In this talk, based on her doctoral research on Ahmadi, Alissa will highlight the role of oil as an agent of political, social, and cultural change at the level of the everyday urban experience by introducing the oil company town as a modern architectural and urban planning prototype that has been largely neglected. Using the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) town of Ahmadi as a case study, Alissa offers a new history of oil, architecture, and urbanism in Kuwait since 1946. She argues that Ahmadi’s colonial modernity, which initially targeted the expatriate employees of the company during the 1950s, was later adopted by KOC’s Kuwaiti employees after the country’s independence in 1961, and in turn mediated a drastically new lifestyle during the 1960s and 1970s. The memory of this urban modernity coupled with its gradual erosion ever since have rendered Ahmadi a nostalgic city in the nation’s collective imagination.

**DR. REEM ALISSA** is an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia’s School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. She holds a Ph.D. in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley, a Master of Architecture from Tulane University, and two Masters (in Landscape Architecture and Urban Design) from Harvard University. She has worked as an architect for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill’s offices in New York and Washington D.C. and as a self-employed designer in Kuwait on diverse projects. Her research and teaching interests focus on the interrelations between the built environment and the social sphere and fall under the larger categories of space and power, global urban histories, and contemporary patterns in urban formation.

This lecture will be conducted in English

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