ARC 425

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CITY:
Dreams of Past, Realities of Present, Visions of Future

Friday // 09:30 - 12:30

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Cities have been the stage for the great events of human history. Whether as seats of political power, spaces of subversion and revolution, or centres of trade and innovation and culture, cities have punctuated human history.

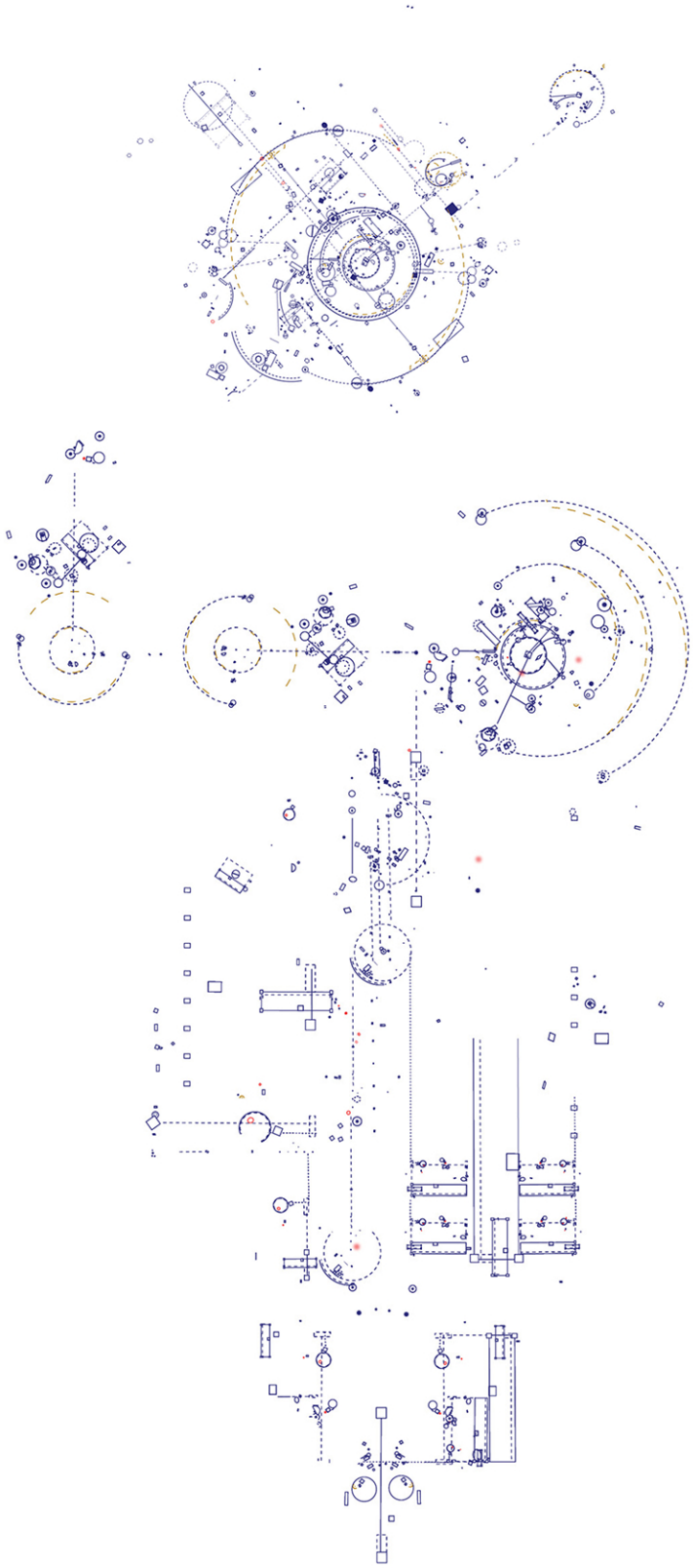
This course will try to ask the following questions and at the same time try to answer them through the examination of historic and contemporary data. Speculations will follow when looking towards the future. The questions asked in this course are as follows:

Is the city an inevitable and indispensable construct for mankind? How did the city emerge and survive throughout history? Why does the majority of the world's population live in cities? What shapes our cities? What is the possible future for cities?

In order to be able to answer these questions and to speculate about the future, we have to understand the behavioral/social/natural roots and reasons of our aggregation in numbers in cities. That foundation will be improved by investigating the dialectic relationship between mankind and space, which will guide us throughout different stages of urbanization in history. The dynamics/factors/variables which shape our cities, man made or natural, will be scrutinized and determined as the course progresses, while the counter effects of our evolving cities which operate as "interfaces between the administrative/military/economic powers and the public" and continue to shape our society will be tracked simultaneously.

The determination of the variables which contribute/contributed to the equations shaping contemporary and historical urban geographies will provide a foundation of our imagining of future cities.

Differences and similarities between urban geographies from different ages and localities will be used as a guideline for the students, who are expected to found an imaginary ancient settlement and evolve it as the course progresses using their sketchbooks and all kinds of media.



"In the civilizations I have created cities are planned with the constellations considered. As individuals traverse the pathways between dwellings and destinations they gaze through spaces between buildings. These architectural frames highlight celestial bodies so they resonate in patterns both subtle and clear. A story unfolds with each corner turned and the music of the spheres is played in a silent symphony of light floating in space."

Robert Strati
image & quote: http://creatingcivilizations.tumblr.com