ENVST-UA 495
Urban Greening Lab: New York
Spring 2015

Tuesday and Thursday, 2-3:15
Bobst LL 150

Instructor: Anne Rademacher
Office: 285 Mercer Street 905
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-3 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This reading and field intensive course explores the theory and practice of urban “greening” as it has been planned, debated, and implemented in New York City. Drawing on analytical tools from the social and biophysical sciences, we will consider how New York’s historical and contemporary context shape the meaning, implementation, and social experience of environmental improvement. We will ask, “What does it mean to green New York? What does it mean to green a city?” Rather than accepting the meaning of this term as self-evident, we will give it clear analytical contours and apply our research questions accordingly.

Our analytical approach integrates ecosystem ecology concepts, urban design principles, and social scientific sensibilities.

REQUIREMENTS

This course covers a wide range of topics and case studies, and it draws from multiple disciplinary perspectives. To do well, it is essential that you attend all class sessions, and complete all the required readings before coming to class. In my class lectures, I will assume that you have read the readings thoroughly, and I will often introduce additional material that does not appear in the readings.

Due to the structure and content of the course, attendance for all class sessions is mandatory. Attendance will be taken before every class, and grading penalties will accrue with class absences.

A mid-term exam will be given in Week 6; there is a final exam at the end of the semester. In addition, you will prepare two 2-page analytical commentaries that examine selected field trip portions of the course. Field trips will be timed so that students are able to attend them within the allotted course period; if this is not possible, alternative arrangements can be made with the professor.

Your final grade will be computed based on the following distribution:
• Attendance (10%) and Participation (15%) in all aspects of the class*
• Mid term exam 20%
• Two analytical essays 30%
• Final exam 25%

*Attendance is mandatory; participation will be assessed based on a students’ active verbal and written engagement in class sessions. We will discuss this at our first class session.

READINGS

Required Books


LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

Jan 29: Course Introduction: “Urban Ecologies” and Urban Greening

Feb 3 & 5: Ecology in the City vs. Ecology of the City and Science, Society, and Design: Urban Ecology and the Challenge of Integration


Feb 10 & 12: Spatial Heterogeneity and the Concept of Resilience

In: Resilience in Ecology and Urban Design: Linking Theory and Practice for Sustainable Cities:


**Feb 17 & 19: The Context for Greening in New York**

*In: Resilience in Ecology and Urban Design: Linking Theory and Practice for Sustainable Cities:*


*Articles:*


*Watch:*


**Feb 24 & 26: Social Dynamics of Urban Greening**

Articles:


March 3: Greening through Repurposing Urban Infrastructure

Guest: Darren Patrick, York University
Field visit to the High Line

March 5: Mid-term Exam

March 10 & 12: Greening by Creating Public Park Space

Guest Lecture: Steven Weber
March 12 Field visit: Comparing Urban Public Space through a Study of Plaza Parks

March 24: The Urban Forest 1

Articles:


March 26: The Urban Forest II

Guest Lecture: Dr. Richard Karty

Articles:


*Web resources to review:*

Million Trees NYC Campaign:  

NYC Cool Roofs:  

**March 31: Greening by Creating Urban Forest**

Field Visit to The New School Green Roof, led by Dr. Richard Karty

**April 2: Resilience in NYC: Sandy and Beyond**

Guest Lecture: Kirsten Keller, formerly with *Build it Back*

Adger et al. 2009. Are there social limits to adaptation to climate change? *Climatic Change* 93: 335-354

In *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans*:  
Greenberg, Miriam and Kevin Fox Gotham. “Conclusion: Lessons in the Wake of Crisis,” Chapter 7 pgs. 223-242

In *New York City CDBG-DR Action Plan*:  
Examine maps on pgs. 20-24  
Read sections on funding justification and housing, pgs 31-32  
Skim overview of Build It Back, pgs. 60-67

From NYC Recovery:  
“NYC Build It Back Information Update”

Build It Back:  

**April 7: Ecosystem Services and Land Use**

*Articles:*


April 9: Urban Resilience

In: Resilience in Ecology and Urban Design: Linking Theory and Practice for Sustainable Cities:


Articles:


Web resources to review:

Rebuild by Design: http://www.rebuildbydesign.org

April 14: Greening through Resilience and Recovery

Field Visit, post-Sandy recovery site with Kirsten

April 16: Greening the Built Infrastructure

First Essay is Due

Review the current initiatives for Urban Green, the NYC chapter of the US Green Building Council: http://urbangreencouncil.org/initiatives

Read: Improving Building Envelopes, Making Buildings Resilient, Creating Low-Carbon Cities, Reaching All Industries, and Greening Codes, including the specific projects for each category (30pp)

Review the implementation monitoring strategy (5pp): http://urbangreencouncil.org/greencodestracker

April 21 & 23: Greening through Building Design
Guest lecture and field visit to Bushwick Inlet Park with Greg Kiss, Principle Architect, Kiss + Cathcart

**April 28: Resilience and Rebuild: Living Breakwaters and Community Consultation in Staten Island**

Readings TBA

**April 30: The 2050 City and Post-midterm reading review**

*The 2050 City*

**May 5: Project Presentations**

*Second Essay is Due May 5*

**May 7: No class meeting**

**Final Exam** will be given in class on May 14.