

# Order, Autonomy and the City

Wednesdays, 6:00 PM | September 2016 | Pulitzer Arts Foundation

Facilitator: Michael Allen

This multi-week class explores the history of power structures that seek to contain the elements of American cities – real estate parcels, neighborhoods, buildings, and even people – that have been perceived as disorderly or otherwise unruly. Readings and discussions will present a counter-narrative suggesting that change, emergence of alternative economies, and community autonomy are often mistaken for disorder – and that the quest for order often destabilizes urban systems.

Based on the input of registered participants, the course will focus on the practical interaction of key themes with the histories and realities of St. Louis. The goal is to unpack the meaning of the *4562 Enright Avenue* installation in accessible but deep critical analysis of the context of the changing city.

## Key Terms As Used

**Order:** The stabilized condition of an urban system (land management, economy, society, education), whose state may reflect the value judgements of its definer. These systems often include different but overlapping elements, making assessments of order difficult to those not aware of all systems.

**Disorder:** A state of rupture in a perceived urban system, often defined from outside of the system and often unaware of the other systems in which an element actually contributes to order.

**Autonomy:** The ability of an urban human to live the life of her or his choice. Also, the political freedom (electoral and spatial) of the urban human.

**City:** The urbanized space of St. Louis, which includes the “City of St. Louis” as well as the surrounding metropolitan area in Missouri and Illinois. Notably, the city does not stop at Skinker Boulevard or the Mississippi River.

## Expectations

Each student is expected to attend all four sessions, participate in discussion and keep current with course readings. There is no mandatory assignment, no grade and no way for the instructor to rule your studies. You are free to make this course your own, with the consent of the multitude (your fellow students).

## Readings

Sources marked with an asterisk are available for download on the course website. The reading list is far from comprehensive, but is designed to not overwhelm participants in such a short course.

## Schedule

### **Session 1: Physical Order: A History of St. Louis' Urban Form**

*Suggested follow-up reading:*

St. Louis City Plan Commission, "Physical Growth of the City of St. Louis" (1969):  
<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/archive/history-physical-growth-stlouis/>

Mitchell Schwarzer, "Past St. Louis," *Harvard Design Magazine* 16 (2002).\*

Maria Altman, "St. Louis Takes a New Look at an Old Problem: What to do with Vacant Land,"  
St. Louis Public Radio (Jun 15, 2016).  
<http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-takes-new-look-old-problem-what-do-vacant-land-and-abandoned-buildings>

### **Session 2: The Geography of Division: Race, Class and Suburbanization**

*Readings to discuss:*

Philippe Bourgois, "If You're Not Black Then You're White: A History of Ethnic Relations in St. Louis," *City & Society* (December 1989).

Demosthenes DuBose, "Interview from *That's The Way It Was: Human Responses to Racism in Everyday Life, 1900-1960*," *Ain't But a Place* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998).\*

Ta Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* (June 2014).  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631>

Elijah Anderson, "The Code of the Street," *Code of the Street* (New York: W.W. Norton Press, 1999).\*

Richard Sennett, "How Cities Bring the Myth of Life," *The Uses of Disorder* (New York: W.W. Norton Press, 1971).\*

### **Session 3: Command and Control Urbanism: Planning & Policing the City**

Guest: Alderwoman Cara Spencer (D-20<sup>th</sup>)

*Readings to discuss:*

Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, "Of Love Possessed" and "The Metropolis" from  
*Commonwealth* (2009).\*

George Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety,"  
*The Atlantic* (March 1982).  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>

Jane Jacobs, "Gradual Money and Cataclysmic Money," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).\*

David Harvey, "The Art of Rent," *Rebel Cities* (New York: Verso Press, 2012).\*

"Ownership and Class," *The Housing Monster* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).\*

#### **Session 4: The Future Is Now**

Guest: Regina Martinez

*Readings to discuss:*

Ferguson Commission, *Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity* (2015).  
<http://forwardthroughferguson.org/report/executive-summary/>

Allan Mallach and Lavea Brachman, *Regenerating America's Legacy Cities* (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2013).  
[https://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/2215\\_Regenerating-America-s-Legacy-Cities](https://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/2215_Regenerating-America-s-Legacy-Cities)

Frederic Stout, "The Automobile, the City and the New Urban Mobilities," *The City Reader* (New York: Routledge Press, 2015).\*

Richard Sennett, "The City As An Anarchic System," *The Uses of Disorder* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1971).\*

Keller Easterling, selections from *Subtraction* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014).\*

#### Instructor Contact

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## Related Events

Saturday, September 17, 10:00AM-12:00 PM (tour); 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (picnic at Pulitzer)  
Seeking the Changing Urban Form: Field Trip

Join Amanda Williams and Andres L. Hernandez, the designers selected for the 2017 PXSTL commission, and Michael Allen, cultural historian and urbanist-in-residence, on a multi-site discussion exploring the conditions of vacancy, emergence, and reinvestment in the city. The group will visit three distinct locations: the Botanical Heights and Hyde Park neighborhoods of St. Louis, and East St. Louis, Illinois. A picnic and discussion at the Pulitzer will follow. This program is free, but space is limited. For more information and to register, please email [programs@pulitzerarts.org](mailto:programs@pulitzerarts.org).

Thursday, September 29, 7:00 PM

Panel Discussion: Deconstructing and Reconstructing St. Louis

Moderated by cultural historian and urbanist-in-residence Michael Allen, this discussion will focus on the panelists' collective work to shape the St. Louis cityscape. Panelists, including many collaborators on the raumlabor project, will be Arnice Little of Z & L Wrecking Company; Pam Talley, President of Lewis Place Historical Preservation, Inc.; Bob Hansman, Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis; Jessica Eiland, President of Northside Community Housing, Inc.; and Frank Oswald, Building Commissioner of the City of St. Louis.