This seminar will set out to examine key notions and developments around food systems, urban form, and landscapes. Food and its production entails a complex web of relationships from the soil to plate. Examining these relationships asks us to engage with notions of culture, identity, ecology, spatial design and social justice. Food systems are material systems; perhaps the one human reality that cannot be dematerialized. As such, they extend through ecosystems, agricultural lands, residential areas and cities. Everywhere that humans go food systems reach; food has determined the shapes of our cities for millennia. Just as we can look at historical food systems and relationships as determinant of urban form, new developments and thinking about food production are sparking a new wave of urban design and landscape architectural innovations.

The relationship between food and cities is fundamental to our lives. From the point of view of spatial design, these relationships are a rich field of investigative potential. We will examine how food has historically shaped urban form. We will encounter notions of food justice, food security, and food sovereignty. Urban agriculture has recently enjoyed a renaissance and is transforming our cities. From there we will encounter the emerging field of “Agrarian Urbanism” — spatial design based upon agrarian ideals. This coming together of design for food production and the creation of urban forms has yielded new developments, such as Agrihoods which integrate large-scale food production into residential areas and give new meaning to the phrase “mixed-use development.” Food and design opens up a new realm of possibilities—new lifestyles, new urban spaces, but it is also necessary to critique these developments through the lens of social justice and accessibility.

This seminar will be reading and discussion based with short essay responses and a final project. We will be coordinating some of discussions and projects with the two other seminars being offered in Winter 2019: Yekang Ko’s LA 459 Sustainable Energy Landscapes and Kory Russel’s ENVS 410 Water, Public Health, and the Environment. This will allow exploration of some key connections between food, energy, and water.
Selected Reading List


