Call for Papers

Placing East Asia: A Graduate Student Conference on Urbanism and the Production of Space

March 2-3, 2012
Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS)
University of California, Berkeley

In recent years, a growing number of scholars have turned their attention to cities and urban space as a means to understand historical and social processes. While the so-called “spatial turn” in the humanities and social sciences has spurred a diverse body of scholarship, the interpretive lens and research methods on urban issues have remained largely divided along disciplinary boundaries. Meanwhile, the push towards theoretical pluralism in area studies and urban studies has placed increased emphasis on the interconnections between the local and global environs, human agencies and institutional and cultural structures, and a diverse array of discourses and historical trajectories that shape the transformation of cities and everyday life.

This two-day interdisciplinary conference brings together graduate students working on urban studies in the East Asian region. Although the wide range of urban forms and historical experiences in East Asia precludes any generalization of an “East Asian city,” the examination of the region from different disciplinary perspectives can lead to new insights on urban processes that depart from long established Euro-American assumptions. To this end, we invite conference participants to submit papers to one of the following three sub-themes:

1. Urban Experiments and Placemaking Practices: The construction and invention of urban projects that serve specific interests and ideological ends. What are the competing regimes of values that drive these projects and who are the agents involved? What kind of symbolic forms are utilized to promote urban aspirations and create new meanings of place?

2. Industries, Networks and the City: The shaping of cities by emergent global and local production networks and industries. How does the interaction between global market forces and domestic governmental practices reshape urban processes and the politics of place? How do contestations among different social actors, changing central and local state relations and the ensuing jurisdictional fragmentation impact urban development in specific locales?

3. Culture(s), Space(s) and Representation(s): The representations of urban space and their relations to the production of subjectivity, identity and difference. Paper topics might address questions such as: how is the city portrayed in different mediums? What kinds of cultural imaginings and truth claims are enabled by its diverse representations? How do cultural representations of urban spaces interact with larger representations of cultural identity in an increasingly fluid and global age?

Submission of Abstracts: October 15, 2011
Notification of Acceptance: November 5, 2011
Submission of Full Papers: February 10, 2012
Conference: March 2-3, 2012

Applicants should submit a 250-word abstract with indication of a preferred theme, a 1-page CV and contact information (email, phone no. and mailing address) to placingeastasia@gmail.com by October 15, 2011.

This conference is sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS) and the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley. For additional information about the conference, please contact the organizers at placingeastasia@gmail.com or visit the conference website at http://ieas.berkeley.edu/urbanism. A limited number of travel grants may be available to conference participants.