

U239: URBAN DESIGN THEORIES AND APPLICATIONS



Images Source: City of Irvine and Ajay Garde

INTRODUCTION

This course is organized around one central theme: How might the planning and design of the built environment contribute to making a sustainable, livable, walkable, vibrant, efficient and equitable city? We will examine visual, morphological, temporal, perceptual, functional, regulatory, and social dimensions of urban environments to study how these different dimensions contribute to that end. We will explore national and international examples of urban design practice. We also will discuss important innovations in urban design, their impact on urban form and their implications for public policy. For example, we will examine implications of recent innovations such as New Urbanism, LEED-ND rating system, and Form-Based Codes for the practice of urban design. This course is very different from courses in environmental psychology or planning theory in part because we neither focus on behavioral issues nor discuss critical theory. Instead, we focus on characteristics of built environment that contribute to what Kevin Lynch called “a good city form.”

In this course, we will examine questions such as “What is urban design?” Do we really design cities? What are the critical issues in urban design? Who is involved in urban design? How is urban design different from architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning? **Please note that this is not an urban design studio. You will not design anything in this course.** The classes will consist of introductory lectures, instructor-led discussions, videos, student-led seminars, and presentations by guest speakers (TBA).

The course is organized in the following three sections:

Section One: Visual, Social and Morphological Dimensions of Urban Design

We will first explore some of the fundamental issues and core concepts in urban design and discuss the values and techniques that are central to the field. Simultaneously, we will examine various modes of observation, interpretation, and analysis of urban space. Next, we will discuss important approaches of urban design that focus on the visual, social and morphological (pertaining to form or structure) dimensions of cities. Here we will examine the scale, size, and density of certain types of urban spaces and evaluate how these features of built environment contribute to the quality of life of cities. We also will explore concepts and movements such as form-based codes, compact development, sprawl, and New Urbanism and their implications for designing sustainable cities.

Section Two: Perceptual, Functional, Legal and Temporal Dimensions of Urban Design

In this section we will focus on the principles and approaches of urban design that focus on perceptual, legal, functional and temporal dimensions of cities. We will examine the link between these dimensions and their implications for generating a vibrant, livable urban form. For instance, we will explore how urban environments have different meaning for different people depending on their gender and race as well as their cultural and economic backgrounds. Why are high rise buildings in Chicago designed differently from those in Manhattan? Additionally, we will examine the reasons for conservation, recycle, and reuse of built environment.

Section Three: Urban Design and Urban Form

In this section we will focus on normative theories and performance criteria discussed by Kevin Lynch to explore what makes a good city form. His idea of good city form is analogous to sustainable city form. Simultaneously, we will evaluate current trends in urban development to examine the extent to which these trends contribute to making a good, sustainable city. We will discuss how innovations in urban design are conceived as paradigms that influence public policy and reshape urban form.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

This course is designed to help you understand the core issues, basic principles, important values, classic and emerging theories, analytical approaches and implementation processes in urban design. It is expected that the course will contribute to your ability to interpret different dimensions (not just the social dimension but also pertinent spatial dimension) of the built environment and enhance your analytical and communication skills in urban design. Students are required to complete assigned readings in advance of the meetings and participate in class discussions in-class and online. You are encouraged to participate in the classes using additional information. You will be required to question theories and methods presented in the course of discussion and evaluate their applications to urban design.

Attendance in all classes is required. Unexcused absences will not be permitted after the first week. If you are more than 15 minutes late, it will count as absent. More than 2 unexcused absences may result in a failing grade (F). Please note that attendance is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion for class participation component of grades, you will need to actively participate during discussions and presentations.

ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES, AND GRADING PROCEDURES

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due dates. Any assignment not submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date will be considered late. Students must submit a plain paper copy of the papers in addition to the electronic submissions to the class DropBox. Late submissions are discouraged; a 10% deduction of received points will apply per day. I will consider late submissions due to illness if a doctor's note supporting your case is attached. Any assignment not received by the last day of class will not be considered for final grade calculation. All assignments should be clearly written, well-organized, and edited for spellings, style, and grammar. Any grade/points dispute must be discussed with the instructor within 10 days of achieving the grade/points. I will not consider any grade dispute after this time.

For this course, you will write one term paper, and lead one seminar session. There are no exams. For the assignment, MURP students will write a term paper and doctoral students will write a book review (of two or more books) as described below in detail.

Term Paper (MURP Students): You will write a term paper comparing the visual, functional, social, and morphological dimensions of two specific sites in two different cities in Southern California. A total of four specific sites have been identified for this assignment. These sites are about quarter mile long by quarter mile deep in four cities—area centered around Main Street and 4th Street in Santa Ana, area centered around Main Street and Von Karman Street in Irvine, area centered around 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica, and area centered around South Coast Highway and Laguna Avenue in Laguna Beach. You can select and compare any two sites for this assignment. In the paper, you will first present a brief introduction of the general characteristics of the cities in which these sites are located. Next, you will present a critical evaluation and comparison of the visual, functional, social, and morphological dimensions of the two selected sites. In the last section of the assignment, you will offer your own conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the two sites in terms of their visual, functional, social, and morphological dimensions and provide suggestions for improvements. You will need to include figure-ground drawings and photos, as well as any available maps and drawings in this assignment. (Term paper ~2500 words plus photos and maps; term paper counts for 50 points).

Book Review (Doctoral Students): Doctoral students will write a book review of Companion to Urban Design (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2011) and one additional book. The book review should be ~2500 words and should include references to related books on the topic. (Book review counts for 50 points).

Assignments will be weighted according to the following distribution:

*Term Paper or Book Review Due March 16	50%
Student-led Seminar Presentation	30%
Class Participation**	20%
Total	100%

*See course schedule for due dates

** Class participation includes emails relevant to debates in urban design and online discussions

Grade Conversion Table: 100 Points Scale and Corresponding Letter Grade

In this course grading will be done on a point system—not on a curve. It is important to note that we will not round up the total score if you have a fraction of a point on your total score. The final grade will be determined based on the total percent points achieved in the course as indicated in the table below:

A+ = 100.00	A = 95.00	A- = 92.00	B+ = 88.00
B = 85.00	B- = 82.00	C+ = 78.00	C = 75.00
C- = 72	D+ = 68.00	D = 65	D- = 62
F = 61			

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND UNIVERSITY POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Acts of dishonesty in any academic work constitutes academic misconduct. You should familiarize yourself with university policies concerning academic integrity. I will follow the university policies in the event of academic misconduct.

COURSE TEXTS

The required texts for this course include Companion to Urban Design (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2011), Public Places Urban Spaces (Carmona et al., 2010), and Good City Form (Lynch 1981). Together, these texts cover variety of topics and provide a broad account of the subject matter. The Companion to Urban Design is a comprehensive reference text that provides a broad overview of the field of urban design. The Public Places-Urban Spaces describes different dimensions of urban design in a holistic approach. The Good City Form (Lynch 1981), provides an in-depth account of the main theme of this course. In addition, several articles included below are used as required reading for this course. The assigned readings provide important background information for class discussions and critiques. I will discuss selected parts of these books and articles but will not rehash these in my presentations. Moreover, I will use selected topics from other texts throughout the quarter as and when appropriate.

REQUIRED READINGS

Banerjee, Tridib and Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia (Editors) 2011. Companion to Urban Design. London and New York: Routledge.

Carmona M., Heath T., Oc T., and Tiesdell S. (2010). Second Edition. Public Places Urban Spaces. London and New York: Routledge.

Lynch, Kevin. 1981. Good City Form. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Garde, A. M., Kim, C., and Tsai, O. (2015). "Differences Between Miami's Form-Based Code and Traditional Zoning Code in Integrating Planning Principles." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 81 (1), pp. 46-66.

Garde, Ajay M. 2008. "Innovations in Urban Design and Urban Form: The Making of Paradigms and the Implications for Public Policy" Journal of Planning Education and Research 28 (1), pp. 61-72.

Garde, Ajay M. 2009. "Sustainable by Design? Insights from U.S. LEED-ND Pilot Projects." Journal of the American Planning Association. 75 (4), pp. 424-440.

Garde, Ajay M. 2014. Citizen Participation, Design Competition, and the Product in Urban Design: Insights from the Orange County Great Park" Journal of Urban Design 19 (1): 89-118

U.S. Green Building Council (No date). LEED for neighborhood development rating system (use the most recent version of the rating system available online from USGBC, retrieve from <http://www.usgbc.org/>).

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS*

Wk	Date	Topic/Activity/Assignments	Readings
1		Course overview, introductions; What is urban design?	Introduction, and Chapter 1 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
1		Traditions in urban design	Chapters 1, 2 in Carmona et al.
2		Values, issues and approaches of urban design	Garde 2014; Chapters 19, 20, 23, 25 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
2		Social & visual dimensions of urban design	Chapters 6-7 in Carmona et al.
3		Social & visual dimensions of urban design	Chapters 11, 36-37 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
3		Morphological dimension of urban design	Chapter 4 in Carmona et al.; Chapters 26-28 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
4		Morphological dimension of urban design, Sprawl v. New Urbanism	Chapters 29-30 & 38 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
4		Perceptual dimensions of urban design Video: 10 That Changed America	Chapter 5 in Carmona et al.; Chapter 12 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
5		Functional and temporal dimensions of urban design; Student-led seminar	Chapters 8-9 in Carmona et al.
5		Functional and temporal dimensions of urban design; Urban Flux; Student-led seminar	Chapters 32-34 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris (2011)
6		Urban design and sustainability: LEED-ND rating system	Garde 2009; and USGBC LEED-ND rating system available online
6		Form-based codes for urban design Student-led seminar	Garde, Kim & Tsai 2015; Chapter 39 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
7		Question and Answer Session	Bring a written question for class discussion
7		Legal dimensions of urban design	Chapters 13, 21 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
8		Video: New York Highline Student-led seminar	Chapters 8, 9 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
8		Urban design practice & urban form Student-led seminar	Chapters 1-5 in Lynch
9		Good City Form Student-led seminar	Chapters 6-12 in Lynch
9		Global trends in urban design Student-led seminar	Chapters 40-41 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris
10		Urban Design Paradigms and transformation of urban form; Student-led seminar	Garde 2008
10		Last Class: Course Review Due: term paper or book review	Chapters 42-43 in Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris

* This schedule of classes, due dates and course content are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.