“Reshaping the Metropolis” is designed to explore major forces, trends, and ideas that are shaping and reshaping American metropolitan communities. It will deal with “hard” forces such as economic restructuring, migration, real estate markets, and environmental change. It also deals with social and cultural factors such as racial segregation, environmental values, and attitudes about place. The intent is to take a long view and to explore the nexus between thinking globally and planning locally.

April 4     Thinking forward: 2020 and 2050

*Scientific American*, Sept. 2011: special issue on cities
Dowell Myers and Alicia Kitsue, “Constructing the Future in Planning,”
*Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 19: 221-31

April 11    Changing geographies of settlement

April 18    People and place: Population trends and persistent inequalities

April 25    Cities in peril: Human and natural catastrophes

May 2       Professional futurists: hits and misses

May 9       Presentations

May 16      Presentations

[May 23]    No class

May 30      Presentations

June 6      Presentations

[June 13]   Exam week:
             Due date for second short paper and group presentation report.
Responsibilities

1) Read and respond to a book that claims to be forecasting the American future. Write a 4-5 page critique that considers the coherence of the author’s argument, the validity and character of the evidence, and the implications for planning. The critiques will be due May 2 and will form the basis for class discussion that day. Here are some possibilities.

Stewart Brand, *Whole Earth Discipline*

Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, *That Used To Be Us: How America Fell Behind the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back*


Joel Kotkin, *The Next 100 Million: America in 2050*

Ramez Naam, *More Than Human: Embracing the Promise of Biological Enhancement*

Paul Gilding, *The Great Disruption: Why the Climate Crisis Will Bring On the End of Shopping and the Birth of a New World*

Richard Heinberg, *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*

Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization*


2) Read a work of so-called “mundane” science fiction that is set on a near-future earth and draws on conceivable science and social trends (no warp drive or E.T.s). Write an analysis of the economic and social implications of this imagined future and reflect on the explicit or implicit role of urban planning in that future. Here are some possibilities.

Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Wind-Up Girl*

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

Cory Doctorow, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*

William Gibson, *Virtual Light, Idoru, All Tomorrow’s Parties, Pattern Recognition*

Ken MacLeod, *The Star Fraction*

Ian McDonald, *River of Gods*

Geoff Ryman, *Air*

Kim Stanley Robinson, *40 Signs of Rain, 50 Degrees Below, 60 Days and Counting*

Charles Stross, *Rule 34*

Neal Stephenson, *The Diamond Age*

Vernor Vinge, *Rainbows End*
3) Develop a group-based presentation on forward-looking planning responses to a key social, cultural, economic, environmental, or technical trend. I have some ideas, but we will co-produce the topics in discussion during the first two weeks of class.

Here are the parameters:

- Three-person teams will prepare 45-minute presentations and be prepared to lead another 15 minutes of discussion.

- At least four days in advance of the presentation the team will provide 20-30 pages of reading for the other class members, preferably accessible online.

- For the presentation, provide a two-page (front/back) handout with an outline, bibliography, and list of any technical definitions.

- Final report, due June 13. This can take the form of a written document or it can take a less traditional form such as a website or video.