Opposites find and recognize each other, in a unity both more real and more ideal, more complex than its elements already accounted for.”

H. Lefebvre, “Seen from the Window” p227

This class approaches urban theories as systems of mediation; producing selective realities that condition not just urban policy and design but also urban life. Historic, traditional, and emerging theory will be interrogated from a viewpoint that focuses on the relationship between how urban space is understood and how subjects are understood.

In brief the course takes seriously the everyday notion “that it all depends on

How you look at it”.
The sections of the class are as follows

1. Methods and Measures: the methodological approach used in the course, including the use of ideal types as measures of complexity: a) topos, extension, relation b) image, series, sequence c) echo, exchange, encounter
2. Echoes and effective history: theories of the modern metropolis and their legacy in contemporary theory
3. Exchange and the evolution of urban governance: consideration of “the city” at the level of everyday life experience
4. The conjunction of the past, present and possible: encountering the urban in the spatial imaginary

Class material will include a mix of conceptual material, evolution or application of that material and/or related visual evidence. Each week I will give an overview. Students will contribute by raising issues and/or summarizing reading materials. This will begin with locating particularly telling passages in the readings (everyone) and move to discussion and a short analysis memo (two students). All students will also write a paper based in one of the conceptual frameworks explored in class. This can be an analysis of conceptual issues or an application of urban theory to a concrete situation.

Grading is based on participation in class (60%) and final paper (40%). For class participation how presentation and writing illuminate theoretical issues will be the measure. For the final paper the clarity of insight and how the paper expands understanding and relevance of conceptual frameworks are the measure.

Readings will be distributed and/or available on electronic reserve at the library. To obtain these materials go to library website, find electronic course reserve tab, click, enter either the professor’s name or the course number. The pin number for the class is 7582. Click on the small file. Readings are listed alphabetically by title. The text appears when you click on each one. You may read it online or print it.

First Class – 26 August 2015- Laying the groundwork – the play between how the city is understood and how subjects are understood. Mathatta by Paul Stand and Charles Sheeler 1921. Shaft by Gorden Parks 1971
