

**Cities, Urbanist Projects & Global Connections**  
**Graduate Workshop**  
**Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures & Societies**  
**Freie Universität, Berlin**  
**Summer 2011**

Wednesday, 13 July, 10:00-17:00  
Altensteinstraße, 48

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Office timings: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and by appointment

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## **Description**

This workshop explores methods and key concepts for approaching space as a theoretical and practical concern in scholarship on historical and contemporary Muslim (and other) societies. We will focus in particular on densely populated, extensively built up and intensively surveilled urban zones during the last couple of centuries, but the methods explored in the workshop are relevant to scholars of any historical period and a variety of themes. Key empirical and theoretical issues and topics we might consider include: built form and architecture, public health and sanitation, state housing and poor relief projects, global capitalist and neoliberal economic transformations, negotiations over the politics of difference, and the formation and negotiation of public spheres.

Urban terrains have long been focal points of economic development and of the production and application of technologies of governance, as well as central loci for the articulation of diverse political imaginaries and social practices. By the end of the nineteenth century, cities had displaced other spaces of habitation as the paradigmatic forms of human society, and continue to provide a key framework for modern life and scholarly analysis. This workshop combines writings from several disciplines that provide theoretical orientation, empirical elaboration, and exemplary models for research on historical and contemporary cities. We will consider urban spaces as arenas and idioms of three key processes: first, state **planning** and the increasingly thorough realization of projects of modern governance; second, the emergence of material and conceptual structures of sociality in the dense and diverse terrain of **everyday life** in the city; and third, **transnational circulation** technologies and political ideas within and about the urban framework. This workshop is designed to introduce methodological frameworks and approaches relevant to a wide range of topics and contexts in historical and social analysis.

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## **Readings**

### Approaching the City:

This section examines an excerpt from the work of a key theorist of cities and space as an entry-point for considering the necessity and productivity of approaching *the urban* as a particular object of inquiry. The recommended pieces include a useful forward to Lefebvre's chapter, and an overview of recent urban history scholarship on South Asia.

*Required:* Henri Lefebvre "From the City to Urban Society" *The Urban Revolution* (2003 [1970 French]), 1-22

*Recommended:* Neil Smith "Foreword" *The Urban Revolution*, vii-xxiii

E.L. Beverley "Colonial Urbanism & South Asian Cities: Review Essay" (Mss.)

Planning/Urbanist Projects:

Here we consider endeavors by colonial (and postcolonial) states to remake cities via planning and zoning, building projects, and regimes of social control. Glover considers the ostensibly civilizing functions of built form in the making of colonial Lahore, and Rabinow suggests the new capital of Rabat reflected colonial dominance, but also provided a vital contact zone for negotiating imperialism. Prakash examines the postcolonial life of planning projects in an erstwhile center of colonial capitalism.

- Required:** William J. Glover "Objects, Models, and Exemplary Works: Educating Sentiment in Colonial India" *Journal of Asian Studies* 64.3 (2005): 539-566  
 Paul Rabinow "Techno-Cosmopolitanism: Governing Morocco" in *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (1989), 277-319
- Recommended:** Glover "A Colonial Spatial Imagination: British Knowledge of the City and Its Environs" (27-58) or "Collaborations: Building an Elite Landscape in Lahore's Civil Station" (59-98) in *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (2008)  
 Gyan Prakash "Planning and Dreaming" *Mumbai Fables* (2010), 251-288.

Everyday Life in the City:

As a focal point of technologies of governance (such as planning) and center of burgeoning populations, urban spaces structure city-dwellers' encounters with difference. De Certeau frames urban space as object of practice and analysis, Behl uses literary texts as an entry point into the politics of diversity. The (highly) recommended selections are Fahmy's look at the effects of planning projects on popular livelihoods, and journalistic or literary accounts of everyday structures and encounters of the urban everyday in major world cities (New York, Berlin, Bombay).

- Required:** Michel de Certeau "Walking in the City" *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984 [1980 French]), 91-110  
 Aditya Behl "Poet of the Bazaars: Nazir Akbarabadi, 1735-1830" A *Wilderness of Possibilities: Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspective* K. Hansen and D. Lelyveld, eds. (2009), 192-222
- Recommended:** Khaled Fahmy "An Olfactory Tale of Two Cities: Cairo in the Nineteenth Century" *Historians in Cairo: essays in honor of George Scanlon J. Edwards*, ed. (2002), 155-187  
 Joseph Mitchell "King of the Gypsies" (1942)  
 Walter Benjamin "A Berlin Chronicle" (1978 [1932 German])  
 Saadat Hasan Manto "Mozel" (2007 [1948? Urdu])

Transnational Urban Circuits:

This section opens up the roles cities play as key nodes in global circulations of people, commodities and ideas. Lafi's piece uses municipal reform to show how cities provided both the subject matter and locations for transnational engagements.

- Required:** Nora Lafi "Mediterranean Connections: The Circulation of Municipal Knowledge and Practices during the Ottoman Reforms, c. 1830-1910" *Another Global City: historical explorations into the transnational municipal moment, 1850-2000* P-Y. Saunier and S. Ewen, eds. (2008), 35-50
- Recommended:** Stephen Legg "Governing prostitution in colonial Delhi: from cantonment regulations to international hygiene (1864-1939)" *Social History* 34,4 (2009): 447-467
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## Expectations

Participants should read the required texts above (hopefully the recommended too), and be prepared to discuss their contents and broader applications (no need to concentrate on empirical details). We will also discuss the relevance of workshop material to participants' projects. Participants should ideally complete a short (~1 p.) informal statement of how the workshop content might inform their own research and leave this in my mailbox in BGS MCS by Mon.11.July. In any event, all should be ready to discuss their projects in dialogue with workshop topics.

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## Schedule

10:00-11:00	Introductions (participants, projects and topic)
11:00-11:15	Coffee
11:15-13:00	Approaching the City, Planning/Urbanist Projects
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:45	Everyday life in the City/Transnational Urban Circuits
15:45-16:00	Coffee
16:00-17:00	Discussion of Participant Projects, Conclusions