

# Anti-Development Vacancy, Wilderness, Ruin

LAND 530B | Fall 2018



*Michigan Theater, Detroit. Photograph: Bob Jagendorf, 2010.*

**Graduate School of Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture  
Washington University in St. Louis**

**Location: Givens Hall 117  
Time: Mondays, 8:30 – 11:30 AM**

**Instructor: Michael Allen**  
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## Preface

What if we let the city decline, change or go wild? Is land development truly “sustainable urbanism,” or are depopulating cities like St. Louis and Detroit trying to speak another path to us? This seminar examines anti-growth urban land management and preservation practices – practices that embrace systems of emergent, wild and unexpected urbanism, but also raise questions of austerity and democratic rights to the land. With key readings as guide, students will explore topics of state landbanking and autonomous land trusts, managed depletion (including St. Louis’ infamous “Team Four” memorandum), wilderness conservation and “greenway” creation, watershed reintroduction, agricultural land reclamation, experimental historic preservation projects that eschew restoration or even rehabilitation and even land taxation policies. Starting with grounding readings in principles of the American orientation to wilderness, ecological vitality and urbanism, the seminar explores the modern history of efforts to harness decline, vacancy, depletion and no-growth as productive management practices. The seminar will probe the question of what makes the city whole, with field outings in St. Louis and beyond. Work in the seminar will be based on site-specific interventions developed throughout the semester, proposing management of urban sites that avoid new construction while realizing latent ecological and even economic vitalities.

## Readings

Students should obtain copies of these books:

- Keller Easterling, *Subtraction* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014)
- Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Lathe of Heaven* (various editions)
- Michel Serres, *Malfeasance* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011)

All other required and suggested readings are accessible on Blackboard (<http://bb.wustl.edu>).

## Aims

This seminar aims to cover an overview of practices and theories related to the development of cities, with an emphasis on those that engage decline, depletion, right-sizing, planned shrinkage, demolition, landbanking, re-wilding and historic preservation. Through study, the course will introduce ways of identifying land management problems and priorities in a declining city (such as St. Louis) and distinguishing them from those of a growing city. This understanding will support the evaluation of the appropriateness of different policies on land use, demolition and open space, and the development of place-specific hypothetical proposals of new best practices for St. Louis.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Explain and comprehend the concepts of abandonment, depopulation, right-sizing, shrinking cities, landscape urbanism, adaptive reuse, brownfields, land-banking and experimental preservation.
2. Develop practices that accommodate growth (development) and shrinkage (anti-development) as separate and sometimes simultaneous management regimes, not necessarily as an opposition;
3. Explain and comprehend how American cities have come to a point where they are shrinking in both built mass and population;
4. Explain and comprehend the differences in economics between shrinking cities and growing cities, and articulate the sets of design needs in both types of cities;
5. Develop an ability to harness abandonment, building ruin, vacancy and wilding as productive practices.

## Schedule

### Monday, August 27 (Introductions)

Introductions  
Predictions  
Ritual

### Monday, September 3 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

### Monday, September 10 (Restoration / Impossibility)

Field Visit:  
Granite City Art & Design District – Granite City, Illinois  
Guide: Chris Carl, landscape architect

Reading:  
Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Lathe of Heaven*  
Alan Mallach, "The Rise and Fall of the American Industrial City," *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2018)\*

### Monday, September 17 (Entropy and the Myth of Urban Decline)

Film Clip In Class:  
*Cleveland: Confronting Decline in an American City* (2016)

Readings:  
Eric Zencey, "Some Brief Speculations on the Popularity of Entropy as Metaphor," *North American Review* 271.3 (September 1986).\*  
Team Four, *Technical Memorandum 6B* (1975)\*  
Patrick Cooper-McCann, "The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the 'Team Four Plan.'"  
Brent D. Ryan, "Rightsizing Shrinking Cities: The Urban Design Dimension," *The City After Abandonment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)\*

### Monday, September 25 (Finding New Energies)

Field Visit:  
Cherokee Street and Chippewa Street  
Guests: Jason Deem, Principal, South Side Spaces; Alderman Cara Spencer

Reading:  
Keller Easterling, "Disposition," *Extrastatecraft* (New York: Verso, 2014).\*  
J.B. Jackson, "The Necessity for Ruins," *The Necessity for Ruins* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).\*

*Paper #1 Due*

**Monday, October 1 – NO CLASS, Instructor Away**

**Monday, October 8 – NO CLASS, Instructor Away**

**Monday, October 15 – NO CLASS, Fall Break**

**Monday, October 22 (Anti-Development as Productive Protocol)**

Field Visit:

Harlem Creek Watershed

Reading:

Keller Easterling, *Subtraction*.

Michael Allen, "Vacant Land as Infrastructural System: Landbanking, Stormwater and Public Participation"  
[draft manuscript]\*

Roderick Nash, Excerpts from *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).\*

Suggested Reading:

Texts on Harlem Creek and the Green City Coalition\*

*Paper #2 Due*

**Monday, October 29 (Landbanking as Strategy)**

Guest Lecture: Patricia Heyda, Associate Professor of Urban Design, Sam Fox School

Reading:

Patricia Heyda, "Erasure Urbanism," *Architecture Is All Over* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).\*

Center for Community Progress, *Take It To the Bank* (2014)\*

Asakura Robinson et al, *St. Louis Landbank Assessment* (2016)\*

**Monday, November 5 (Vacant Buildings & Experimental Preservation)**

Field Visit:

St. Liborius Church/Sk8 Liborius –

Guest: David Blum

St. Augustine's Church

Reading:

Daniela Sadler, "Counterpreservation as a Concept," *Counterpreservation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2016).\*

Eric Klinenberg, "The Other Side of 'Broken Windows'" (*The New Yorker*, 23 August 2018)

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-other-side-of-broken-windows>

## **Monday, November 12 (The Cost of Vacancy)**

Field Visit During Class:

LRA "Finest 15" Tour

Guest: Eltoreon Hawkins

Reading:

Alan Mallach, *The Empty House Next Door* (Lincoln Land Policy Institute, 2018)\*

*Paper #3 Due*

## **Monday, November 19 (The Politics of Demolition)**

Guest: Tara Aubuchon, Vacancy Collaborative

Reading:

Alan Mallach, "Empty Houses and Distressed Neighborhoods: Confronting the Challenge of Place," *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2018)\*

Emily Rosenman and Samuel Walker, "Tearing down the city to save it?: 'Back-door regionalism' and the demolition coalition in Cleveland, Ohio," *Environment & Planning* 48.2 (2016).\*

Hayleigh Colombo, "City rushes to use \$3M to raze abandoned houses," *Indianapolis Business Journal* (March 30, 2018)

<https://www.ibj.com/articles/68174-city-rushes-to-use-3m-to-raze-abandoned-houses>

Emilie Evans, "Preservation and Rightsizing: Strategic Demolition in Detroit," *Preservation Leadership Forum* (July 26, 2013)

<https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/special-contributor/2013/07/26/preservation-and-rightsizing-strategic-demolition-in-detroit>

## **Monday, November 26 (Development, Entropy and the Future of Cities)**

Guest lecture: Carlie Trosclair, artist – [carlietrosclair.com](http://carlietrosclair.com)

Reading:

Michel Serres, *Malfeasance* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011)

*Paper #4 Due*

## **Monday, December 3 (Conclusions)**

Team Presentations

Final Discussion

Reading:

Marc Augé, "Introduction to the Second Edition," *Non-Places: An Introduction to Super-Modernity* (New York: Verso, 2009)\*

Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitolocene, Plantationocene, Cthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015).\*

**Monday, December 17**

*Final Papers Due by 11:59PM*

# Assignments

## Response Papers

There will be four assigned response papers that will frame responses to the readings and site visits. These papers shall be 3 pages long, and will allow students to work out intellectual responses to the readings and events of the seminar. The prompts for the papers will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard, since course activity will influence the exact questions for each paper. All papers should use either the Modern Language Association of Chicago Style citations, 11-point typefaces, standard margins and double spacing. Papers shall have titles and page numbers. *Papers shall be submitted via email or in paper to instructor's mailbox.*

## Final Project

The final project will entail a site-specific management proposal based on the seminar themes. The assignment description will be circulated in seminar on October 22. Students will work in teams on a presentation, and then complete individual 10-page research papers that support the team's proposal and elaborate on ideas. Grades for the final project will be individual although participation in the team presentation is mandatory and will count toward the grade.

## Evaluation and Grading

The required work in the seminar will include four papers, a final research and design project, field trip notes, participation in the course glossary, participation in discussion and attendance. The final grade will be based on this formula:

Response Papers	40%
Final Project	35%
Attendance and Participation in Discussion	25%

Papers and work will be graded numerically out of 100 points. Final grades will be letter grades based on the following grading scale:

	Conceptual Considerations	Methodology	Craftsmanship	Integrative skills
<b>A</b>	New concepts are explored in original ways. Conceptual basis of project demonstrates clear grasp of complex issues (histories, social contexts, ecological issues). Project is fully developed and expresses a high level of investigative rigor.	Analysis demonstrates rigor and highly developed understanding of scope. Sophisticated and attentive design decision-making apparent throughout process. Logical, confident and iterative procedure generates design outputs that can be described and evaluated in terms of the process.	Clear connection between ideas and their investigation through careful manipulation of design representation and materials. Excellent craftsmanship displays thought and care. Clear demonstration of the importance of the artifact in design production. Attentiveness to the aesthetic of making.	New and complex issues are successfully integrated. Seamless integration of depiction and depicted. Comprehensive marshaling and conjoining of the physical, the conceptual and the representational.
<b>B</b>	Complex issues are adequately integrated. Project is well-developed and design outcomes show understanding of issues.	Process demonstrates adequate grasp of problems and issues. Clear use of iterative method. Source data employed throughout. Project process remains within the confines of the known.	Good quality work, with moderate appeal. Engagement with materiality of representation needs further work. Outputs would improve with greater attentiveness to quality of craft.	Design production shows real understanding of issues, problems, resources and process, but does not quite bring them all together in a unified articulation of design intent.
<b>C</b>		Clear and effective process never fully developed.	Crafted dimension of production distracts from	Project remains on the level of a collection of disparate ideas

Project exhibits an inherent lack of conceptual engagement. The necessary components are gathered but are related and explored only superficially.

Tentative and ill-defined methodology. Tendency to change from approach to approach without fully investigating any one method, suggesting uncertainty with respect to iterative procedures.

design intent. Sloppy, ill-managed articulation of the artifact as an object. Ideas remain untransformed by the act of making.

and forms, weakly integrated or developed, and only marginally related to the singularity of the site, situation or program.

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<b>D</b>	Project is inadequately developed in all areas. Heavy reliance on found materials. Project shows little or no regulation by means of conceptual thinking.	Inadequate development of project. Muddled thinking about process. Little or no clear methodological procedure utilized. No connection between design output and design process.	Poor quality or negligible craftsmanship. No sense of the development of an aesthetic. Outputs are uninspiring, timid and uncared for.	Little or no sense of the project as an interactive condition. Outcome does not relate to program, site or contexts. Failure of understanding with respect to the nature of design.
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## Course Communication

In addition to class time, course communication will occur through email. The instructor will send notifications of amendments to the syllabus and confirm field trip driving plans through email, so please check email before each class period to stay apprised of any changes. Blackboard will only be used for a repository of readings and assignments.

## Course Policies and Information for Students

This seminar operates on a pedagogical model of participatory inquiry, where all participants shape the research questions and experiential priorities of the course. The seminar requires a high degree of participation through verbal discussion while also demanding a robust schedule of readings to support exploration of themes. While the instructor will lecture and guide, the seminar is a venue for each student to present questions, findings and connections located in readings and field trips. For readings, students should make every attempt to complete readings before meeting, but if not possible, at least discern authors' key points and themes. The seminar encourages research as practice; that is, research not for memorization but for critical understanding of subjects to advance students' own educational goals. Design students should have no fear.

**Seminar:** *Oxford English Dictionary* definition 1.1: "A class at university in which a topic is discussed by a teacher and a small group of students." Origin: Late 19th century: from German Seminar, from Latin *seminarium* (see seminary).

### Policies:

- ATTENDANCE POLICY:** All students should attend each class session, take notes and participate in discussions. *Only one unexcused absence is allowed. A second unexcused absence will result in automatic drop of one letter grade for the final course grade.* If a student cannot attend a session due to a conflicting academic requirement, that student should notify the instructor in writing one week prior to the session that will be missed. If a student has a medical or personal reason for absence, likewise the instructor shall be notified in writing at least prior to the start of class. When in doubt, please contact the instructor. Your grade will thank you. All field trips will occur during class time and are mandatory.
- PENALTIES FOR LATE WORK and REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS:** Late work will lose three points for each day that it is late. Requests for extensions must be made before the start of the class session before the assignment is due. No explanations submitted along with late work will suspend these policies. Always consult the instructor if in doubt.
- REGRADING POLICY:** There is no regrading in this seminar.
- REQUESTS FOR INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK ON DRAFTS AND REQUESTS TO REVISE:** Please consult the instructor if you want to receive feedback on writing before it is due.
- TECHNOLOGY POLICIES:** Computers and smart phones may aid course sessions by allowing students to pull up readings, websites, images or other materials to share. These devices should not be used



for other purposes during class time. Absolutely no use of these devices for personal communications, web browsing or games is allowed.

## Academic Integrity

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas, drawings, photographs, written texts and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged through citation, with the name of the author and full reference of the source. See <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~writing/plagiarism.htm> for more information on properly documenting any work or ideas that are not your own. Work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University. Students must be the sole authors of their work from concept through production.

Graduate School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design students are currently governed by the Academic Integrity policy of the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts: [http://www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu/files/Final\\_12-6\\_Architecture%20Graduate%20AI%20Policy-1\\_final2.pdf](http://www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu/files/Final_12-6_Architecture%20Graduate%20AI%20Policy-1_final2.pdf). Students should become familiar with the guidelines and policies of the university and school regarding academic integrity and misconduct. Any questions or concerns should be immediately addressed. Your instructors, advisors and department faculty are available to help students understand the Academic Integrity Policy, how to avoid plagiarism and its serious consequences by learning to cite sources correctly and leaving plenty of time to complete assignments. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance with any concerns in these regards.

Intentional plagiarism may result in a failing grade for this class. If you are not certain what constitutes plagiarism, please ask your instructor.

## Resources for Students

1. **DISABILITY RESOURCES:** If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please speak with instructor and consult the **Disability Resource Center** at Cornerstone ([cornerstone.wustl.edu/](http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/)). Cornerstone staff will determine appropriate accommodations and will work with your instructor to make sure these are available to you.
2. **WRITING ASSISTANCE:** For additional help on your writing, consult the expert staff of The Writing Center ([writingcenter.wustl.edu](http://writingcenter.wustl.edu)) in Olin Library (first floor). It can be enormously helpful to ask someone outside a course to read your essays and to provide feedback on strength of argument, clarity, organization, etc.
3. **THE UNIVERSITY'S PREFERRED NAME POLICY FOR STUDENTS**, with additional resources and information, may be found here: [registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name-policy/preferred-name-policy-student/](http://registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name-policy/preferred-name-policy-student/).
4. **ACCOMMODATIONS BASED UPON SEXUAL ASSAULT:** The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb ([kim\\_webb@wustl.edu](mailto:kim_webb@wustl.edu)), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however,

requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy can be reached at [\(314\) 935-3118](tel:(314)935-3118), [jwkennedy@wustl.edu](mailto:jwkennedy@wustl.edu), or by visiting her office in the Women's Building. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Tamara King, Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at [\(314\) 935-5555](tel:(314)935-5555) or your local law enforcement agency.

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling [\(314\) 935-8761](tel:(314)935-8761) or visiting the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Seigle Hall.

5. **BIAS REPORTING:** The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: [brss.wustl.edu](http://brss.wustl.edu)

6. **MENTAL HEALTH:** Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: [shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth](http://shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth)

***Disclaimer***

The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester.