

**Федеральное государственное образовательное учреждение высшего
профессионального образования
«Национальный исследовательский университет "Высшая школа экономики"»**

**Подразделение «Высшая школа урбанистики»
в сотрудничестве с Институтом Медиа, Архитектуры и Дизайна «Стрелка»**

**Направление подготовки
«Градостроительство»
Степень (квалификация): магистр**

**ПРОГРАММА
«ADVANCED URBAN DESIGN»
«ПЕРЕДОВЫЕ ПРАКТИКИ ГОРОДСКОГО ПРОЕКТИРОВАНИЯ»**

**Аннотация учебной дисциплины
«Critical Thinking»
«Основы критического мышления»**

Шифр направления 07.04.04

Москва, 2016

Critical Thinking

Title of the Course: Critical Thinking

Duration: 1 semester, first year

Type: introductory

Author/lecturer: Nick Axel

Invited speakers: Urban Fauna Lab, METASITU

Scientific Advisors: Benoît Castelnérac (Department of Philosophy and Applied Ethics, University of Sherbrooke), Mathieu Marion (Professor, Department of Philosophy, Université du Québec à Montréal)

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This founding course is intended to promote a methodological approach to critical thinking, mirroring the teacher's multi-disciplinary research and his commitment in fields such as critical theory, architecture, and pedagogy. Critical thinking is presented here as an awareness of one's own actions, the contexts in which they take place, and the implications of their technical — and mediated — performance.

Throughout this course, students will be challenged to bear witness to the contingency of their own opinions and beliefs through a careful analysis of the means by which they are supported and articulated. Students will confront and breach the limits of their inherited ways of seeing, thinking, discussing, and working, eventually coming to consider these actions as performative and political design decisions. Critical thinking is therefore treated as a feat of dexterity, of being able to step outside of one's own position so as to be able to inhabit, and act within it, more strategically.

Through a series of lectures, seminars, practice-based and reflexive activities, students will learn to move from distance to proximity, from subjectivity to objectivity, from identification to disagreement – and back again. Students will ultimately learn to develop well reasoned and incisive arguments; to analyze their 'truth value' (or, conversely, their lack thereof). debate will catalyze the learning process and transfer of practical knowledge. To ground this way of seeing, thinking, and acting as an urban practice, a series of fieldwork sessions will focus on exploration, documentation, analysis, and representation.

This course will not only equip its students with a set of methodological, analytic and practical tools, but also with the skill and ability to reflect upon the shortcomings of those tools. The techniques — and, foremost, the methods — put forward during this course will fundamentally inspire the students' activities and studies, both theoretical and practical,

throughout the entire degree.

2. STRUCTURE AND THEMATIC COMPOSITION

Hours per theme:

<u>#</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Total hours</u>	<u>Lectures</u>	<u>Seminars</u>	<u>Practical/ Field trips</u>	<u>Individual Workload</u>
<u>1</u>	Introduction: <u>Thinking about Thinking</u>	16	4			12
<u>2</u>	Specific competence #1: <u>Dialogue</u>	18		4		14
<u>3</u>	Specific competence #2: <u>Rhetoric</u>	29		4	6	15

<u>4</u>	Specific competence #3: <u>Fieldwork</u>	32	4		16	16
<u>Total:</u>		<u>95</u>	8	8	22	57

Theme per day:

Day 1 Monday, September 5	-Introduction: <u>Thinking about Thinking</u> Lecture #1: Focusing on the Frame Lecture #2: Dialectical Games
Day 2 Tuesday, September 6	-Specific Competence #1: <u>Dialogue</u> Reading Room Reflection
Day 3 Wednesday, September 7	-Specific competence #2: <u>Rhetoric</u> Consolidation: <u>Individuation of main topic</u>
Day 4 Thursday, September 8	-Specific competence #2: <u>Rhetoric</u> Challenge: <i>Debate</i> Reflection
Day 5 Friday, September 9	-Specific competence #3: <u>Fieldwork</u> Presentations by Urban Fauna Lab & METASITU
Day 6 Saturday, September 10	-Specific competence #3: <u>Fieldwork</u> Field trip #1 with Urban Fauna Lab
Day 7 Sunday, September 11	BREAK
Day 8 Monday, September 12	-Specific competence #3: <u>Fieldwork</u> Field trip #2 with METASITU
Day 9 Tuesday, September 13	-Specific competence: <u>Fieldwork</u> Studio work with Urban Fauna Lab & METASITU
Day 10 Wednesday, September 14	Colloquium of student work Final Reflection

3. COURSE CONTENT

Introduction: Thinking about Thinking

Two lectures on foundational mechanisms of critical thinking: *Frame Analysis* and *Dialectics*.

Frame Analysis will be a presentation and reflection of frame analysis theory, first put forward by Erving Goffman and expanded upon by Jim Kuypers, and the latter will focus on pre-Socratic Sophist thought and the notion of truth as a dialogical procedure of refutation.

Dialogue

A day-long ‘reading room’, working through a single text by the entire group, will assure collective understanding while revealing the *process* of understanding to be a collective endeavor. The text, Maurice Blanchot’s *Infinite Conversation*, has been selected for its specific address of a common uncritical tendency, the thought and action as if there is no more to say, no more to learn, no more to discuss. *Dialogue* will end with a group reflection sessions.

Rhetoric

The ability to step outside of one's own position can be an incredible challenge – to see and think about things differently than the ways we already do. *Rhetoric* will be a performative exercise that will have students enact a formal debate around a single topic of common concern yet divergent interpretations. A main topic will be selected by the course's organization and scientific committee.

The first day of *Rhetoric* will be dedicated to individuating this main topic and discovering common positions on a series of key points. By the end of the first day, arguments will be articulated and laid out. The following day, students will be grouped in teams based on their common positions and will be challenged to argue in favor of what were previously discovered to be opposing views. Teams will be scored based on their ability to successfully argue a position which is not their own, and refute those that are. *Rhetoric* will end with group reflection sessions.

Fieldwork

The focus of *Fieldwork* will allow students to continue to demonstrate their engagement with a subject as a critical activity by seeking to bring the critical awareness generated towards one's own position in *Rhetoric* to urban sites. The lack of students' familiarity with said sites or contexts is not as important as how that very familiarity, or lack thereof, is reflected in its engagement. *Fieldwork* should therefore be understood as, in the words of curator and theorist Irit Rogoff, "'field work', i.e. the work of fields [backgrounds, disciplines] rather than that which is located in fields."

Two external guests, Urban Fauna Lab and METASITU team, will be invited to provide their unique insight into urban phenomena currently taking place in Moscow, posing the question of what to look at and what is fundamental to the criticality of both guests' practice. The guests will present their work before leading a daylong excursion to the sites of their respective research, whereupon students will experiment and practice with different means of site and subject documentation. Reflecting on said means, students will then have a studio day with the invited workshop leaders in which they work to represent and frame their engagement with the site and urban phenomena discovered.

At the end of *Fieldwork* a colloquium will be convened in which students will present their work from the previous day's studio session, concluding with a group reflection. By the end of the following week, students will be tasked with writing a single page (A4) of text reflecting on the module as a whole to be submitted to the course teacher.

Bibliography

Required reading in advance:

Erving Goffman – *Frame Analysis*, 'Introduction'

Jim Kuypers – '*Framing Analysis from a Rhetorical Perspective*'

Benoît Castelnérac & Mathieu Marion – '*Arguing for Inconsistency*'

Suggested reading:

Jacques Rancière – *Dis-agreement*, ‘Wrong: Politics and Police’ & ‘The Rationality of Disagreement’

Eyal Weizman – *Hollow Land*, ‘Introduction: Frontier Architecture’

Manuel DeLanda – *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*, ‘II: Flesh and Genes’

4. GRADING

50% Course Participation

30% Colloquium Performance

20% Reflective Written Assignment

Annex 1. A Brief Introduction to Modern Russia

Modern Russia is a complex and, in many ways, a contradictory state. High volatility, spontaneity and fluidity always were and still remain important characteristics of the Russian reality. The twentieth century was one of the most challenging in its history; from the collapse of the Russian Empire and the creation of a totalitarian system in the Soviet Union to the fall of the Soviet Empire and the birth of the Russian Federation, many dramatic events have altered the fate of the country several times – with unprecedented severity and wide spread consequences. Four lectures will introduce the main aspects of the Russian historical development to both local and foreign students as a part of the ‘Critical thinking’ course, providing useful insights into the Russian Past and Present along with the guidelines for further investigation.

Duration: 4 days at the beginning of the first semester (first year)

Type: Introductory

Total hours: 8 hours

Author/lecturer: Alexandra Kolesnik

Lecture 1. Russia in Six Points

1. Geographical Monstrosity

Visualized history of geographical transformations of Russia; the concept of frontier; Russian borderland territories; scale; climatic and natural diversity; natural resources management; emptiness; transport connection.

2. The State of the Empire

Imperial and Soviet Past; territorial expansion; statism; the “patron-slave” relationships in the foreign and interstate policy; archetypes of authorities and bureaucracy in Russia; specific

Russian society; extensive economy; contemporary post-Soviet space; inner colonization; militarization; national symbols and mythologization.

3. Ethnic Mosaic

Ethnic diversity and ethnic disunity; Russian federalism (national, geographical and cultural criteria); migrants and emigrants; “Titular” nation, nationalism and national identity.

4. Between the Religion and the Ideology

The fundamental role of the church in the Russian history; atheistic Soviet experience and the cult of the Communist Party; contemporary Orthodox Church as an economic and political power; “spiritual bonds”; “Orthodoxy and Empire” ideology.

5. Monocentrism

Administrative, financial, educational/scientific, cultural, and economical centralization in Russia; Moscow City Agglomeration; attempts to create regional centers in recent years.

6. East/West

At the crossing of East and West: Russia as a “third place”; Slavophiles and Westerners; the idea of Russia’s “Special Path”; the concept of Eurasianism in the Past and today.

Lecture 2. The Life Lines of Russia

This lecture introduces the history of the country in three interrelated chronologies: Timeline 1. Politics, Timeline 2. Social development, Timeline 3. Culture.

Lecture 3. The ‘Triumvirate’: the Russian Empire – the Soviet Union – the Russian Federation

The lecture is focused on the key periods of the Modern and Contemporary history of Russia, from the heyday of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19th century, to the period of “Perestroika” in the mid-1980s. The aim of the lecture is to explain the specifics of particular historical periods according to five problematic blocks: conflicts and crises; reforms and stabilization; social movements and struggle; the hummers of ideology; culture and “the Russian classics”.

Lecture 4. The Russian Contemporaneity

This lecture looks at modern Russia, specifically at the period between 1985 and 2015, and explains how the Imperial and Soviet past influenced the development of the new democracy and how certain governmental and economic systems from the West were being adopted and adjusted to the controversial Russian situation. The lecture also addresses formative oppositions that define the society today: imperial autocracy versus democracy, appointed authorities versus elected authorities, unitary state versus federal state, Russian nationalism

versus globalization, etc. The lecture strives to give an overview of contemporary Russia and prevailing political trends, and serves as foundation for more detailed investigation of public and private life in various parts of the country.

Bibliography

1. Figes, Orlando (2002). *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
2. Hill, Fiona (1998). The Borderlands of Power: Territory and Great Power Status in Russia at the Beginning and at the End of the Twentieth Century, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 22, Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe, pp. 225-250.
3. Ledeneva, Alena (2013). *Can Russia Modernise?: Sistema, Power Networks and Informal Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Pipes, Richard (1995). *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books.
5. Tolz, Vera (2005). Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 127-150.