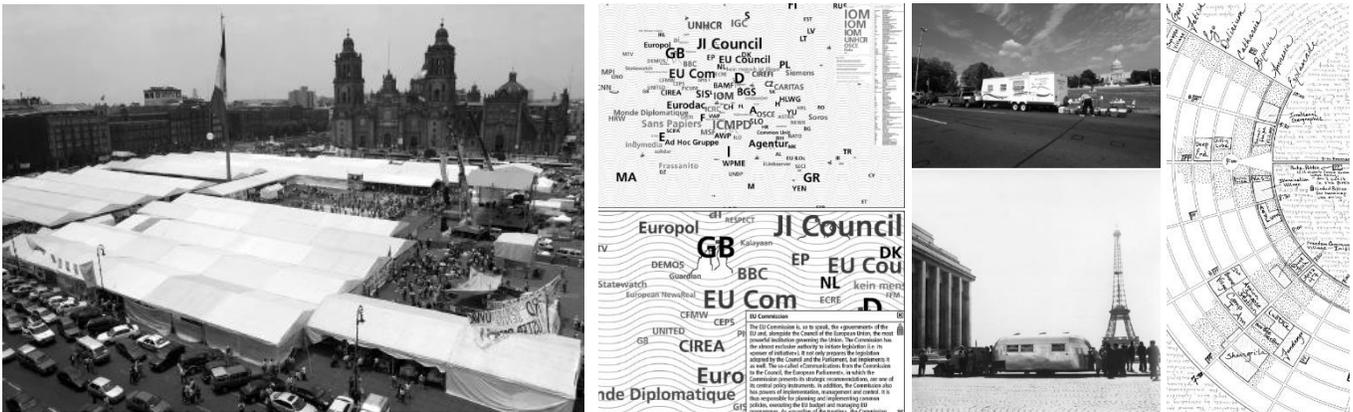


History–Theory Seminar (Fall 2014), Section 11GF
 Meeting time & place: Tuesday periods 7-9, CBD 224

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Camps have become an undeniable condition of 21st-century settlement patterns—whether generated by human choice, economic shifts, political transformations, rapid urban growth, or natural disaster. In the early morning of August 28, 2005, New Orleans officials urged residents to prepare as if they were planning to go camping. By 8 a.m. the Superdome had been declared a “refuge of last resort,” and Hurricane Katrina evacuees, soon to be called “refugees,” filled the adapted site—a camp for the estimated twenty thousand disaster victims. As news of the hurricane’s devastation spread, antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan in Texas was breaking down her protest camp, and in Utah a group leaving the Burning Man festival made plans to reconstruct their theme camp as a relief site along the Gulf Coast. Meanwhile, many of the nation’s eight million recreational vehicle owners were camping out across the nation, as the Hurricane Katrina diaspora sought accommodation in FEMA trailers, RV parks, and other forms of temporary housing.

Defining the camp is a central problem of our contemporary moment. Camps result from the exceptional circumstances of conflict, natural disaster, displacement, and marginality with increasing frequency and ever-greater facility. How and why these camps are made, where they are located, and how long they endure reveal problems and possibilities associated with our built environment—a context being radically transformed by globalization, mobility, and political flux. Because of their rapid deployment and temporal nature, camps register these forces at their earliest stages and thus provide an important gauge of local and global situations. To understand a camp’s paradoxes is to begin to comprehend our current spaces, inexorably affected by militaristic, political, and romantic extremes. Camp spaces no longer just serve recreational and strategic uses but now accommodate an increasingly diverse set of occupants—including detainees, refugees, migrants, pilgrims, activists, tourists, hedonists, and avatars. The complex dynamic between these groups and the internal or external methods of response characterizes the siting and making of each camp.

This seminar begins with the premise that camps register the forces and conditions of human settlement at their earliest stages. As a result, camps afford a unique look at foundations of the contemporary city, current ecologies, and landscapes in transition. The seminar will include historical frameworks to comprehend camps’ relevance throughout the built environment’s development, methodological frameworks to understand urban form and growth, and more localized and contemporary frameworks to ascertain new directions in urbanism and the current experiences of the modern city. In each case, the seminar will consider global and local situations: from refugee camps in Africa to migrant camps in the southeastern U.S., from festival camps in the United Kingdom to protest camps in North America, and from government-regulated responses to idiosyncratic, highly localized permutations. In each context, we will delve deeply into the forces and conditions at work.

In Florida’s particular setting, camps require us to reconsider settlement patterns and what has been called “sustainable” growth, just as the state’s FEMA cities remain, migrant camps become more permanent, and utopian dreams flourish. And government-regulated responses to disasters overlap with idiosyncratic, highly localized permutations. Census Designated Places such as Gibsonton—where carnival performers have influenced zoning ordinances—rest alongside other less formalized—but equally potent—zones like Rainbow Gathering camps in the Ocala National Forest.

The course will include weekly readings, discussions, and presentations. The primary texts will be Charlie Hailey’s two recent books: *Campsite: Architectures of Duration and Place* (LSU Press, 2008) and *Camps: A Guide to 21st-Century Space* (MIT Press, 2009). Students will be asked to analyze, map, narrate, and write about particular camps and camp-related systems. Seminar outcomes will include the development of a comprehensive and critically framed taxonomy of contemporary camp-city and camp-landscape relations, selected close readings of camps in the global context, and refinement of interdisciplinary scholarship and research modes that take into account the ephemerality of contemporary camps. In all cases, spatial, ecological, legal, ethical, political, experiential and cultural implications will be considered.