History of Copenhagen: Structure, Plan, Design

A study of the city in Europe over time, using Copenhagen as a case – and a resource

Fall Semester 2017

The question underlying this course is a simple one: Why does Copenhagen, or any other city, look the way it does? The answer is less simple, though. Cities are human artifacts. Their structure, plan and design are the cumulative results of countless human acts rooted in reason, ideology, aesthetics, ostentation, and concerns for economy, efficiency, security, mobility, or quality of life. Hence the relatively simple study of the physical history of Copenhagen – the development of the urban plan, the design of its built environment, and the changing use of space – involves an exciting journey into European intellectual, artistic, religious, political, economic, social, technological and military history. Expect an unusual, but inspiring course!

Instructor: Carsten Pape

Office and Office Hours
You are welcome to see me after class or set up an appointment at DIS. You may also communicate by e-mail: cp@dis.dk. or through the course site on Canvas. I will normally respond within 24 hours.

DIS Contact
Sanne Rasmussen, Program Coordinator, European Humanities Department, sra@dis.dk

Class Meetings
Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:05-11:25, N7-B12.
Objectives
Please be aware that this course is a full-fledged urban history course, not an extended tourist introduction to Copenhagen. This comes as a surprise (and regret) to some students. At the end of the course, you will

- Be able to intelligently ‘read’ a European city, i.e. decode and make judgments about its history through map analysis and informed observations of the urban fabric. This includes the ability to distinguish and reference the main styles of European architecture over time;
- Know the main stages of the evolution of the city in Europe in general and of Copenhagen in particular, with a focus on its physical aspect, or morphology (see ‘Content’ below);
- Understand major causes and determinants of the development of cities in general and Copenhagen in particular, as well as the impact of general European urban history trends on Copenhagen;
- Know the main morphological elements and historic design features of cities (e.g. fortifications, street patterns, ports, railways, building styles, and suburbs) and understand their rationale, main functional features, and design;
- Understand the most recent discourse concerning urban development in the medium-term future;
- Know the urban geography of contemporary Copenhagen, including relevant place-names;
- Possess a general sense of the chronology of the topic, both absolute and relative.

Content
The focal point of the course is the city’s evolving morphology, i.e. the historical development of town plan, land use patterns, and building fabric – or, to put it differently, the history of the city itself, seen as physical reality. The approach is not ‘What happened in Copenhagen?’ but ‘What happened to Copenhagen?’ However, to understand how Copenhagen changed over time, we need to also focus on the agents of change, be they larger historical trends (‘industrialization’), foreign models (‘Dutch urban planning’), technological change (‘development of siege artillery’), building styles (‘Neoclassicism’), concrete Danish historical events (‘the Swedish siege of 1658-59’), social and political forces (‘the labor movement’), state and municipal government (‘traffic planning’), and individual kings, merchants, politicians, planners, and other actors. Political, social and economic aspects of the history of Copenhagen will be treated in this sense, i.e. as agents of change, but not as independent topics within the city’s history.

The approach is chronological and interdisciplinary. We will employ historical disciplines such as political and economic history, military, naval and fortifications history, architectural and urban planning history, and social history, and fuse them into a coherent urban morphological history. The impact of European models on Copenhagen developments will be emphasized throughout.

In addition, the approach is highly visual, with a focus on analytical interpretation of historical maps, city prospects, existing buildings and urban spaces. These should be perceived as ‘texts’ in their own right on a par with the ‘real’ course texts. Observation, analysis and interpretation are key to this course.

Readings
Except for the final, contemporary section of the course, quality literature on Copenhagen in English is scarce. Therefore, readings often deal with general European urban developments, while lectures, field studies and some English-language texts will present specific Copenhagen features and developments. Some materials are written, edited or adapted by the professor.
Field Studies

1. Wednesday, September 20, 9:00-12:15 am

*The early modern city, ca. 1600-1800.*

On this guided walking tour we will study important features of early-modern Copenhagen discussed in class. These include the historically unique naval housing complex *Nyboder* (New Booths) from the 1630s, the Citadel from the 1660s, the naval and commercial port from the 1700s, today’s royal palace, Amalienborg, and the surrounding district Frederiksstaden from the 1750s. Additionally, the tour includes a visit to Rosenborg Palace (1606-36), featuring historic royal rooms and the Danish crown jewels. On foot.

2. Wednesday, November 29, 1:00-3:00 pm

*Contemporary urban design and planning: The Århusgade District of the larger North Harbor Project.*

The objective of this guided tour of the most recent urban development in Copenhagen – work will be in progress as we walk by – is to look into the objectives, processes, issues and results of Copenhagen’s within-city expansion in the 21st century, including the transition from industrial to residential land use, the significance of public transportation, and the wager on livability and sustainability. On foot. Guided by a DIS Architecture & Design faculty member.

Assignments

**Assignment 1: Teach-Yourself-Copenhagen-History Exercise**

This exercise will acquaint you with the core area of the city, usually referred to as ‘Medieval Copenhagen.’ Guided by an Autoguide booklet, you will visit 15 different sites, observe historical and contemporary urban features, and answer specific questions at each point. *Assigned Class 1, due Class 5, and relevant for Test 1.*

**Assignment 2: Architectural Styles Analysis**

This exercise is particularly important to one of the objectives of the course, the ability to ‘read’ a European city. Based on an introductory lecture, readings, and an ‘Encyclopedia of Architectural Decorative Features,’ you will, in groups of four, document the styles of real Copenhagen buildings from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical periods in text and power point images. *Assigned Class 6, due Class 10.* (Don’t be nervous – you need no previous knowledge of styles).

**Assignment 3: Vesterbro Exercise. On-Site Analysis of the Industrial and Post-Industrial City**

In this exercise you will study on-site (1) the urban fabric of the working-class districts that sprang up around the inner core of Copenhagen (and most European cities) during the industrial revolution of the 19th century, (2) the methods and results of recent processes of urban renewal of these decaying slums, and (3) a variety of historically important urban functions in their Copenhagen embodiment, e.g. main station, meat-packing district, schools, churches, etc. The exercise, carried out in groups of two or three, is directed by an Autoguide booklet and will result in a written and photo-documented report. *Assigned class 12, due class 20.*

**Tests**

There are three tests, one in Class 5, one in Class 11 (midterm), and one in the finals week after the end of class. Test 1 is an integral part of Assignment 1.
Course Requirements and Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Assignment 1:</td>
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<td>Test 3 (final):</td>
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Class Participation Covers
- Level of preparation and willingness to answer questions in class.
- Involvement in class and group discussions.

Participation Grade Policy
Active class participation throughout the semester: A=96 / Occasional participation: B=86 / Little or no participation: C=76. Fine-tuning of percentage points may occur, reflecting student performance.

Note that attendance at all classes and field studies is required and expected and is not credited as participation. Failure to attend will have a negative influence on the participation grade, however.

Course Website on Canvas
The most important tab is “Files”. Here you will find all lectures, assignment and field study instructions, test materials, handouts, and maps of Copenhagen used in class.

Reading Guides
Further, the “Files” tab contains Reading Guides for each class. It is important that you consult the reading guides when preparing for class, as they put the individual readings in perspective and indicate where you should place your focus of attention while studying the texts. The guides are also an excellent tool for preparing for the tests.

How to Get a Good Grade
- **Involve yourself!** Allow yourself the luxury of taking a genuine interest in the course, i.e. in ‘cities’. It may not be your core field or interest, but why not join the many students who have been surprised at how interesting it actually is to suddenly understand the urban and historic environment you live in.
- **Get organized!** Enter all due dates in a semester calendar and set aside time to work on assignments and prepare for tests. Get a binder or folder to collect and organize course handouts (there are many!).
- **Prepare for class! Every class!** Start your preparation by acquainting yourself with the Reading Guide for the particular class (see paragraph above), it makes your preparation so much more meaningful.
- **Take good notes!** The course is information-intensive, and you will get most of the information only once. All information given in class and on field studies, factual as well as analytical, is relevant for tests.
- **Take the tests seriously** and prepare well for them! This is higher education, and tests will reflect this fact. There are no free A’s, although they are certainly possible to get.
- **Participate!** Sharing your thoughts and ideas in class is not just important for the participation grade, it is one of the best tools for developing your analytical skills.
DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE

NOTE: # refers to the number of a required reading in the compendium. Page numbers refer to those of the original text, NOT those of the compendium. “Handout” and “Instructor Handout” followed by a number refer to a reading in pdf format uploaded to the Handouts and Instructor Handouts folders on the course website on Canvas (click Files, then Handouts or Instructor Handouts).

1: Friday, Friday, August 25
Approaches to urban history: Introduction to the course.
*Introduction to Assignment 1: Teach-Yourself-Copenhagen-History Exercise (due Class 5).
*Introduction to Test 1 (Class 5).
Readings: #1 / Course syllabus, pp. 1-4.

PART 1: MEDIEVAL COPENHAGEN, 11TH-16TH CENTURIES

2: Tuesday, August 29
Emergence of cities in Northern Europe. The origins of Copenhagen.
Readings: #2 / Instructor Handout 1 / Instructor Handout 2 / Outline History of Denmark, pp. 16-45 (optional, but pp. 20-25 required).

3: Friday, September 1
Chief medieval urban features. The Gothic style in the Baltic area.
Readings: #3, pp. 221-23 (to “Ramsing’s terrain map”), 224-29 (to “The Harbour”) and 233 (from “The Shipyard”)–235 / Instructor Handout 3.

PART 2: EARLY MODERN COPENHAGEN, c. 1550-1850

4: Tuesday, September 5
Introduction to the Early Modern Period. King Christian IV and Renaissance Copenhagen, c. 1600-1660.
Readings: Instructor Handout 4 / Instructor Handout 5 / Handout 1a-1b / Handout 9, pp. 13-16 (top) / Outline History of Denmark, pp. 54-92 (optional, but useful).

5: Friday, September 8
Absolute monarchy and grand-manner urban design.
*Assignment 1 due.
*Test 1.
Readings: Instructor Handout 6: Absolutism / #5 (skip ‘Antiquity’).

6: Tuesday, September 19
Design of the building stock: Architectural styles of early modern Europe.
*Introduction to Assignment 2 (due class 10).
*Introduction to Field Study 1.

Wednesday, September 20, 9:00-12:15 am
Field Study 1: Visit to the Frederiksstadens area with Amalienborg Palace (1750s), the outer port (1700s), the Citadel (1660s), Nyboder (New Booths, 1630s), and Rosenborg Palace (1606-36). On foot. Details t.b.a.

7: Friday, September 22
Royal Copenhagen, 1660-1848. Cases: Frederiksberg Palace & Garden, Christiansborg Palace, Amalienborg Palace & Frederiksstadens, city gates and naval port.
*Introduction to Map Exercise.
Readings: #6.

8: Tuesday, September 26
Fortress Copenhagen: From stone wall to bastioned fortification.
Map exercise: Fortifications and urban development Europe.
Readings: Instructor Handout 7 / #4 / Prepare map exercise.

9: Friday, September 29
Ordinary Copenhagen: Folk, faeces and fires.
Assembling the pieces: Chronology of early modern Copenhagen.
*Introduction to Test 2 (midterm).
Readings: Industrial Copenhagen (booklet), sections A-C.

PART 3: INDUSTRIALIZATION, c. 1850-1920

10: Tuesday, October 3
Industrialization and the city in Europe. Intro to industrial Copenhagen.
*Assignment 2 due.

11: Friday, October 6
*Test 2, covering classes 2-9.

12: Tuesday, October 17
Urban expansion and social segregation. The classical working-class district. Worker housing.
*Introduction to Assignment 3.
Readings: #7, pp. 293-315 (top) / Booklet: Industrial Copenhagen, sections D, E, I.

13: Friday, October 20
Housing (cont’d) and public construction. Building styles of the industrial era: Historicism.
Readings: None. Enjoy!

14: Tuesday, October 24
The transport revolution: Trains, ships and trams.
Readings: #8 / Handout 9, pp. 18-23 / Booklet: Industrial Copenhagen, section H.
15: Friday, October 27
Readings: #10.

16: Tuesday, November 7
Planning and building a modern metropolis. Map exercise.

PART 4: CONTEMPORARY COPENHAGEN

17: Friday, November 10
Into the 21st century: From industrial to post-industrial city.
Readings: Handout 8 / #11.

18: Tuesday, November 14
Changing strategies of urban renewal: From Nørrebro to Vesterbro.
Readings: #12, pp. 7-10, 13-14, 54-57 / Handout 7.

19: Friday, November 17
Developing the post-industrial city: Major approaches and development projects. Cases: Ørestad, Sluseholmen, Holmen and the North Harbor.
Readings: Handout 2 / Handout 3.

20: Friday, November 21
The wager on livability. Reurbanization.
*Assignment 3 due.
Readings: #14 / Wikipedia: Cycling in Copenhagen / #13.

21: Tuesday, November 28
Suburban Copenhagen: Genesis and structure.
*Introduction to Field Study 2.
Readings: Handout 4 / #15.

Wednesday, November 29, 1:00-3:00 pm
Field Study 2: Copenhagen futures: Guided tour of the North Harbor Project, stage 1: the Århusgade District, by DIS Architecture & Design faculty member. On foot.

22: Friday, December 1
Suburban Copenhagen: Cases
Readings: None.

23: Tuesday, December 5
Suburban Copenhagen: Managing growth. Summing up the course.
*Introduction to Test 3 (final).
**READING MATERIALS**

**Textbooks and other hard-copy materials** (handed out at semester start):

**Handouts** (uploaded to the course website under Links/Handouts)

**Instructor Handouts** (uploaded to the course website under Links/Instructor Handouts)

**Articles and other materials in Course Compendium** (handed out at semester start):


