

## **The Posthuman City**

**Bruce Braun, University of Minnesota**

This seminar explores urban life through the lens of the 'posthuman turn' in social and political thought. The objective of such a course is to shift the analysis of urban life away from a subject or human centered analysis, where the city is viewed from the perspective of the human subject as an accomplished fact, towards an analysis of the complex material and technological fields within which forms of life unfold. What this brings to the fore is what social and political theory routinely relegates to the margins: the technological systems, infrastructure, ecological relations and material environs that rarely appear as anything other than the 'stage' on which urban life unfolds, or that are figured as so many 'things' which humans use in an instrumental fashion. Reversing this schema allows us to see how forms of human and nonhuman life emerge in relation to what Gilbert Simondon calls the 'pre-individual', or what Jane Bennett, in a different register, calls 'vibrant matter'. Course materials will move between case studies taken from specific urban sites (New York, Bombay) and key theoretical and philosophical texts that characterize the 'posthuman' turn in social and political thought (Jane Bennett, Brian Massumi, Mark Hansen). The seminar will conclude with a discussion of modes of governance that attempt to capture or modulate the vital energies of the more-than-human city.

Bruce Braun is Professor Geography at the University of Minnesota. He is co-editor of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and author or editor of various books, including: *Political Matter: Technoscience, Democracy and Public Life*; *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, Politics*; and *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture and Power on Canada's West Coast*. He is currently working on a project entitled "Biopolitics and the resilient city".