

IMA 704
Communications and the City
Psychogeography + Locative Media

Prof. Mary Flanagan (Mary.Flanagan @ hunter.cuny.edu) Room 543 HN
Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:30pm
IMA program, Film + Media Studies, Hunter College, reg #3968
Office Hours Spring 2005 2pm -5pm Mondays; 7:30pm – 8:30pm Tuesdays
Course website: <http://www.maryflanagan.com/courses/2004/TT>;

Exploring the history of cities and media practice from historical, geographical, and practice-based research approaches, this course focuses on the way the space of the city and media intersect, with a particular emphasis on the emerging field of locative media. The first half of the course introduces a selection of the key and historical texts of social theory which study cities, spatiality and urban form, with a focus (though not exclusive to) the city of New York. Readings will include Lefebvre, de Certeau, Calvino, Massey, etc. Class discussions will cover a range of critical perspectives on media practice with a focus on Surrealist, Situationist, performance, and contemporary media art work which have reassessed the ways of representing, relating to and encountering the city.

The second half of the class will investigate locative media, a new art form that explores the ways in which data, location, and media technology alters how we can understand issues of place and environment; locative media projects can include smart mob, urban gaming, and other ways in which the "real world" can be interactively explored and mapped. The course also includes discussions of the work of contemporary media practitioners (including visiting practitioners) whose work includes user-led mapping and artistic interventions. Students will write one research paper, lead discussions, and have the option of a solo/group practice project or paper for the final work.

Evaluation

Assignment Breakdown

The Five Assignments and Critiques	90%
Visiting Artist/Artists Reports/Presentations	10%

***work for this class must be created for this class alone unless pre-approved by instructor.*

Required Text: Online; <http://www.maryflanagan.com/courses/2005/CommCity/default.htm>
Materials: pen drive, videotape, sketchbook, etc

Weel 1: Tuesday February
Intro to class; mapping, psychogeography

Assign-Read: *Read for February 8th: Readings from the Situationist International Anthology, 1950s-1960s.*
Assign-Practice: *Moment* (assigned)

Week 2: **Tuesday February 8**
Crits and Methodologies
Critique: *Moment* (due)

Assign-Read: *Read for February 15th: From Design Research, from the Everyday Life Reader*
Assign-Practice: *Mini Ethnography Experiments* (assigned)
(post to wiki-everyone comment on 2 others' works)

Week 3: **Tuesday February 15**
Local Art Tours

Visit Tim Hawkinson Exhibit en Masse @ Whitney; Friday open 'til 9pm; Hunter students admitted free; View the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Central Park Work.

Assign-Read: *Read for Feb 22: From de Certeau: Walking in the City*
Assign-Practice: *rewrite mini-eths*

Week 4: **Tuesday February 22**
Mapping and StreetLife
Visiting artist Nina Katchadourian

Assign-Read: *Read for March 1: From Jane Jacobs*
Assign-Practice: *Sidewalk* (assigned)

Week 5: **Tuesday March 1**
City Networks
Fieldtrip: Glowlab <http://glowlab.blogs.com/>

Assign-Read: *none*
Assign-Practice: *Sidewalk* (continued)

Week 6: **Tuesday March 8**
Critique: *Sidewalk* (due)

Assign-Read: *Read for March 15: From Lefebvre*
Assign-Practice: *Revisions.*

Week 7: **Tuesday March 15**
Open Theme

Assign-Read: *Read for March 22: From Calvino*
Assign-Practice: *None*

Week 8: **Tuesday March 22**

Janet Cardiff work, central Park

Assign-Read: *Read for March 29: From Mitchell, From Gibson*

Assign-Practice: **Urban ALGORITHM** (*Assigned*)

Week 9: Tuesday March 29 No Classes at Hunter

Assign-Read: *Read for April 5: From The Situationist City*

Assign-Practice: **Urban ALGORITHM** (*continued*)

Week 10: Tuesday April 5

Digital Cities (Mary Gone)

Guest speaker Jonah Brucker Cohen

Review urban algorithms ½ way point in class

Week 12: Tuesday April 19

Critique: Urban Algorithm (*due*)

Week 13: Tuesday April 26 SPRING BREAK

Urban Game Commences, with Jane McGonigal (*assigned via email*)

Week 14: Tuesday May 3

Student Presentations

Week 15: Tuesday May 10

Student Presentations

Week 16: Tuesday May 17 LAST CLASS

Critique: Urban Game (*due*)

Spring 2005 Visitors/events
Mary Flanagan's Classes @ Hunter College
(ugrad +grads welcome)

Tuesday February 22

Visiting artist **Nina Katchadourian** "Artist Talk"
IMA 704 Communications and the City: Psychogeography + Locative Media Room 543 HN
Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:30pm
http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/features/2002/july/car_alarm/
<http://www.debsandco.com/crossdressing.html>

Tuesday March 1

Fieldtrip: **Glowlab**
<http://glowlab.blogs.com/>

Tuesday March 22

Visiting Media and Music producer/Journalist **Rick Karr**
"Kazaa is to Music what Blogs are to Journalism: How Technology Changes What We Like and Who We Trust" Understanding New Media
MEDIA 280, Tuesdays, Spring 2005 | 2:10pm – 5:00pm | HN 506
<http://www.technopop.org/>

Tuesday April 5

Visiting artist **Jonah Brucker Cohen** "Artist Talk"
IMA 704 Communications and the City: Psychogeography + Locative Media Room 543 HN
Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:30pm
<http://www.coin-operated.com/>

RECOMMENDED NYC Happenings

Tim Hawkinson on view February 11 – May 29, 2005

Whitney Museum, **Emily Fisher Landau Galleries, Floor 4**
Tim Hawkinson's fantastic constructions suggest the profound strangeness of life, matter, and time. Hawkinson, featured in the Whitney's 2002 Biennial, interweaves images of bodies and machines at scales that vary from the monumental to the nearly microscopic, conjuring a world that teeters on the cusp of the real and unreal.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude from the Roof: "The Gates" Project in Central Park

February 12, 2005–February 27, 2005
Metropolitan Museum, The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden
The Metropolitan Museum is opening The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, which offers spectacular views across Central Park to the Manhattan skyline, for the 16 days that artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude's public-art project *The Gates* will be installed in Central Park. Roof Garden open every day from 9:30 to 3:00 (weather permitting) except Monday, February 14.

Diane Arbus Revelations

March 8, 2005–May 30, 2005 Special Exhibition Galleries, 2nd floor
Diane Arbus (1923–1971) was one of the most original and influential American artists of the 20th century. This retrospective exhibition, the first in more than 30 years, will present the artist's signature images—such as *Child with a toy hand grenade in Central Park, N.Y.C., 1962* and *A Jewish giant at home with his parents in the Bronx, N.Y., 1970*—as well as previously unpublished photographs and writings drawn from the artist's archive.

Max Ernst: A Retrospective

April 7, 2005–July 10, 2005 Special Exhibition Galleries, The Tisch Galleries, 2nd floor

This will be the first retrospective exhibition of the work of the French artist Max Ernst (b. Germany, 1891–1976) to be shown in New York in some 30 years. A founding member of the Surrealist group in Paris, Ernst was one of the most inventive artists of the 20th century. His paintings, steeped in Freudian metaphors, private mythology, and childhood memories, are regarded today as icons of Surrealist art. Comprising some 200 works, the exhibition will include his most important paintings, his celebrated collages, drawings, sculptures, and illustrated books lent by private and public collections in Europe and the United States.

The Armory Show, New York

March 11 - 14

MARY KELLY @ postmasters

May 14 - June 18, new project

Highly Recommended Upcoming Things, SUMMER 2005

Robert Smithson

on view June 23 – October 16, 2005

Whitney Museum, **Emily Fisher Landau Galleries, Floor 4**

The creator of *Spiral Jetty*, a monumental 1,500-foot basalt coil in the Great Salt Lake, Utah, Robert Smithson (1938 - 1973) has long been recognized as one of the pioneers of the Earthworks movement and one of the most influential of the Minimalist sculptors. This first complete retrospective of Smithson's work features documentation and examples of his famous objects and Earthworks as well as largely unknown paintings, collages, and drawings from 1957 to 1963 that cast his entire career in a new light.

Communication and the City Spring 2005 Investigations and Experiments.

1. Moment

Capture a "moment" on a street corner in as many ways as you can and bring to class; the trick is to have under 20 seconds of media experience which captures an experience or feeling of the site. See if class can guess location.

2. Mini Ethnography Experiments.

Based on the readings and the works discussed in class, propose three short paragraphs which feature small, novel ethnographic experiments in the city. These do not necessarily have to be implemented in the course of the class but rather serve as methodological exercises.

3. Sidewalk

Reflecting on Jacob's description of the importance of sidewalks, document /Create/Remember the most important experience on a sidewalk you have had. The sidewalk experiment must be based around some kind of map.

4. Urban Game

This game will be introduced by leading game designer Jane McGonigal.

5. Urban Algorithm.

A.

Make a rule set about a space: one block, one city, one neighborhood, one playground, etc. (for example, up one block, over two, then x). You must document your process, keeping planning documents for explanatory purposes.

*Involve human intervention (for example, ask a person re: last object they have seen, color, most important thing about the place)

*Acquire sound from something in the scene

*Document your process with a map

B.

Follow another team's rules.

C.

Write a paper using the same concept to step through theoretical texts re: urbanism and psychogeography.

Student Presentations

The Student Presentations consist of 10 minute presentations on artwork other than their own in mini-lectures. These should be artists, groups, or projects that relate somehow to their own work or where they wish to take their work.

Readings:

From *Situationists International Anthology* (one scan):

Debord, Guy. "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography." [Situationists International Anthology](#). Knapp, Ken. (ed). pp. 5-8

Debord, Guy and Wolman, Gil. "Methods of Detournement." (1956) [Situationists International Anthology](#). Knapp, Ken. (ed). pp. 8- 14.

Situationists. "Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation." [Situationists International Anthology](#). Knapp, Ken. (ed). pp. 43-46.

Martin, J.V., et al. "Now the SI [1963]." [Situationists International Anthology](#). Knapp, Ken. (ed). pp. 134-147

From *Design Research*:

Plowman, Tim. "Ethnography and Critical Design Practice." *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives*. Ed. Brenda Laurel. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 30-38.

Zimmerman, Eric. "Play as Research: The Iterative Design Process." *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives*. Ed. Brenda Laurel. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 176-184.

Fogg, B. J. "Conceptual Designs: The Fastest Way to Capture and Share your Idea." *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives*. Ed. Brenda Laurel. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 200-211.

From *the Everyday Life Reader*:

Madge, Charles. "Mass Observation: Two Letters and 'They Speak for Themselves' [1936-7]". In Highmore, Ben (ed.) *The Everyday Life Reader*. New York: Routledge 2002, pp 145-152.

Debord, Guy. ["Perspectives for Conscious Alterations in Everyday Life \[1961\]"](#). In Highmore, Ben (ed.) *The Everyday Life Reader*. New York: Routledge 2002, pp.237-245.

From *deCerteau*:

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Chapter 7: Walking in the City. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, pp.91-110.

From *Jane Jacobs*:

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1961, pp 55-73; pp. 372-448. Click here for [pdf part 1](#); [part 2](#).

From *Lefebvre*:

Lefebvre, Henri. *Writing on Cities*. Trans Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 205-215. [Click here for pdf](#).

From *Calvino's Invisible Cities*:

Calvino, Italo. [Invisible Cities](#). Various pages.

From *Gibson*:

Gibson, William. [Idoru](#). pp. 107-117, 229-236

From *Mitchell*:

Mitchell, William J. [City of Bits. "Space, Place, and the Infobahn"](#). Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998, pp. 115-133.

From *the Situationist City*:

Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, parts of Chapters 2 and 3, pp 76-122. Click here for pdfs, divided into three files for downloading convenience: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#).

