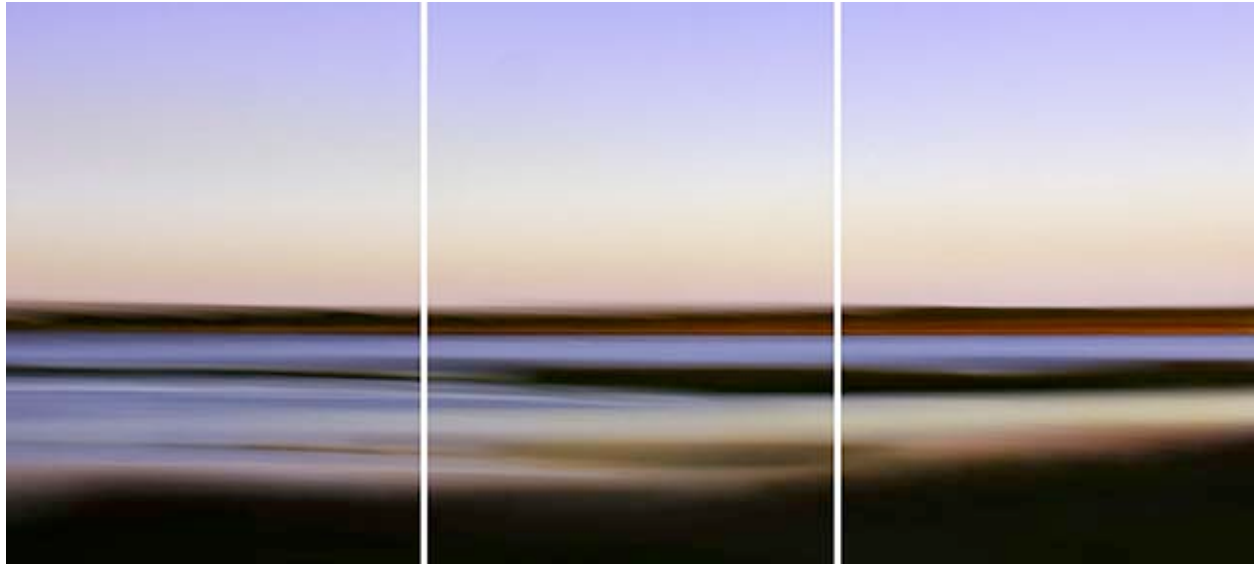


**The Catholic University of America
School of Architecture and Planning**

**ARPL 601-602-701
Urban Practice Studio
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Architecture and the Water's Edge

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The waterfronts in our region are currently being transformed by an astonishing amount of economic redevelopment; examples include the new SE and SW developments in Washington DC, Harbor Point in Baltimore, and a new master plan for the entire waterfront promenade in Alexandria. As citizens, our relationship to the water's edge is being dramatically altered within a very short period of time. The challenge for architects and designers is to understand how and why these places are being transformed and to foster change that is appropriate and beneficial today and for generations to come. This requires re-thinking the very nature of design and urban planning in relationship to the water and re-imagining the way we live next to water, be it a river or an ocean.

In this studio, we will explore the many reasons why waterfronts are so important and have become so valuable. We will look at what has been true historically from the earliest Greek colonies to the latest luxury tower in Miami. We will become familiar with the economic drivers that are transforming the very edges of our cities today. Finally, we will try to understand the sensitive ecological conditions at waterfronts so that we can design in harmony with nature and best co-exist alongside and preserve this valuable resource.

To test our ideas and thoughts, we will select a site along the waterfront of Alexandria, Virginia and design a project that explores how we as a society and as individuals can ideally experience and live along the water's edge.

Alexandria (Briefly) paraphrased from the Visit Alexandria website:

One of the ten busiest seaports during colonial times, Alexandria, Virginia was George Washington's hometown and part of the original Washington, DC. Thomas Jefferson entertained guests at Gadsby's Tavern; Alexandria served as one of the largest slave trading ports prior to the Civil War, but once

occupied by Union forces from the onset of the Civil War, the city was both vital in the defense of the nation's capital and essential in the war effort as a transportation and hospital center for the Union." While the City proper extends several miles inland, its "Old Town" is considered one of the finest planned towns in the United States and often a model of New Urbanism. Old Town's relationship with the water is constantly changing both physically and culturally. Until 15-20 years ago--for example- only a few places along the waterfront were publically accessible.

Sequence of the Studio

Students will engage in a *glissando* of scales (urbansim to architecture), degree of collaboration (group to individual), media (analog to digital) and concept (theoretical-historical-practical). The first month of the semester students will work in teams to research and analyze Alexandria's urban fabric and history that will lead to synthesis or urban strategies. These strategies will then, ultimately, be tested at the architectural scale that will, it is hoped, re-inform the urban strategies.

Part 1: Documentation, Analysis and Strategies (through late September)

Site visit, document and historical information collected and represented
Site analysis, precedent studies and strategies developed.

Part 2: Strategies to Tactics (early October to early December)

Students will be asked to take the strategies into the architectural scale.

Texts: In addition to other readings, we will review the following:

Architecture and the Terror of Time (Karsten Harries)

"The Agency of Mapping" (James Corner)

"Guiding principles of large-scale architectural design" Eckstut, Stanton; Cavaluzzi, Peter David
Oculus, 2004 Summer, v.66, n.2, p.38-39,

"Waterfront destinations" Smith, Douglas C. *Urban land*, 2008 Oct., v.67, n.10, p.128-131,

"Alvar Aalto and the International Style" Search for a New Style - Chapters 12-16
International Recognition - Chapter 19 - 22 especially chapter 22.

"Programming the Urban Surface" (Alex Wall)

"America's waterfront revival: port authorities and urban redevelopment [by] P Brown
Journal of planning education & research, 2010 Summer, v.29, n.4, p.496-497

"Riverfront renaissance [APA Awards]" Davidson, Michael *Planning*, 2013 Apr., v.79, n.4, p.43

"Hapticity and Time" (Juhani Pallasmaa)

"Above the Falls: Minneapolis redefines its working river" Martin, Frank *Edgerton*
Landscape architecture, 2001 Nov., v.91, n.11, p.50,52,54,56,

"Projects: three approaches to urban design" Fisher, Thomas, 1953-; Arcidi, Philip
Progressive architecture, 1992 Feb., v.73, no.2, p.96-101,

<http://landarchs.com/10-cities-that-are-reinventing-the-relationship-with-their-rivers/>

Resources:

Alexandria Archives <http://www.alexandriava.gov/Archives>

Lyceum: Alexandria's History Museum <http://alexandriava.gov/Lyceum>

Alexandria Archeology Museum <http://www.alexandriava.gov/Archaeology>