Excursion Guide
Paris & Cergy Pontoise
16-19 april 2011

INTI Staff:
Michelle Provoost (director), Ivan Nio (urban sociologist, researcher), Arnold Reijndorp (professor of Socio-Economic and Spatial Developments in New Urban Areas, UvA), Wouter Vanstiphout (professor Design & Politics, TU Delft), Saskia Hulskes (office manager & researcher), Sophie van Ginneken (coordinator education).
PROGRAMME

Saturday April 16th

8.16 / 8.56 Departure Thalys at Amsterdam CS / Rotterdam CS (coach 16, seats 11-54)
11.35 Arrival at Paris Nord
13.00 ± Arrival at Hotel Olivarius (RER Cergy Préfecture, 34 Blvd du Port)
14.00 Introduction on Cergy Pontoise by Mrs Denise Lamarche in our hotel.

Denise Lamarche is tourist guide at the Office de Tourisme Cergy Pontoise.

15.00 – 18.00 Bustour along different parts of the city among which older parts of Pontoise, Jouy-le-Moutier, Cergy Saint Christophe, Axe Majeur and Cergy-le-Haut. Presentation by Mrs Caroline de Saint Pierre; tour guided by urban sociologist Ivan Nio (INTI).


Sunday April 17th

9.00 – 16.00 Tour along the Paris Banlieues by Wouter Vanstiphout (INTI, TU Delft)
afternoon Research student teams
evening Presentation by Ivan Nio on his research on Cergy Pontoise

Monday April 18th

9.00 – 10.00 Presentation by Mr Bertrand Warnier on the design for and planning of Cergy Pontoise, at the ‘Verger’ (La Communauté d’Agglomération). Address: Le Verger, Rue de la Gare, Cergy Préfecture.

Bertrand Warnier is architect and urban planner (in his own words: raised as an architect; urban planner by choice), one of the major figures in French urban planning and leading in the design and making of Cergy Pontoise. He
was head of town planning department at the EPA (the Public Development Corporation) of Cergy Pontoise. He also initiated ‘Les Ateliers de Maîtrise d’Œuvre Urbaine’ (International Workshops for Urban Planning and Design), one of the main cultural institutions of Cergy. Since 1982, ‘Les Ateliers’ have been organising international workshops on topics defined together with local authorities for city or regional planning, in France as well as abroad, gathering students and professionals of different nationalities and different specializations.

10.00 – 11.00 Presentation by Mrs Aude Talon on the new master plan for Cergy Pontoise (SCoT).

Aude Talon is head of the SCoT project department, part of the agglomeration preparing the master plan for Cergy Pontoise. The plan was presented in 2010, and is awaiting official status.

11.00 -12.00 Meeting / excursion with Michel Jaouën (under reserve)

Michel Jaouën is architect and urban planner. Together with Bertrand Warnier he was one of the leading figures in the planning of Cergy Pontoise. From his mid-twenties on, he was involved in the design and building of different parts of Cergy Préfecture, Saint Christophe and the Axe Majeur. He was the successor of Bertrand Warnier fulfilling the role of head of Urban Planning Department of the EPA.

afternoon Research student teams

evening Consultation student teams

Tuesday April 19th

Whole day Until ± 16.00 Research student teams

19.25 Departure Thalys at Paris Nord (coach 18, seats 41–87)

22.00 / 22.43 Arrival at Rotterdam CS / Amsterdam CS
GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

The main purpose of the excursion is to explore the everyday realities of the new town. This year, the specific case is Cergy Pontoise, one of the five new towns around Paris, designated in the 1960s and built from the 1970s on up to today. The new town will be examined not only in its historical, sociological or design context (the themes that underlie the setup of the course), but moreover in its contemporary state; a present day city lived by its inhabitants, workers and visitors. The product of this collective fieldwork is an alternative travel guide to Cergy Pontoise. The idea of a ‘travel guide’ is to picture the town in an optimistic manner, just as travel guides usually do for (historical grown) cities, given the fact travel guides of new towns hardly exist. However, like older cities, the new town is not just a built design for a town but also a lived city with its own history (even though this is short), peculiarities and attractions, interesting enough to explore for people from outside. For producing the guide, Cergy Pontoise is looked at as a polycentric city with two main centres. The focus will be on either Cergy Pontoise as a whole; Cergy Préfecture (the main new city centre), and Cergy Saint Christophe (the next main city centre). Each group takes its own research approach.

Do not produce just dry and factual maps, but try to tell a story. Also make maps showing one specific aspect or theme. Use existing maps and schemes, written articles, explore historical and present day situations. Write texts explaining the background of crucial issues concerning the history and design of the town, illustrate with some images (old photos, new shots).

Group 1: Urbanism, Cergy Pontoise
Group 2: Architecture, Cergy Préfecture
Group 3: Use & attractions, Cergy Préfecture
Group 4: Architecture, Cergy Saint Christophe
Group 5: Use & attractions, Cergy Saint Christophe
Group 1: Cergy Pontoise (urbanism)
The urbanism group analyses the entire new town on an urban scale level. Research should focus on the town as a whole in terms of structure, infrastructure, public and collective spaces, relation to the mother city, the landscape, etc.

1. Planning history
Describe the planning process of new towns in the Paris Region (Ile de France). What was the role of the national government, EPA, local authorities? What makes Cergy Pontoise different from other Parisian new towns (Marne la Vallee, Evry, Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines, Melun-Senart)?

2. The new town, the metropolis and the landscape
Pay attention to the location of the new town in relation to the capital, to the system of new towns, but also look at the structure of the landscape (river, valleys, forests, plateaus) and the sightlines created by means of the landscape. How is the new town embedded in the Paris region (Ile de France)? To what extent are existing built-up areas (villages, roads) included in the design? What did the area look like before it was designated as a development site for a new city? What can you say about the economy, the qualities of different neighbourhoods, the unique selling points of Cergy Pontoise (compared to other new towns and in general)?

3. Organisation / setup
Show the hierarchy in different municipalities and sub-centres that underlies the setup of the town. Which parts are designed when and what can you say about their character (urban, suburban, village-like, industrial,...)?

4. Infrastructure
Show how Cergy is connected to train / subway, roads, bicycle networks (regional and town level).

5. Service programme
Show how key urban and regional facilities are divided over different parts of the town. Think of employment centres (offices, government buildings), education (schools, colleges, university, academy) malls, parks, industry, markets, important cultural facilities and, of course, the central recreation park in the heart of Cergy Pontoise.

Output: maps, texts, pictures

Experts:
★ Anna Dekker       UvA planning
★ Nicolien van Eeden UvA planning
★ Paul Mulder       TU Delft Urbanism
★ Lidwien van der Noll UvA planning / RM metropolitan studies
Group 2: Cergy Préfecture (architecture & urbanism)
Group 2 analyses the most central core of the town – Cergy Préfecture – on a more detailed, architectural scale level. Research is focused on grasping the architectural identity of this part of the city, in the first place on the town centre and (in the second place) on the housing neighbourhoods around it.

1. Town centre: *dalle* and buildings
Explain how the centre has been conceived, what are the most important buildings. What are the qualities of the *dalle* in terms of architecture and urban planning, what is the organizational principle behind it, and how is it connected to the rest of this area (Cergy Préfecture)?

2. Public space
Explain how the shopping mall Les Trois Fontaines is connected with the urban tissue, look at relations between collective and public spaces and the sequences of different public and collective spaces. Show the connections with RER and busstation(s). Make a ‘Nolli-map’ of the centre to clarify the relationship between public and private.

3. Housing areas
Highlight the most important housing areas: urban setup, architectural style, chronology, year of design/completion. How have housing areas been structured and designed and what is their relationship with the urban tissue? What role do schools play in the urban setup of the housing areas and what can be said about their typologies?

4. New and old
What can you say about the integration of the new design for Cergy Préfecture within the (existing) city?

Output: maps, texts, pictures

Experts:

- *Greg Gosiau* Vrije Universiteit Brussel, architectural history
- *Charlotte Cammelbeeck* TU Delft Urbanism
- *Maaike Zwart* TU Delft Urbanism
- *Peter Oosterbaan* TU Delft Architecture
- *Daphne Nederstigt* TU Delft Architecture
Group 3: Cergy Préfecture (use & attractions)
Where Group 2 focuses on the built objects, group 3 looks more into those who use them and how they use them. Look at public domains, amenities and attractions, and how people use them. Who are they? What is the identity of the centre in terms of culture, atmosphere?

1. Public domains and other key spots
Look for and describe lively public, collective and parochial places. Which are planned, which are unplanned? What kind of groups or lifestyles do they attract? At which places (public domains) do these groups come together?

2. Attractions
A crucial element of any travel guide is a collection of attractions. These could be (besides the lively places described under 1.): museums, libraries, shopping streets, theatres, bars, restaurants, exciting nightlife, good bookstores, etc.

3. Zoom on student life
With 27000 students, the University of Cergy Pontoise is a crucial element of the city because it provides services for those who study, work and start their professional lives. Look at the organization of several faculties and related services. Look also at student life: where students live and go out for a drink? Interview 5-10 students to find out.

Output: texts, images. Maps can be a tool as well.

Experts:
- Gertjan Wijburg  UvA Sociology
- Emmy van den Berg  UvA architectural history
- Go Bruens  UvA architectural history
- Gwen Mozer  UvA Sociology
- Myrthe van Voskuil  TU Delft Architecture
Group 4: Cergy Saint Christophe (architecture & urbanism)
Within the new town of Cergy Pontoise, ‘a city with two hearts’, Cergy Saint Christophe was planned to play the role as the second heart of the town. Group 4 analyses this part of the city on a more detailed, architectural scale, together with the Axe Majeur – the iconic feature of Cergy Pontoise and the pride of its designers. After Cergy Préfecture (mainly built in the 1970s), Saint Christophe was built in the 1980s, based on urban and architectural ideas which are essentially different from those in Cergy Préfecture. Research is focused on grasping the architectural identity of this part of the city, in the first place on the town centre and the Axe Majeur and (in the second place) on the housing neighbourhoods around it.

1. Town centre: streets, squares and buildings
   Explain how the centre has been conceived, what are the most important buildings? As in a tourist guide, highlight the most prominent buildings (commissioner, architecture, year of completion, description). What is the character of the urban plan and what are its qualities?

2. Public space
   Explain how the centre is connected with the urban tissue, look at relations between collective and public spaces and the sequences of different public and collective spaces. Show the connections with RER and busstation(s). Make a ‘Nolli-map’ of the centre to clarify the relationship between public and private.

3. Housing areas
   Highlight the most important housing areas: urban setup, architectural style, chronology, year of design/completion.
   How have housing areas been structured and designed and what is their relationship with the urban tissue? What role do schools play in the urban setup of the housing areas and what can be said about their typologies?

4. Axe Majeur
   How has the Axe Majeur been conceived and how was it embedded in the existing landscape? Describe the project in an urban, architectural and artistic way, and its relationship with the area of Saint Christophe.

5. New and old
   What can you say about the integration of the new design for Cergy st. Christophe within the city?

Output: maps, texts, pictures

Experts:
- Bart van Walderveen  
- Sarah Chebaro 
- Vasiliki Tsioutsiou 
- ?
Group 5: Cergy Saint Christophe (use & attractions)
Where Group 4 focuses on the built objects, group 5 looks more into those who use them and how they use them. Look at public domains, amenities and attractions, and how people use them. Who are they? What is the identity of the centre in terms of culture, atmosphere?

1. Public domains and other key spots
Look for and describe lively public, collective and parochial places. Which are planned, which are unplanned? What kind of groups or lifestyles do they attract? At which places (public domains) do these groups come together?

2. Attractions
A crucial element of any travel guide is a collection of attractions. These could be (besides the lively places described under 1.): museums, libraries, shopping streets, theatres, bars, restaurants, exciting nightlife, good bookstores, etc.

3. Zoom on the ‘ethnic’ (African) life
The centre of Cergy Saint Christophe offers one of the largest African markets of the region (only on Saturday morning). Identify meeting places and facilities for the African and Arab communities, planned and unplanned. Interview 5-10 people to find out.

Write texts, use images. Maps can be a tool as well.

Experts:
★ Dorus Nelissen UvA architectural history
★ Jacob Buitenka UvA architectural history
★ Nathalie van der Waart UvA Sociology
★ Marvin Hogervorst UvA Sociology
LIST OF LITERATURE PARIS NEW TOWNS & CERGY PONTOISE

Literature on French new towns written in English or Dutch, especially the more recent ones, is rather limited. Below you will find some titles which explain the French new town idea from the perspectives of national planning policy, the former era of mass housing projects, and the French new town idea, with a focus on the new town of Cergy Pontoise.

All titles are available through our website, unless indicated otherwise

OBLIGATORY READING

One of the very first publications on French New Towns:


The new towns related to the previous era of grands ensembles (mass housing projects):


A meeting with Paul Delouvrier, the 'architect' of the new town concept in France:


A short introduction to Paris' new towns in Dutch:


A must read is the ‘atlas’ of Cergy Pontoise, produced by Bertrand Warnier – one of the crucial figures in the planning of the new town. It contains mostly images, such as analytical sketches which explain the design process of the new town in historical and geographical context:

★ B. Warnier, *Cergy-Pontoise, du projet a la réalité; Atlas Commenté*, Margada, Sprimont 2004. (Available through INTI library or to be ordered online).

A recent planning overview of the Paris Region:


Three short interviews with Bertrand Warnier, Michel Jaouen and Henry Bernard:

★ Magazine CityLab (2004/2005)
FURTHER READING

GENERAL

A novel written by French novellist Annie Ernaux, who reports life in the new town of Cergy Pontoise. Translated in Dutch:

🌟 A. Ernaux, *De Blik naar Buiten*, De Arbeiderspers 2007 (order online for € 7. -).

A very recent study into French New Towns is this dissertation. See especially chapter 4 and 5 where Cergy Pontoise is represented). Contains useful images.


The new master plan for Cergy Pontoise consists of 3 large reports. Contains useful maps. See folder:

🌟 SCoT Cergy Pontoise

ZOOM ON CERGY PRÉFECTURE

The beginning of an architectural guide can be found in a very early version of the Parisian New Town Guide, when construction of Cergy Pontoise had only just begun (only the centre of Préfecture was built):


For more floor plans, sections and a short description (in French) see this special edition of the journal Techniques et Architectures on Cergy Pontoise: