Post-Industrial Urbanism
Assistant Professor Kevin Erickson

Overview
Physical infrastructure is the last urban layer yet to be designed beyond functionality. Integral to any city’s vitality, a heightened public awareness is challenging infrastructure’s role in generating new opportunities, particularly in the realm of public space. This studio will focus on two post-industrial urban situations and how to generate, position, and articulate big picture ideas through the realm of design competitions. We will focus on how to analyze, write, and communicate ideas, which empower architects to promote good design rather than relying on antiquated methods of practice. Successful projects will go beyond the academic arena to influence future work and create opportunities for immediate implementation.

Project 1: Transforming the Bridge Competition | http://clevelandcompetition.com/current-competition/
The Detroit-Superior Bridge, also known as Veterans Memorial Bridge, completed in 1918, is a concrete arch and steel bridge consisting of two levels: an upper level that is largely dominated by vehicular traffic and a lower level that was originally designed for streetcars. At almost one mile long, the bridge spans the Cuyahoga River, connecting Downtown Cleveland, the industrial Flats neighborhood and Cleveland’s west side neighborhoods. While the upper level of the bridge is one of the most heavily used thoroughfares in Cleveland, the lower level has remained closed, vacant and largely unused since 1954 when streetcar service was discontinued. Transforming the Bridge challenges designers to re-imagine the abandoned lower streetcar level of Cleveland’s Detroit-Superior Bridge as a dynamic public space, performance venue and pedestrian experience.
Due: 3 October | Students will work in groups of 3

Project 2: Water_Works Competition | http://gowanusbydesign.org/competitions
The Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn NY, once a busy cargo transportation hub, has paralleled the decline of domestic water shipping in the US. Surrounded by a legacy of serious environmental problems, the canal and water front property have become a recent focus for environmental cleanup and economic development. Based on recent studies, it is likely that the Douglass and Degraw Street pool, adjacent to the canal, will be demolished in order to properly remediate the heavily contaminated soil. Water_Works Design Competition envisions this as an opportunity to consider a new urban typology by deliberately placing two disparate uses of water on the same site. The two programs – Combined Sewer Overflow Retention Facility and Community Pool Facility – encourage designers to explore how the ritual and profane uses of water are realized in an evocative design solution.
Due: 12 December | Students will work in pairs of 2

Travel: New York, NY | 19-23 September
Students will the have opportunity to visit New York City and investigate first-hand issues defined in studio.

Texts:
Ecological Urbanism edited by Mohsen Mostafavi
Landform Building; Architecture’s New Terrain edited by Stan Allen
Pamphlet Architecture 30: Coupling: Strategies for Infrastructural Opportunism by Mason White & Lola Sheppard