This cross-disciplinary seminar explores digital visual cultures and critical media practices in urban environments, understanding how aesthetics and politics interact in contexts of upheaval, striation, precarity, and inequality. We will be examining media infrastructures and networks with attention both to digital art and popular cinema/media, from German installation art to Nigerian videos and anything in between. Collaborative projects embrace multiple methodologies and genealogies, from critical theory to media *stilos*, from ethnography to digital mapping. The course will draw upon Cornell’s urbanism resources in its library and museum collections.

The aim of the course is to understand how cinema takes place (in locales, in built environments, in circuits of production/circulation/exhibition) but also how it makes places, both material and imagined. An historical overview of urban representation is therefore important as a starting point, so that we can raise questions of perception and scale within modern debates about aesthetics and politics (i.e., Soviet cinema, Weimar cinema, radio and television, avant garde art practices). So, too, do we begin with crucial theoretical formulations of the city, from Raymond Williams and onward. The heart of the course, however, will consist in testing extant rubrics for investigating urban media cultures and forging new ones through shared research.

Requirements: attendance at all meetings of the seminar and a final project, to be discussed at length. You may take the course S/U or for a letter grade. Any other pertinent information will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

Week 1 (1/21/15)

Introductions

Week 2 (1/28/15)

Reading: *Raymond Williams, The Country and the City*
Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*

Screening: Louis Le Prince, Lumiere bros., Skladonowsky bros., Edison

Week 3 (2/4/15)

Reading: *Reyner Banham, Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*
Mike Davis, “Bunker Hill: Hollywood’s Dark Shadow” BB
Josh Stenger, “Return to Oz. The Hollywood Redevelopment Project, or Film History as Urban Renewal” BB

Screening: *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (Thom Andersen, 2003)
Week 4 (2/11/15)

      Hito Steyerl, “Too Much World” BB
      Hito Steyerl, “Is a Museum a Factory?” BB

Screening: Lovely Andrea (Hito Steyerl, 2007)

Week 5 (2/25/15)

Reading: *Siegfried Kracauer, The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays
Screening: Berlin, Symphony of a Great City (Walter Ruttmann, 1927)
      Berliner Stilleben (L. Moholy-Nagy, 1931)
      Impressionen vom alter Marseiller-Hafen (L. Moholy-Nagy, 1929)

Week 6 (3/4/15)

Reading: Stuart Liebman, “Jean Vigo’s A propos de Nice: A Surrealist City
Symphony” BB
      Walter Benjamin, “Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century” BB
      Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project
      Anke Gleber, The Art of Taking a Walk

Screening: A propos de Nice (Jean Vigo, 1930)

Week 7 (3/11/15)

Reading: Dolores Hayden, “What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like?” BB
      Matt Cook, Queer Domesticities
      Lee Wallace, Lesbianism, Cinema, Space

Screening: La Souriante Mme. Beudet (Germaine Dulac, France, 1922)

Week 8: (3/18/15)

Reading: *Patrick Keiller, The View from the Train
      Iain Sinclair, Ghost Milk
      Blesser and Salter, Spaces Speak, Are you Listening? (ch. 1&2)

Screening: London (Patrick Keiller, UK, 2004)
      Dreams of a Life (Carol Morley, UK, 2011)

Week 9 (4/8/15)

Reading: Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: A History of Walking
      Henry David Thoreau, “Walking”
      Frederic Gros, A Philosophy of Walking

Screening: Kelly Reichardt or Still Walking (Hirokazu Kore-Ada, Japan, 2008)
Week 10 (4/15/15)

**Reading:** Alessandro Petti et al, *Architecture After Revolution*
Decolonizing Architecture AR (DAAR) website

**Screening:** *Rt. 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel* (Eyal Sivan, Michel Khleifi, Israel/Palestine, 2004)
*Gazonto* (John Greyson, 2014)

Week 11 (4/22/15)

**Reading:** Janaki Nair, *The Promise of the Metropolis*
David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*
Iwan Baan, *Living with Modernity*

**Screening:** *Praia do Futuro* (Karim Ainouz, Brazil, 2014)
*Dhobi Ghat* (Kiran Rao, India, 2011)

Week 12 (4/29/15)

**Reading:** *Galloway, Wark, and Thacker, Excommunication*
Dana Cuff, *The Provisional City*
Ed Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*

**Screening:** *Megacities* (Michael Glawogger, Austria, 1998)

Week 13 (5/6/15)

**Reading:** Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin*
Brian Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*
Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*

**Screening:** *Eastern Boys* (Robin Campillo, France, 2013)
*November* (Hito Steyerl, Germany, 2004)
*In Free Fall* (Hito Steyerl, Germany, 2010)

Week 14 (5/12/15)

**Reading:** *Keller Easterling, Extrastatecraft*

**Screening:** *The Iron Ministry* (J.P. Sniadecki, US/China, 2014)

**RESOURCES**

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”
Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life” (1938)
Lewis Mumford, *The Urban Prospect* (1968)
Robert Venturi, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972)
Anthony Vidler, “The Explosion of Space: Architecture and the Filmic Imaginary”

Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, eds., *Cinema and the City* (2001)
Francois Penz and Andong Lu, eds., *Urban Cinematics* (2011)

*Amsterdam Global Village* (Johan van der Keuken, Netherlands, 1996)
*Art House* (Don Freeman, USA, 2015)
*Detropia* (Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, USA, 2012)
*District B13* (Pierre Morel, France, 2005)
*A Grin Without a Cat* (Chris Marker, France, 1977)
*Museum Hours* (Jem Cohen, UK, 2012)
*The Tiniest Place* (Tatiana Huezo, Mexico/El Salvador, 2011)
*Tokyo Waka* (John Haptas and Kristine Samuelson, USA/Japan, 2013)
*Waste Land* (Lucy Walker, UK, 2010)
*When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (Mikio Naruse, Japan, 1960)