The Social Justice and the City Lecture Series for Fall 2014

The Social Justice and the City lecture series is part of the “Social Justice and Development Policy in the Arab World” project undertaken by the Issam Fares Institute at AUB, which seeks to explore facts of social justice in relation to the recent transformations that have struck the Arab Middle-East. This project is in partnership with the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University. With respect to the theme of the city, our interest is to explore critically how notions of inclusive/shared space, communal property, and others borrowed from urban studies, can provide useful lenses to produce new readings of the cities in our region. We are therefore beginning the program with an open-ended lecture series that brings established researchers who have looked at these themes in different contexts and activist-scholars from the region who have investigated, applied, tested and re-imagined some of these contexts.

Monday September 29, 2014 | 6:30-8:00PM
Issam Fares Institute Auditorium

The Paradox of Citizenship and Justice in Divided Societies: Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and South Africa
Lynn Staeheli

Abstract: Citizenship seems like a status and a concept that is hard to object to; it signals inclusion, belonging, unity, and a kind of political protection. It is for this reason that many international organizations, governments, and civil society organizations have turned to the concept as they promote healing and reconciliation in the face of deep social divisions and conflict. Citizenship, they often argue, links development and democracy, and can serve as a basis for peace-building and social justice. In this way, it stands as both a universal norm and an unquestioned goal. Against this optimistic outlook, however, many social and political activists are wary of citizenship-talk and the ways that it can be manipulated to create new fault lines of exclusion.
In this presentation, I take a genealogical approach to explore the paradox of citizenship promotion programmes in three societies with recent histories of conflict and/or division: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon and South Africa. Genealogical approaches trace the ways that a general set of principles and values interact with histories and place-specific relationships, and often produce unanticipated forms and practices of citizenship. Through the tensions between the ways in which normative ideals are
promoted and the ways citizenship is practiced and experienced in daily life, the political and social limitations and potentials of citizenship become evident.

**Biography:** Lynn Staeheli is Professor of Human Geography at Durham University in the United Kingdom. She previously held appointments in the Department of Geography and Institute of Behavioural Studies at the University of Colorado, and she was the Ogilvie Chair of Geography at the University of Edinburgh. Her research is generally concerned with the ways that marginalized groups gain political voice. More specifically, she has studied: public space; community and political activism; feminist and immigrant mobilizations; protest movements; the role of faith and spirituality in public life; and homelessness. Her current research project ‘Youth Citizenship in Divided Societies’ is funded by a European Research Council Advanced Grant.

Friday October 10, 2014 | 11:00AM-1:00PM  
Architecture Lecture Hall

*Site-writing: Positionality and Subjectivity in Urban Research and Criticism*
Jane Rendell

[*This lecture is part of the Performance Philosophy's workshop "Beirut: Bodies in Public" taking place at the Architecture and Design Department October 9-11, 2014. For more details, see: http://performancephilosophy.ning.com/page/beirut-bodies-in-public.]*

**Abstract:** With reference to two projects, *An Embellishment (Purdah)* and *May Mo(u)rns*, this talk configures what happens when discussions concerning situatedness and site-specificity inform the practice of writing criticism, and the spatial qualities of writing become as important in conveying meaning as the content of the criticism. I will suggest that in operating as mode of a practice in its own right this kind of criticism raises ethical questions concerning the relation of the critic to the work positioned ‘under’ critique, and instead proposes alternative positions connecting the researcher/writer to his/her ‘object’ (or subject) of study. Following the feminist figurations of Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway, site-writing is also a process of figuration, one informed by psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity and representation, where relations between critic and site, text and reader are figured, configured and re-configured through writing.

**Biography:** Professor Jane Rendell (BAHons, DipArch, MSc, PhD) is a writer whose work crosses architecture, art, feminism, history and psychoanalysis. She has developed concepts of ‘critical spatial practice’ (2002/6) and ‘site-writing’ (2007/10) through such authored books as *Site-Writing* (2010), *Art and Architecture* (2006), and *The Pursuit of Pleasure* (2002) and co-edited books as *Pattern* (2007), *Critical Architecture* (2007), *Spatial Imagination* (2005), *The Unknown City* (2001), *Intersections* (2000), *Gender, Space, Architecture* (1999) and *Strangely Familiar* (1995). She is currently working on a new book on transitional spaces in architecture and psychoanalysis. She is Professor of Architecture and Art at the Bartlett, UCL, where she supervises MA and PhD students in
Whose Daliyeh? A Discussion on Property, Laws and the Ecology of Daliyeh

Monday November 3, 2014 | 6:30-8:00PM
Architecture Lecture Hall

Nizar Saghieh (Lawyer): “Lessons in Law”

Abir Saksouk (Architect and Landscape Architect): “Al-Daliyeh as an Opening to Beirut and as Environmental, Geological and Cultural Heritage”

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Daliyeh is endangered by a real-estate project that threatens its features and limits its use, transforming it from an irreplaceable public space in the city to a private place very similar to the hotels and tourist resorts along the Lebanese coast.

To face the looming danger over this public space, the Civil Coalition for the Protection of Daliyeh al-Rawcheh is organizing a series of activities and seminars, of which this one at AUB, to open the debate on the maritime public domain, raise awareness on the planning projects in Daliyeh, and investigate resistance mechanisms against the transformation of this historical landmark in Beirut.

The Civil Coalition for the Protection of Daliyeh al-Rawcheh are citizens, parents, children, old and young, who like this country, Rawcheh, the sea, and public spaces that cannot be restricted to public space framed as a property issue. We are environmental groups, cultural groups and activists. We work using all legal and civil mechanisms to protect Daliyeh as a space that was commonly shared for decades and as a free place without restrictions.

Tuesday November 18, 2014 | 6:30-8:00PM
Issam Fares Institute Auditorium

Can inequality be measured? Mapping Social Injustice and the Urban Environment (Egypt)
Yahia Shawkat

Biography: Yahia founded the blog Shadow Ministry of Housing in 2008, to critique policy on the built environment in Egypt, which in the two years after the January 25th Revolution spawned the The Right to Housing Initiative, chronicling the debates of deprived communities about the challenges they face. He is also co-founder of a new think-tank, 10 Tooba, which will host a built environment observatory among other programmes. Yahia is currently Housing and Land Rights Officer at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, where he focuses on communities threatened with development-based forced eviction or the collapse of their building, as well as housing programme policies. Yahia has authored the book; Social Justice and the Built environment | A Map of Egypt (Ar), as well as a number of studies including Mubarak's Promise - Social justice and the National Housing Programme; affordable homes or political gain? for CEDEJ's Egypte Monde Arabe and the chapter The Right to Cairo for Learning From Cairo. In 2008 Yahia curated the Egyptian Pavillion at the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale where he directed the short film; The Shadow of Geometry, and has produced over ten short documentaries on the built environment since. Yahia Shawkat holds a BSc in Architecture from Cairo University.