

Crises, Heritage and Urbanity

QUESTIONS OF REHABILITATION; RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY

Reflections on contextual and morphological dynamics

Second Block Course - Online

19 – 21 September 2022



Homs City, Syria in 2014: Hamidiyeh in the old city of Homs - Youssef Karwashan/AFP

Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Historic Districts and Preservation of Architectural Heritage after Armed Conflicts

Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus – Senftenberg, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning
American University of Beirut, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

In cooperation with Technische Universität Berlin and German Jordanian University

Funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

INTRODUCTION

The second block course in the framework of the BTU-AUB cooperation on the post-conflict reconstruction of historic Syrian cities focuses on the impact of socio-economic dynamics on the urban and architectural reconstruction of historic quarters. It hence investigates the interplay between the morphological and socio-economic processes of recovery. This block course opens up interrelated thematic frameworks for further debates and dialogues among the experts and participants. The themes include:

- International Lessons: Innovative interventions - innovative methods
- Syria & MENA: Urban Stories and News from the Land

In this 3-day seminar, questions around intervention and societal dynamics of in/post-crisis will be linked to the reconstruction and recovery process that resurface in periods on (in)stabilities. Similar to our former course, the integrated and strategic planning process is the umbrella approach to understanding and building on how the urban, architectural and territorial scales interplay and synergise multifaceted aspects of crises. Therefore, this course aims to dig deeper into different space-time-frames of past-present-future responses and change of the society-economy-space triad. This second block course focuses on in and post-crisis reconstruction that impact and catalyses wide practices of heritage preservation and urban development within a comprehensive yet tactical manner. Syria and MENA theme aims to tackle the historical and contemporary contested study areas within other local and international contexts. Therefore, it is fundamental to rethink different intervention strategies and socio-spatial practices, which this course will introduce and further discuss. Finally, the international and innovative methods theme will shed light on existing lessons and developed tools to map and address crisis-associated challenges, including (forced) displacements, marginalisation, increasing inequalities and (un)successful interventions. The main goal is to set stepping stones for more inclusive scenarios towards meaningful and peace-led reconstruction practices within and despite resurfacing instabilities.

The seminar is structured based on highlighting an aspect of each theme during each day to frame relational realities through inputs from the cooperation team, guest experts, and the participants. The event will be concluded by a discussion round on the intersection of the proposed frameworks.

This seminar will serve as a prelude to an Urban Design workshop in November hosted by German Jordanian University.

TIMETABLE

Registration Link:

<https://forms.gle/UEY9jNNmCmowqs6U8>

Link to Join:

<https://b-tu.webex.com/b-tu-en/j.php?MTID=m7de637c1a39fbc6c7f972aeed5d65d06>

Meeting number (access code): 2733 865 0203

Meeting password: rcQrp3GdU63

Note: the schedule is set based on the Central European time Zone.

DAY	TIME (UTC +1)	AGENDA
Day 1	09:00 – 09:15	Opening and Welcome
Monday 19.09.22	09:15 – 10:00	Conservation of Post-War Modern Architecture in Prague: Legislative issues and contesting views <i>Dr. Mounir Sabeh Affaki</i>
	10:00 – 10:15	Q&A
	10:15 – 11:00	Urban Activism in Saida, Lebanon <i>Dr. Ismael Sheikh Hassan & Architect Lyne Jabri</i>
	11:00 – 11:15	Q&A
	11:15 – 12:45	Lunch Break
	12:45 – 13:30	Community-led Transformation Debates: The Relation to the Destroyed Heritage of the Old City of Aleppo <i>Architect Minerva Fadel</i>
	13:30 – 13:45	Q&A
	13:45 – 14:00	Coffee Break
	14:00 – 14:45	How to provoke enduring crisis (and not solve it): Regional imbalances in Tunisia <i>Dr. Stefano Pontiggia</i>
	14:45 – 15:00	Q&A
	15:00 – 15:15	Closing Remarks
Day 2	09:00 – 09:45	Approaches of Urban Recovery of Historic Districts after War: The Integrated Planning Approach (Cases from Freiburg Germany and Ukraine)
Tuesday 20.09.22		<i>Prof. Christoph Wessling</i>
	09:45 – 10:00	Q&A

10:00 – 10:45	The Ancient city of Bosra, Damage assessment and recovery process after the conflict <i>Architect Ahed Diab</i>
10:45 – 11:00	Q&A
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break.
11:15 – 12:00	Memories of Places - Space for Memory. The role of the historical urban spatial morphology in the process of recovery. The case of the city of Ypres in Belgium <i>Prof. Dr. Gisèle Gantois</i>
12:00 – 12:15	Q&A
12:15 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 14:45	THERE IS NO CITY WITHOUT CITIZENS: SOCIAL ACTIVATION FOR URBAN REGENERATION IN CONFLICT ZONES: Notes from the practice in the casbah of Nablus, Palestine <i>Alessandra Gola</i>
14:45 – 15:00	Q&A
15:00 – 15:15	Closing remarks

Day 3 Wednesday 21.09.22	10:15 – 11:00	Mapping, the practice: participatory / social mapping through humanitarian work and anti-colonial research <i>Architect Razan Khalaf</i>
	11:00 – 11:15	Q&A
	11:15 – 12:00	Planning in Hard Mode (Cases from projects in Mozambique, Syria, and the Philippines) <i>Prof. Thomas Stellmach</i>
	12:00 – 12:15	Q&A
	12:15 – 12:45	Discussion, reflections and introduction to the workshop in Jordan

Dr. Mounir Sabeh Affaki.

Conservation of Post-War Modern Architecture in Prague: Legislative issues and contesting views



Debates have been recently raised around the fate of late post-war architecture in Prague, especially the end of 1960s to 1980s, criticised for a handful of issues including stylistic language, urban position, political representation, functional suitability, physical status, and unsustainability. This phenomenon has caused waves of demolitions and extreme and harmful alterations, putting this component at risk. This presentation will communicate and discuss the aspects of this debate and its impacts on the preservation of post-war architecture in the city through the examination of selected cases.

Architect Lyne Jabri & Dr. Ismael Sheikh Hassan

Urban Activism in Saida, Lebanon



This talk will discuss different strategies of urban activism in the context of Saida in southern Lebanon. More specifically it will discuss how urban activists confronted neo-liberal urban development projects and national infrastructural projects that were destroying Saida's agricultural orchards, historic urban fabrics and natural structures of the city. It will also discuss the limits and potentials of grassroots movements in confronting corruption and clientelism within sectarian societies.

Architect Minerva Fadel, Msc.

Community-led Transformation Debates: The Relation to the Destroyed Heritage of the Old City of Aleppo

The consequences of armed conflict and physical destruction commonly create a call for a transformation of the built environment. This study debated the visual (perceived) and mental (projected) transformation of historical places. This was based on the community of the Old City of Aleppo's perceptions and in the context of the Syrian conflict 2011-18. With semi-structured interviews with eight decision-makers from academia and practice, this study investigated the potential routes of transformation and the changeable relationship with the damaged heritage because of destruction. Findings were outlined in three arguments; restoring the Old City to more than 'as it was', accepting changes defined as a correction or upgrading, and the challenges of commemorating the war through built heritage. Discussing these findings in regard to the relationship with the destroyed heritage showed a correlation between transformation directions and relations' transformation. In addition, presenting war memories explored a contentious relationship with the destroyed heritage.

Dr. Stefano Pontiggia

How to provoke enduring crisis (and not solve it): Regional imbalances in Tunisia

Building on research data collected in southern Tunisia during 2014 and 2015, the speech will tackle the issue of regional imbalances in Tunisia and will trace back its genealogy starting from pre-colonial times. Rural-urban disparities are indeed caught in a broader dynamic of inequality that unfolds at the regional level, the north-east leading the country and the south-west being given the role of providing raw materials and a low-skilled workforce. The lecture will propose some concepts to understand this situation (and others similar to this) and will briefly describe how the post-revolutionary period tackled the issue.

Prof. Dr. Stefan Heidemann (this lecture is postponed)

Infrastructure Projects, Rebuilding lives and the Antiquity Market

Building activities in historical landscapes, cultural heritage preservation and antiquities trafficking are interlocked phenomena. Antiquities trafficking is mostly discussed in terms of invaluable national heritage, evil players, ruthless collectors, tomb raiders, and lately of financiers of terrorist groups. This sounds exciting, but it is only a fringe phenomenon of a much wider and quite different problem, which is as far as a crime novel from everyday life. It is not so much spectacular looting at archaeological sites with initial criminal intent in the Middle East that produces the mass of rather pedestrian antiquities available for the worldwide market (coins, oil lamps, simple shards, base metal buttons and pendants etc.), but probably more the large earth movements in the course of legitimate major construction and infrastructure projects that secondarily bring tens of thousands of undocumented historical objects to light. Most of them are not spectacular, or worth a lot, but historians and archaeologists loose invaluable find spot data. Also the necessity to rebuild life looks for available building materials which are at hand, well hewn antique stones, adobe from ancient settlement mounts, and so forth. It is not war situations, but more post-war reconstruction situations, as being now in Syria, that give rise to fears of destruction of cultural heritage on a massive scale. The presentation draws on 40 years' experience in Syria, as social and economic historian of the Middle East, and as participant on several excavations, and former Museum curator.

Architect Ahed Diab

The Ancient city of Bosra, Damage assessment and recovery process after the conflict

The Ancient City of Bosra was inscribed as a world heritage city in 1980. It is located in southwestern Syria. It is considered a distinguished historic city as it was a religious capital and an important commercial centre. Some historical monuments in Bosra have been damaged since 2015. As a result, a city management plan has been drawn up. This plan has been divided into several stages according to international standards:

The first phase (short term)

Historical studies and collection of all the archives (old photos – references – plan- law....) and studies before the damage.

Assessment and documentation of damage/forms.

Plans of archaeological monuments, excavation, Heights, land use, Material, Ownership, and physical state.

3D Documentation: all city – the Nymphée Monument.

Removing rubble from alleys and roads within the city / Municipal Council /

Modify the building regulations and their enforcement mechanism according to current circumstances.

The second phase (medium-term)

Study restoration projects and implement some of them according to the financing, the seriousness of the construction situation, or according to usage.

Museum rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation of site management (public services - sign boards - visit paths - visitor center).

A study of the economic resources of the site by the local community (investment of some buildings and repurposing them as a restaurant - shops for example).

Prof. Gisèle Gantois

Memories of Places - Space for Memory. The role of the historical urban spatial morphology in the process of recovery. The case of the city of Ypres in Belgium

The city of Ypres, situated in the Flemish province of West-Flanders in Belgium, was completely destroyed during the First World War (1914-1918). However, specifically the streets, alleys and public spaces lined by the blackened ruins of historical buildings remained visible in the ruined city because people re-walked them and trucks and tanks run over them again and again. This pattern of public and collective spaces is still recognisable today in the city's spatial configuration. After the war some former inhabitants came back and new people arrived and they chose to rebuild the city and not for a conservation of the ruins as a memorial as Winston Churchill had proposed. However, the reconstruction was not completely identical to the original form but idealised with new perspectives and a re-orientation of the main axis. Today, 100 years after the war and reconstruction, the city flourishes. It did evolve towards an attraction for war tourism and a space for memory after all, embodied in its monuments and squares. However, after the war life itself with all its expressions was restored as well as in all its diversity, translated in today's social mesh and the different trajectories of citizens and visitors interfering with each other or not in this palimpsestic town. This contribution will demonstrate how ordinary citizens with their real-life experiences interfere in top-down proposals while enabling the co-creation of a resilient city. In the case of Ypres, one can state that the choice to respect the mediaeval street pattern, be it with a certain beautification, probably contributed to the successful reintegration of the citizens. Apart from that, the important link between heritage and memory will be highlighted within the process of reconciliation while restoring lives, broken journeys and narratives.

Architect Alessandra Gola, Msc.

THERE IS NO CITY WITHOUT CITIZENS: SOCIAL ACTIVATION FOR URBAN REGENERATION IN CONFLICT ZONES: Notes from the practice in the casbah of Nablus, Palestine.

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody”, Jane Jacobs wrote. This quote should be the first to be taught to professionals

working on urban spaces, particularly those who engage with urban regeneration and with the mission to bring back life to places that suffered the devastation of war. However, as architects and engineers, we are often trained to pay attention to the physical space while being given a very generalised -and at times stereotyped- consideration of whom we are doing this for. Worse than this, we are rarely formed to appreciate the benefit and the value of consistently including social aspects in our work.

This lecture reflects upon four years of hands-on practice in the field in the old town of Nablus, Palestine, working as the chief of Yalla Project Nablus. The casbah was and still is one of the main targets of the Israeli colonial forces, defining the place as more of an inter-war rather than a post-war zone. After being besieged and sealed off from 2001 to 2008, the old town still suffers frequent raids from the occupying military forces. The uricide campaigns that target Nablus are aimed to disaggregate the built heritage and the local communities (ABU-JIDI, 2014), with the last operation taking place on these very days since August 9th.

Working in this adverse framework brings us to reflect on how the flip side of the coin of destruction is the creation of opportunities to start anew and make space for a more just and liveable city. But how, operatively speaking?

In the past decades, many international projects in urban regeneration have been harshly criticised for failing their intent, not being understood and appropriated by local communities. How can we make it different?



The lecture will focus on the value and ways of integrating the social in architectural regeneration processes. Why and how to understand local social constructs, customs, habits, and rituals? What is the benefit, and why should we understand the local mindset and ways of thinking? How to recognise and integrate local power relationships and hierarchies into our projects? For at least a decade, we witnessed an abundant and often superficial use of “gender”, “women”, and “social sustainability” as project keywords without finding, however, a consistent and impactful application in the field. Why should we still consider these terms, and how can the attention on gender actually benefit the success of a regeneration project?



Architect. Razan Khalaf

Mapping, The Practice: Participatory / Social Mapping Through Humanitarian Work and Anti-Colonial Research

This lecture tracks the journey of a spatial professional through researching space from social political engagement to (attempts) in spatial liberation, it draws on experience within humanitarian work, academia and contemporary art to interrogate the agency of mapping as a power charged practice.

Dr. Mounir Sabeh Affaki.

Dr. Affaki is an architect and a researcher. He holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Coimbra. Being part of the international postdoctoral programme of the Czech Technical University in Prague, he is currently developing his research on the post-war Czech architecture with the mentorship of Professor Petr Vorlík at the Department of Theory and History of Architecture. His personal research responds to the reality of his hometown Aleppo. His PhD dissertation discusses the potentials of architecture and urban planning as tools for post-war social reconciliation, focusing on the role of heritage, memory, and public spaces. To this end, he conducted interdisciplinary research, bridging social studies and architecture.

Architect Lyne Jabri

Lyne Jabri is an architect and urbanist. She worked on the reconstruction project of Nahr el-Bared Refugee Camp in the North of Lebanon between 2009 and 2010. Later, in 2012, she completed her Master's in Urbanism and Strategic Planning at KU Leuven with a master's thesis on water and urbanism in the city of Saida in Lebanon. In 2013, together with a small group of urban activists, she formed the Lil-Madina Initiative in Saida. She has started her PhD at KU Leuven in 2019, and is currently researching through an action-research methodology, urban activism in conditions of clientelism. Since 2020 she is part of Nohiye el-Ard; an initiative working on community gardens in Saida.

Dr. Ismael Sheikh Hassan

Dr. Sheikh Hassan is an urbanist and activist who has engaged in various post-war reconstruction projects and activist initiatives in various Lebanese contexts and Palestinian refugee camps in the region.

Architect Minerva Fadel.

Founder of Re-Think Housing Studio, launched in 2019, which embraces participatory architecture and in research through design and practice along with the affected communities. As such, the studio's work and research interest focuses on Syrian housing in relation to socio-political, heritage, and conflict studies.

Minerva has a BA degree in Architectural Engineering and a MA's degree in Architectural Design from Faculty of Architecture of Aleppo University, where she worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Design and the Construction Departments of the from 2011-2017. She has a second MA degree in International Architectural Regeneration and Development at Oxford Brookes in 2018, with a thesis titled: Post-Conflict Restoration and Transformation: Incorporating Local Community Perceptions in Addressing the Concurrent Need for Change and Cultural Continuity.

Dr. Stefano Pontiggia

Dr. Stefano Pontiggia is a social anthropologist (PhD in Human Sciences with specialization in Cultural Anthropology, University of Ferrara 2016; Master's Degree in Anthropological Sciences, University of Milan Bicocca 2009). He has carried out ethnographic research in Italy and Tunisia working both within the academy and for NGOs, associations, and social cooperatives. Dr. Pontiggia has published books, scientific articles, and chapters in collective volumes. Over the years, he has also worked as a social worker in the reception system for asylum seekers and as a specialist educator on minors; Dr. Pontiggia also dealt with these issues as a teacher and trainer. His areas of interest concern the state and its daily formation, social and territorial marginality, power, and asylum migration. He is also interested in the way power relations unfold in space and contribute to its production.

Prof. Dr. Stefan Heidemann

Prof. Heidemann, since 2011, is a Professor of Islamic Studies at Universität Hamburg, and director of "RomanIslam Center of Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies" in Hamburg. PI of the ERC Advanced Grant Project "The Early Islamic Empire at Work – The View from the Regions Toward the Center" (2014-2019). Formerly he served as Associate Curator of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum and as Professor of Islamic History and Material Culture at The Bard Graduate Center, New York. PhD at Free University Berlin 1993; Habilitation, at Jena University 2001. Cooperation with German, British, French, and Syrian archaeological missions in al-Raqqa, Damascus, Aleppo, Masyaf, Balkh, Karakorum and other sites.

Prof. Christoph Wessling.

Prof. Wessling is an architect and urban planner with over 25 years of practical and academic experience in the fields of urban design, urban revitalization and integrated urban development. He is the acting partner of the insar consult since 1995 and the head of the Middle East Cooperation (MEC) Unit at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg since 2011, where he has guided several academic programmes with Middle Eastern universities including the Aleppo University and Damascus University. He is also the academic coordinator of the Master Programme Urban Design – Revitalization of Historic City Districts which is a double-degree programme between BTU, Cairo and Alexandria universities. From 2016 to 2019 he served as the mentor of integrated urban planning for the city of Chernivtsi, Ukraine, on behalf of GIZ. Currently, he is the acting professor at TU Berlin, Chair of Urban planning and Urban Regeneration

Architect Ahed Diab

Graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in 2001 and started working at the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in early 2002 in the field of cultural heritage preservation and participated in numerous archaeological, restoration and documentation projects.

After obtaining a master's degree in the restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings and archaeological sites at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Damascus and the School of Architecture CHAILLOT/Paris in 2011, She was appointed head of the Department Conservation Studies at the Architecture Department (DGAM). Additionally, Architect Diab has also been part of the teaching team in a Master's program on Restoration and Rehabilitation of Archaeological Buildings at the Faculty of Architecture - at the University of Damascus in 2015-2016.

Since October 2019, she has been the Manager of the Damascus Citadel Project. Currently, Architect Diab chairs several working groups on emergency projects, including the study and supervision of emergency works in the historic Beit El Youssef, one of the most important ancient houses in Damascus outside the walls, as well as the 3D documentation team leader for buildings and archaeological sites in Syria.

She participated with a team from the DGAM in the evaluation and documentation of the damage caused to the archaeological sites (Crac des Chevaliers, Palmyra, Bosra ...) In addition, she supervised the workshop "visions after the liberation" within the framework of a collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Damascus. Last but not least, she supervised the study and implementation of preventive protection at the National Museum in Damascus and other museums in Syria at the start of the 2012-2013 crisis.

Prof. Dr. Gisèle Gantois

The main topic of her research is called Restoring Broken Journeys meaning the re-establishment of a previous (social) right, practice, or situation, which was distorted, while looking at the future as 'Journeys' pre-suppose a process of change and development. This research looks at heritage in a different way beyond the pure restoration of a historical site or area but investigates on how journeys, narratives and lives are closely entangled within a lived environment which has an indivisible link with built community heritage.

In her practice, architect Gantois places an important focus on heritage as part of a fragile social, cultural and ecological fabric. She is particularly fascinated by the interaction of local residents and newcomers with heritage and how this affects the way they experience their environment and how they add new layers of meaning to it.

There is a growing conviction that historical sites have important ecological, social and cultural meaning in addition to their historical artistic, archaeological, anthropological and architectural characteristics. This cannot always be identified unambiguously and immediately, but they are of great importance for the attachment of communities to these places and the identification with them.

In her research and teaching, she develops interactive methods and tools based on walking and storytelling to trace, expose and map these less visible contemporary meanings of the cultural landscape for both residents and newcomers with a view to better and socially better accepted projects of redefinition of historical sites. An important element in this is Imagines Agentes, inspiring images that help the viewer to strengthen his/her memory of the place or to make a new place his/her own through association by emphasizing the universal character of the experience.

Prof. Gisèle Gantois is affiliated with the Faculty of Architecture and the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, KU Leuven, Belgium. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6009-7877>

Architect Alessandra Gola, Msc.

Alessandra Gola is an Italian architect, head and co-founder of Yalla Project, an interdisciplinary research hub on socio-spatial development based in Nablus, Palestine. Her expertise focusses on socio-spatial studies and the relation between built environment and identity, developed through grounded and applied research. Since 2009 Alessandra's practice is based in Palestine and tackles socio-spatial development in contexts of conflict and political instability. Alessandra is attaining her PhD in Architecture from KU Leuven university (Belgium) with a research on socio-spatial production in urban Palestine. In 2018 she co-founded Yalla Project.

Amongst her recent publications is the edited volume *Making Home(s) in Displacement: Critical Reflections on a Spatial Practice* (Leuven University Press, 2022), and the essay "National Identity in the Guest Room: The Palestinian "Duyuf" (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2021).

Architect. Razan Khalaf.

Razan is an interdisciplinary researcher driven by socio-political curiosity, her research seeks to track alternate tools of navigation to document and communicate spatial knowledge within disadvantaged space and colonial contexts. She's trained as a spatial planner and has parallel obsessions with textiles, books, music and organic patterns.

Prof. Thomas Stellmach:

Thomas Stellmach is known as founder of TSPA Making Cities, an international urban planning and design firm that develops sustainable urban systems for a changing world, and as a planning expert for UN-Habitat.

Trained as an architect in Berlin and Barcelona, Thomas Stellmach has lived and worked in Rotterdam, Aleppo, Barcelona and Nairobi. He has now settled in Berlin and teaches Urban Design and Urban Studies at the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Urban Planning at BTU Cottbus since April.

His planning work includes the strategic framework plan for the Metropole Ruhr and the recently awarded development plan for Berlin-Brandenburg 2070, as well as the development plan for Makkah and Moscow's largest urban expansion.

He has previously taught at the Berlage in Rotterdam, NL, the University for Science & Arts in Aleppo, Syria, and Riseba in Riga, and lectured at Tsinghua University in Beijing, Strelka in Moscow, UPC in Barcelona and AUB in Beirut.

For the United Nations, he supports the Sustainable Urban Development Programme and coordinated pilot projects in the Philippines, Rwanda and Mozambique.

In 2020, Thomas was appointed by Berlin's Governing Mayor, Michael Müller, as a member of the strategy advisory board of the recently launched Smart City project.

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Project Name

Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Historic Districts and Preservation of Architectural Heritage after Armed Conflicts [[Link](#)]

Project Partners

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