

Property as Spatial Practice

Arch 509

3 credit elective

Gabriel Cuéllar

Tuesdays, 8:30–11:30am

What are the spatial dimensions of property? How does climate change complicate traditional conceptions of landownership? How can designers support social movements that intersect with property? What concepts are needed to operate across lot lines in a world ordered by property?

This seminar explores the practices and institutions of land and property from the perspective of design. Land mediates power, yet, the design professions have largely taken it — and its social, cultural, and legal dimensions — for granted. Accordingly, this course will articulate how to navigate property and transpose its political stakes onto matters of design. We will cover two main areas. The first, *Histories and Concepts*, introduces the formative settings, conditions, and technologies that precipitated the evolution of real property and corresponding spatial formations from early cities to present territories. The second, *Struggles and Opportunities*, emphasizes contemporary realities to identify the political, material, and ecological design potentials of alternative land-based practices, such as community land trusts, cooperatives, and struggles for decolonization. The course format will include lectures, reading roundtables, site visits, spatial practice case studies, and team-based visual research projects. Students will gain an understanding of how real property structures spatial politics and how designers can contribute to its remaking.