

Inclusive Urbanism and Cultural Sustainability - Investigations of Community through Identity and Place

Cosmopolitanism "begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association"

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Cosmopolitanism- Ethics in a World of Strangers

Course Description

This seminar will investigate the current relationships between socio-cultural-economic inclusion and the physical form of cities. Beginning with 'grass roots' identification of the most crucial issues that emerge in our current work, we will explore the ideas of 'inclusive urbanism' and 'cultural sustainability' in the human community and the role which design plays in their facilitation or prevention. We will consider these issues relative to the effects of factors such as design, conservation, urbanization, and policy on the lives of the inhabitants. The focus is on matters of inclusion/exclusion and tolerance/celebration in the city.

The possibilities for an *inclusive urbanism* and *cultural sustainability* will be considered through critical examination of issues which might result from human differences related to: race, gender, age, ethnicity, economic status, religion, language, appearance, education, health ability *et.al.*. Such differences can prevent or enhance the inclusive full use and enjoyment of the urban environment, sometimes without our knowledge. Our purpose is to sharpen our understanding of issues of identity, pluralism and tolerance as they interface with the formal and functional characteristics of the contemporary city. How do design decisions work with other issues to promote or avert social inclusion and cultural sustainability in our communities?

Beginning with observation of phenomena in communities selected by students, we will identify issues of inclusion/exclusion which call for attention. We will then define terms and discuss our own experiences and observations to broaden our understanding. Following, we will research and discuss critical discourse on the topics identified, contemplating recent efforts by critical thinkers and doers to ameliorate the problems. Finally, we will test our research; promoting critical awareness and proposing design strategies for making cities more 'cosmopolitan', inclusive and culturally sustainable; places of utility and enjoyment for all who use them.

The format for the class will be a variety of lectures, discussions, excursions, readings, viewings responses and student presentations. Investigations can encompass a range of scales (ie. tool, furnishing, building, neighborhood, district, city) and disciplinary perspectives to correspond with particular interests. The intent is to identify and explore a variety of issues, modes of analysis and ways to present them.

Students are expected to identify, research and document issues for three projects which analyze and represent the built environment relative to social equity, cultural enhancement, environmental justice, and economic opportunity. Projects will engage primary sources through observation, interviews, representation etc. and secondary sources through readings and videos. Evaluation will also be based on attendance, participation and responses to weekly readings and viewings.

*Please note that this class is designed to be relevant to 'the city' in general or to neighbourhoods of particular interest to studio or Historic Preservation classes.