48713 URBAN ECOLOGY

Urban ecology describes the complex relationships between humans and our environment and is bound by an understanding of system dynamics. This class will examine the shifting regimes of urban ecology and equip students with skills and core concepts that enable them to lead or contribute to transition through design.

The study of urban ecology is inherently interdisciplinary, and this course will approach the subject from the field of design and planning as well as from other disciplinary perspectives. We will examine contributions from landscape, planning, engineering, economics, biology, sociology, political science, climatology, and even public health. We will learn the fundamentals of systems dynamics as it applies to the design of historical and contemporary landscapes, infrastructure, and spatial practices and we will look through both a positivist lens of evidence as well as a normative lens of belief. Students will learn design tools and methods to query ecological systems and will also gain specific skills and knowledge from other fields, including causal loop diagrams, social dilemma models, and scenario planning. Lastly, students will reflect on their own work and investigate case studies to understand how these tools can augment design practice.

Students from other disciplines are encouraged to join this class.
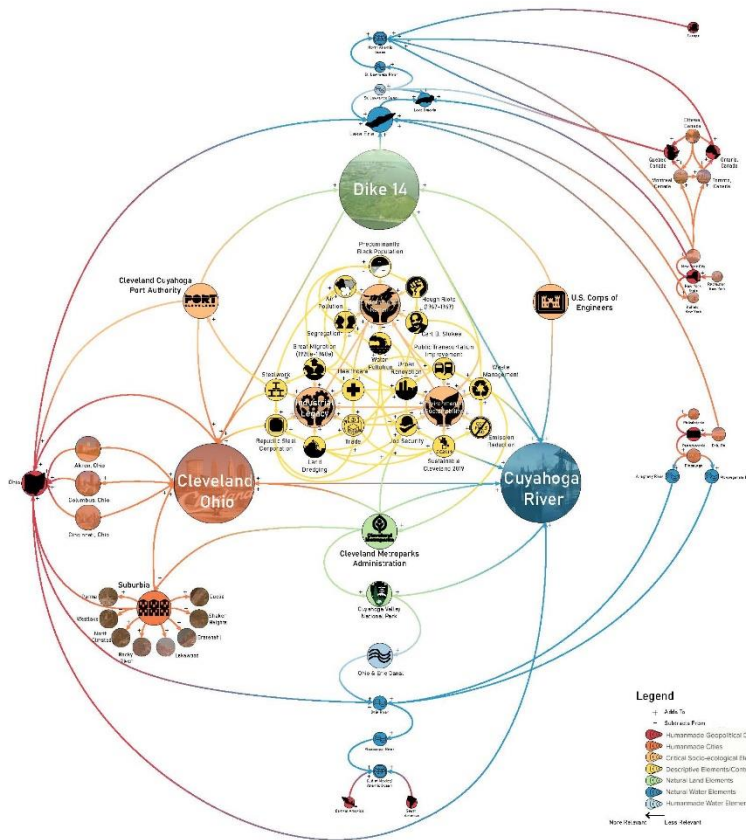
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