



*Image: Film still From Homo Urbanus Venetianus - Bêka & Lemoine*

## 48-250 Urbanism and the Social Production of Space

Units: 9

Instructor: Stefan Gruber

This course introduces students to urbanism and explores architecture as situated and relational practice subject to broader social, political, economic, ecological, and cultural forces. Investigating cities as sites of the encounter of differences and competing interests, the course sheds light onto the production and social reproduction of space—or how we shape the built environment and in turn it shapes us. Beyond the mere aggregation of buildings, cities are made of spaces and life in-between buildings affecting our individual, community, and planetary wellbeing. Cities mold our personal experiences, our sense of place and belonging, as well as the quality of our social relations. But a city's spatial syntax also functions as an operating system structuring the flow of people, goods, energy, water, food, and waste—and as a result, its carbon footprint and economic performance, its sustainability and resilience. Thus, architecture and cities are never neutral, as they provide uneven access to opportunities and resources. Cities are contested sites of power struggles based on class, gender, and race. Cities are inherently political.

In four modules we will discuss **cities as form**, **cities as experience**, **cities as ecosystems** and **cities as social and political construct** and learn how to see, understand, and represent an urban milieu, as well as engage, intervene in, and design at the urban scale. In a fifth module, we will bring these perspectives on the city back together.