialism and City-making: An Overview and Analysis." 1977.

Dean, C. "Towards a Theory of City Form: Le Corbusier's Plans for the City of Algiers, 1930-1942." 1978.

Poodry, D. "Social Structure and Spatial Structure: Observations." 1978.

Wang, M. H. "The Ends-Means Dilemma in the City-making Process." 1978.

Shah, V. "Ancient Town Planning Principles in India." 1980.

Watiker, J. "What Forces Influenced the Development of Early Cities?" 1988.

Unger, M. "The Block in the European Context." 1981.

Dale, J. "Thomas Jefferson's Image of the City." 1984.

Kim, J. "Modernization and the Everyday Built Environment." 1986.

Nielsen, B. "The Other Side: Gender-based Theories of City Form." 1986.

Kapadia, K. "Transformational Nature of Urban Pattern." 1987.

Tuttle, W. "Aldo Rossi and Leon Krier." 1987.

Brady, N. "Cities of Infinite Possibilities." 1988.

Sim, K. "Regent Street and the City: An Alternative History." 1988.

DeShong, M. "Housing Typology and Urban Morphology: London and Paris." 1990.

Kumar, S. "The 'Non-City' and City Form." 1991.

Vernooy, A. "Polynuclear Cities: Crisis in Form or Perception." 1991.

Rashid, M. "Chaos Reigns." 1992.

Scheid, A. "Garnier and Gill." 1993.

Knight, L. "Seats of Power." 1994.

Mar, E. "The Border Condition: Uneven Development and the Space of Flows." 1995.

Crabtree, A. "The City of Man." 1996.

Moustafa, A. A. "Colonial Planning Policies in Morocco 1912-1923." 1997.

Papaefthimiou, N. "Cape Town, Kingston and Rio: Case Studies in Spatial Segregation." 1998.

Han, H-S. "Sustainable Development: Sustainable Urban Design." 1999.

Brown, R. S. "Typology as Urban Form: Urban Morphology in Boston's Back Bay." 2000.

Ho, J. C. "The Implications of Broadacre: Frank Lloyd Wright's Suburban Utopia." 2001.

Meyer, W. "The Social Process of the Malecon." 2002.

Raber, C. "Through the Eyes of an Artist." 2003.

Form Issues of Today

Form issues of today which are worth writing about because they represent a new or innovative idea, are part of an important current debate, or interesting because you can get close to events as they are unfolding. The trick is to avoid gross generalities and to do more than a piece of urban journalism. Examples:

Karen, V. "Pedestrian-free Environments." 1977.

Landman, W. "Recycling the Suburbs." 1977.

Oliver, R. "The Boston Waterfront District: The Environment as an Exchange System." 1977.

Kokkoris, P. "Similitude and Formalism." 1979.

Smith, T. "The Isolation of the Columbia Point Public Housing Project: A Social Control Exerted Spatially." 1979.

Holleran, M. "Street Patterns as a Preservation Issue." 1985.

Wiggins, G. "The Impact of the Information Society on the Form of the City." 1988.

Robinson, R. "The Evocative City." 1990.

Klein, M. "Nantucket: An Island Controls its Future." 1980.

Fraser-Reid, T. "Suburban Neo-traditional Towns." 1991.

Ahmed, I. "The Mall Road, Lahore." 1991.

Kucan, A. "Barcelona: Spectacle of Modernity and Traditional Public Space." 1992.

Panfil, J. C. "The Pedestrian Pocket: A Closer Look." 1993.

Slate, B. R. "The Covenant and the Grid: Toward New Suburban Tracts for America." 1993.

Feng, Z. "Conceptual Urbanism." 1993.

Chew, W. "What is the Future of the Present Centrality of the Past." 1994.

Pollard, K. "Progetto Bicocca: 'Mind Takes Form in the City'." 1994.

Sandomire, D. "City as Memory." 1995.

Mukhija, V. "Whose City is it? A Lefebvrian Critique of Delhi." 1996.

Lave, R. "Designing Change: Transforming Cultural Attitudes towards the Natural Environment." 1997.

Durska, M. "Affirming the 'Correct' Urban Past: Rob Krier's Ritterstrasse Housing Project." 1998.

Campos, G. "The Re-emerging Concept of Neighborhood." 1999.

Kron, Z. M. "Abandoned Gas Stations." 2000.

Messagli, M. K. "E-Tailing vs. Retailing: The Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Shopping." 2000.

Schupbach, J. "Urban Entertainment Centers and Downtown Shopping." 2002.

Shorett, M. "Spiritual Planning: The Fate of a Polycentric North American Regional Plan." 2003.

How Institutions Affect the Form of the City, or Vice Versa

How institutions affect the form of the city, or vice versa. These are generally topics which require a careful examination of an institution and a way of modeling it, a way of conceptualizing the physical environment, and finally, a good explanation of how these fit together. Or the order can be reversed. These are not easy tasks. Some hold strong opinions about these kinds of subjects: for example, how tall office towers represent exploitation of land and human resources, but seldom demonstrate these relationships convincingly. Examples:

Calvet, L., and M. Dominguez. "The Streets of Cambridge: Who Controls What?" 1978.

Jaster, S. "Beaches, Control, and Racial Conflict." 1978.

Mazumdar, S. "The Concept of Control in Persian Architecture." 1978.

Ozonoff, T. "Public Health and City Form: The Early Period, 1630-1799." 1981.

Lou, E. "Public Housing as a Means of Social Control: Singapore." 1983.

Fischler, R. "Architecture and Cultural Production: The Cross and the Banner - Design and Politics in Brasilia." 1985.

Moustafa, A. A. "Colonial Planning Policies in Morocco, 1912-1923." 1987.

Pradhan, G. "The Relationship between Ideology and City Form: The Case of Delhi." 1987.

Vale, L. "Politics and the Form of New Capital Cities." 1987.

Smith, T. E. "The Tale of Three Cities: The Control of Deviance and City Form." 1988.

Rea, C. B. "A Legacy of Hope and Despair: Detroit." 1990.

Shimshoni, A. "The Bedouin of the Negev: Form and Politics." 1990.

Sherman, M. E. "Learning City Form from Children." 1991.

Landaeta, A. R. "Is Socialism Anti-urban? The Case of la Habana." 1994.

Sass, L. "The Theory of an African American City." 1994.

Yi, E-S. "The Urban Logic and the Qibla." 1995.

Mani, M. "Shifting Paradigms and the Influence of Temporal Authority on City Form: A Study of Hyderabad, India." 1996.

Tulay, S. "Institutionalizing the Mentally Ill: A Moral Retreat from the City." 1997.

Smith, C. A. "Performance and Public Space." 1998.

Kim, D. "How to Make a Straight Line into a Square: An Examination of Central Square." 2000.

Liao, N. H. "Investigating Urban Sign Making as Ethnic Identity in Chicago." 2000.

Muntean, D. "Sarajevo under the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1878-1914): The Empire's Reforms and their Impact on the City Form." 2001.

Yaden, R. "Interstate Highways and City Design in the United States." 2002.

Hodges, C. "Public Education and Smart Growth." 2003.