

## **URPL600 Seminar: La Meen Beirut? Whose Beirut?**

Class Coordinators: Mona Harb, with Joyet Beyene

**Wednesdays @ 9:00, Room 211 – Syllabus**

### **DESCRIPTION**

This seminar series is offered once a year for both MUP and MUD students. It tackles ongoing urban planning and design issues in Lebanon from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The overall theme is selected in coordination with the graduate students' interests who get to vote on short-listed topics. The objective of the seminar is:

- i) to introduce and engage students with the discourses of other students, professionals, researchers, experts, and decision-makers who are involved directly in urban-related issues.
- ii) to debate themes of concern from a variety of approaches, viewpoints and disciplines as to inform empirically on urban interventions in the city.
- iii) to examine and analyze critically current policies and projects that are being elaborated and implemented in the city.

### **CITY DEBATES 2004**

As selected by students this year, the theme of the City Debates revolves around one question: *La Meen Beirut? Whose Beirut?* This question is being approached through the themes of inclusion/exclusion and the underlying models of "good city" and "good society" in the post-war reconstruction projects of Beirut. Our interests stem from an urge to critically examine the policies and projects that have happened in the city during the past decade, and to understand their underlying assumptions and their implications on the city. In the seminar series, we will:

1. develop theoretical frameworks for reading this period of late reconstruction,
2. investigate critically the operative assumptions behind different projects/initiatives which make for a 'good city',
3. look at the various implications of such projects and policies, and the ways in which various groups, visible and less visible, have reacted (or not) to them.

The topic will be dealt with from a multidisciplinary perspective combining the fields of planning, political science, sociology, law, history, economics, literature, design, art, and philosophy.

A task team, composed of students and faculty members, have been organizing the seminar series. Joyet Beyene, Mona Fawaz, Mona Harb, Bassam Moussa, Walid Sadek, Chadi Saroufim, Mahya Yahya have been meeting regularly to structure the sessions and the themes of the seminar series. We have written a short call for papers, as well as a more conceptual text (drafted by Walid) which was sent to individuals we have approached for contributions. We have now a preliminary working agenda that we will be finalizing soon.

### **FORMAT**

The public component of the seminar series will be held during five Mondays of May 2004. There will be five closed meetings held in the Department that will prepare towards the public sessions. They will be normally held on Wednesdays 9:00-11:00. A calendar is attached.

## REQUIREMENTS

All students registered in URPL600 are required to attend both closed and public meetings. Each student will sign up for one of the sessions and will be responsible of preparing material related to the session's theme.

Two students will be in charge of each closed meeting session. They will coordinate their work and make sure the requested material mentioned below is covered. Joyet Beyene, who is the Graduate Assistant in charge of this seminar series, and I will be available to help you in organizing your material.

The material that you are supposed to compile has to address the following two components:

- Annotated bibliography related to the theme of the session: books, articles, newspapers, magazines, novels, etc. in English/French/Arabic.
- Annotated bibliography of the major works of the speakers that are to intervene in the session: locating main publications of the participants, in relation to the session's theme.

*> an annotated bibliography does not only list the reference located but also describes in one paragraph its main argument and methods of inquiry.*

## GRADING

This is a 0cr., Pass or Fail course.

### **Very Preliminary Bibliography: some of which is available on AUB electronic databases**

Friedmann, John, "The Good City: In Defense of Utopian Thinking," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 24, June 2000.

Goheen, Peter G., "Public Space and the Geography of the Modern City," *Progress in Human Geography*, Volume 22, Number 4, 1998, pgs. 479-496.

Harvey, David, "Debates and Developments: The Right to the City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 27.4, December 2003, pgs. 939-41.

Lefebvre, Henri, *Writings on Cities*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Malone, Karen, "Street Life: Youth, Culture and Competing Uses of Public Space," *Environment & Urbanization*, Volume 14, Number 2, October 2002.

Purcell, M., "Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 27, September 2003.

Talen, Emily and Cliff Ellis, "Beyond Relativism: Reclaiming the Search for Good City Form," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Volume 22, September 2002.