Urban STS Syllabus (Fall 2016)

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Course Overview

The modern city is unimaginable without technology. In fact, it can be understood as a kind of nexus, where a number of technologies, from tangible ones like pipes and streetlights to the invisible ones, such as the digital, come together to work in concert. While we label these technologies as "infrastructure", their varied forms and configurations pose numerous social, theoretical, philosophical, and design challenges that require investigation. This course will consider the ways in which we can draw from Science and Technology Studies (STS) in order to analyze urban systems, networks, objects, and actors. It will trace the emergence of the urban field of study within STS scholarship by engaging the debate between the adherents of Large Technological System (LTS) and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approaches, all the while considering the limits, margins, and new theoretical contributions to the study of the urban. The students will become familiar with key readings and debates in the field and will be encouraged to comment on the utility and disadvantages of STS-centered approaches to the study of cities, technologies, and infrastructure.

*The working language of this seminar will be English.

Assignments and Grading

20%   Attendance and participation (grade includes timely submission of required weekly discussion questions)
       *all absences must be discussed in advance with the instructor. No unexcused absences will be tolerated. Three unexcused absences will automatically result in "F" for the course

10%   Assignment #1: VDKh attendance (Urban STS sections I & II) and a 2-3 page response paper to the discussion

30%   Assignment #2: Assemblages in Action (photo-essay project)

40%   Assignment #3: Final take-home exam

LATE PENALTY: with the exception of the final assignment, late submission of all other course materials will be subject to the penalty of minus 1/3 letter grade per day. Thus, an assignment which may have received an A- will receive a B+ if it is one day late, a B if it is two days late, etc. etc. There will be NO EXTENSIONS granted for the final exam.

Weekly Schedule

SEPT 12 Week 1.   Urban What?

Course description
Capturing St. Petersburg mini-fieldtrip

SEPT 19 Week 2.   Kaleidoscopic Visions

Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Ninetheenth Century: Expose of 1939," in *The Arcades Project*. (pp. 14-26)

Bruno Latour & Emilie Hermant, *Paris the Invisible City* (First sequence, pp. 1-31)

SEPT 26 Week 3.   Of Techno-Monsters and Men

Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1977)
http://www.nyu.edu/projects/nissenbaum/papers/heidegger_concerningtechnology.pdf

Thomas P. Hughes, "The Evolution of Large Technological System," in Wiebe Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch (eds.), *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*, The MIT Press, 1987, pp. 45-77

OCT 3 Week 4.   Building Systems, Building Cities

Thomas P. Hughes   , "The Electrification of America: The System Builders," *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Jan., 1979), pp. 124-161. [JSTOR]

Stephen Collier, *Post-Soviet Social, Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*, Princeton University Press, 2011, Chapters 3, 4. (pp. 65-107)

OCT 10 Week 5   Things and Stuff

Langdon Winner "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus*, Vol. 109, No. 1, Modern Technology: Problem or Opportunity? (Winter, 1980), pp. 121-136. [JSTOR]

Marianne deLaet and Annemarie Mol, "The Zimbabwe Bush Pump, Mechanics of a Fluid Technology," in Social Studies of Science 30/2, April 2000. (pp. 225-254)

Bruno Latour, "The Berlin Key, or How to Do Words with Things," in P.M. Graves-Brown, ed., *Matter, Materiality, and Modern Culture*, (2000), pp. 10-21.
http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-36-Berliner-KEY-GBpdf.pdf

OCT 17 Week 6   Infrastructure Fights Back

Ольга Бычкова, Евгения Попова, "Вещи и люди в жилищно-коммунальном секторе России 1991-2006 годы," in Харходин, Алапуро, Бычкова, *Инфраструктура Свободы*, 2013. (pp. 147-237)

Anique Hommels, "Changing obdurate urban objects: the attemps to reconstruct the highway through Maastricht," in Farias and Bender, eds. *Urban Assemblages, How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*, Routledge, 2010. (pp. 139-160)

OCT 24 Week 7   Revisiting the System Builders

Madeleine Akrich, "The De-Scription of Technical Objects," in Bijker and Law, eds., *Shaping Technology/building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, The MIT Press, 1992. (pp. 205-223)

Penelope Harvey and Hannah Knox, *Roads: an anthropology of infrastructure and expertise*, Cornell University Press 2013. (pp. TBD)

OCT 31 Week 8   ANTs In Your Assemblages

Neil Brenner , David J. Madden & David Wachsmuth, "Assemblage urbanism and the challenges of critical urban theory," in *CITY*, Vol. 15, No. 2, April 2011**.** (pp. 225-239)

Ignacio Farias, "Introduction: Decentering the Object of urban studies," in Farias and Bender, eds., *Urban Assemblages, How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*, Routledge, 2010. (pp. 1-20)

John Law and Vicky Singleton, "ANT and politics: working in and on the world," 2012, http://www.sv.uio.no/sai/english/research/projects/newcomers/publications/working-papers-web/ant-and-politics.pdf

NOV 7 Week 9   Re-imagined Geographies

Collier, S.J., and Ong, A. "Global Assemblages, Anthropological Problems," in S.J. Collier and A. Ong, eds., Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems, London: Blackwell. (pp. 1-18)

John Law, 'On the Methods of Long Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation, and the Portuguese Route to India',in John Law (ed*), Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge? Sociological Review Monograph* 32, Routledge, Henley, 1986. (pp. 234-263)

Verran, Helen, 'Re-Imagining Land Ownership in Australia', *Postcolonial Studies,* 1: (2), (1998), 237-254. http://www.douri.sh/classes/readings/Verran-ReimaginingLandOwnershipAustralia-PostcolStudies.pdf

* Nov 10-12 VDKh Attendance of Urban STS Sections 1 and 2 mandatory. Students complete Assignment #1

NOV 14   Global Cities

Alan Latham and Derek P. McCormack, "Globalization big and small: notes on urban studies, Actor-Network Theory, and geographical scale," in Farias and Bender, eds., *Urban Assemblages, How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*, Routledge, 2010. (pp. 53-73)

Stephen Graham, "Switching cities off", City, Vol. 9, 2005. (pp. 169-194)

Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XI, Issue 2, 2005. http://www.saskiasassen.com/pdfs/publications/the-global-city-brown.pdf

NOV 21 – 28
    Individual student consultation
- Students work on Assignment #2, due on Dec. 4th @ 5 PM.

DEC 5   Monsters Among Us

Donna Haraway, "The Promise of Monsters: a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others," in *The Haraway Reader*, Routledge, 2004. (pp. 63-124)

Sheila Jasanoff, "'Let them eat cake': GM foods and the democratic imagination," In: Leach, Melissa; Scoones, Ian; Wynne, Brian, eds. Science and Citizens: Globalization and the Challenge of Engagement. London; New York: Zed Books, 2005. (pp.183-198) http://community.eldis.org/.5ad5036d/Let%20them%20eat%20cake.pdf

DEC 12   A Brave New Eco-World

Bruno Latour, "Agency at the time of the Anthropocene," New Literary History, Vol. 45, 2014. (pp. 1-18)

Anders Blok, "Urban Green Assemblages: An ANT View on Sustainable City Building Projects," Science & Technology Studies, Vol. 23, 2013. (pp. 5-24)

DEC 19   "We'll Always Have Paris"

Bruno Latour & Emilie Hermant, *Paris the Invisible City* (remainder of the book, pp. 32-103)

        *Final take-home exam questions will be emailed to the students on 09.01.2017 and will have to be completed on 11.09.2017 at 5 PM