

Quantanomo Bay **Prof. Paul Lukez**

For the next seven weeks we will be investigating design issues associated with Quantanomo Bay in general and more specifically with Camp X-Ray, the detention center. The Quantanomo Bay Naval Base is located on the south eastern section of the Cuba, and covers 71 Sq. Miles of a strategically located harbor and surrounding land. There are more then 7,000 people stationed on the base, 3,000 of which are military staff, the remainder being military staff and families.

The detention center currently houses in excess of 600 prisoners from over 40 countries. They are identified as “unlawful combatants” and therefore do not share the legal status and privileges of prisoners of war. Their future status and rights are not clearly defined, raising important issues associated with international law and the precedent this may establish for future conflicts.

Our first objective is to learn all that we can about this place, its unique history, its natural / physical attributes, (topography, ecology, climate, fauna, etc) as well as how the base has been inhabited over the last 100 years.

Secondly, we will seek to understand more about the prisoners / detainees, their (alleged) crimes, the process of capture / interrogation / detention, their daily life routines, their rights, and what the future holds for them.

Third, we will attempt to understand more about those that live on the base, their lives and the physical and social mechanisms that sustain them on the island.

Fourth, and most importantly, we will investigate and discuss the important legal, and (geo) political issues associated with this Base and its current charter.

After conducting extensive research and gaining a better grasp of the issues identified above, each student will embark on an individually defined design exploration, one that addresses some aspect or issue associated with this base. We are not proposing that you re-design the entire base, but instead focus on one area or set of components. As you develop your design proposals throughout the semester, we will discuss them in relationship between other individual projects, making stronger connections where possible.

Each project will have similar types of minimum requirements, and standards, with how ever a great deal of freedom for you to explore a range of concepts and appropriate representational methods. Each of your projects, along with the supporting research will be included in a document / booklet.

Research and Analysis

1) Creating site documentation

Before embarking on design explorations, it is important to generate a strong base of information about the site, its topography, natural features and patterns of development. Using historical maps, aerial images, and information derived from photographs, this group will do its best to create a good base map approximating the physical reality of Quantanomo Bay as it stands today.

2) History

First discovered by Columbus in 1494, the bay has a rich history. The naval base resulted from a treaty in 1903, and to this day allows the US to occupy a valuable and strategic asset in Cuba. This group should describe in depth the historic development of the Bay, and its impact on larger geo-political issues. Maps identifying key stages of development should be included as should images and supporting text.

3) Natural Systems

The Bay has a unique ecological condition, due to its location and climate. This group will identify and document all the factors that contribute to its ecology. This will include, climate, geology, hydrology, topography, fauna, wildlife etc.

4) Program

Generally, what are all the program elements necessary to support a naval base of this size, and more specifically, what are the facilities required for the detention centers. What is required to sustain the life and health of the prisoners and staff alike? Where do their worlds overlap and how? Are the needs of the prisoners being met, and if not how are the facilities / services deficient?

5) Precedents

Prisoner of war camps are not new, and many models from history can be documented and analyzed to better understand the evolution of interment centers. Create a catalog of historic prisoner of war – like facilities and describe their operations, history and impact on prisoner life.

Similarly, analyze contemporary prison facilities, not only in the US, but also across cultures. What is the role of architecture meeting security needs while providing humane standards of internment. Of special interest are precedents that are located in similar climates.

6) Building materials and systems

Located on a base, where everything has to be shipped or flown in, how are buildings and structures built? What materials and systems are used? What systems might be more appropriate given the climate?

7) Legal / Political Issues

What are the rights of an “unlawful combatant,” who determines them and by what international measure are they to be judged? What are the legitimate rights of a country to protect it, while still recognizing and protecting human rights? Who are the detainees? Where do they come from? What crimes have they committed and how will their cases be processed? What has this done to our international rights, and what does it portend for future engagements, where US

citizens might be taken captive under a similar status? Document and illustrate these issues as much as you can with examples / articles and legal arguments.

8) Visual Library and Bibliography

Small thumbnail images will be cataloged and organized around themes describing the physical quality of this place and life on the base. Include maps, photos etc. Enlarge only those that are of special value, and reference sources in each case.

Also generate a bibliography of reference material, and categorized by subject matter (legal, naval, architectural etc.)

Each group will produce a “package” (8.5” x 11”), which addresses the above issues. Each package will coordinate graphically with all of the other groups. The TA s will produce a cover and dividers, and compile your packages as part of a booklet. In addition, translate your printed material into a PowerPoint presentation.

A few helpful websites.

<http://www.nsgtmo.navy.mil/history.htm>

www.nsgtmo.navy.mil/JTFgtmo/d/dlt001.html

<http://home.att.net/~bpatfw2/guantan.jpg>