

CP 6834/AR 6303

Urban Design: Policy and Implementation

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:35 – 10:55

Room 307, Architecture East

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Professor of Practice

Urban Design is about designing the public's environment – streets, parks, squares, plazas, and the building forms that shape the civic spaces connecting people to place and to each other. The course will explore the roles that citizens, professionals, developers, and public officials play in crafting urban design policy and what it takes to get good urban design accomplished. We will focus particularly on the latter – the rules, the tools, the techniques, and the strategies that shape policy and account for our often disastrous civic environment. If applied consciously and collaboratively, however, the same toolbox can and should produce satisfying results, and don't we all want to live in a better place?

The goal is to introduce pre-professionals to the integration and synthesis of planning, design, and development in response to the physical and spatial needs and desires for the broad and diverse everyday public (as distinct from work for the single client or patron). We will explore how the interplay of the actors on civic space can improve both theory and practice, at all scales, and in all place-building circumstances. We will use readings, field studies, and discussion as a basis for research, analysis, and conceptualization about how to reach the goals. The course will place all of this in the

historic, political, economic, and social contexts that have produced civic design, for better or worse, through time in Atlanta, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Students can expect that the course will provide them conversancy with the theory and practice of urban design, related to the range of planning, architecture, civil engineering, landscape architecture, development practice, and public policies that produce it. They will learn the standards and measures common to good planning and design practice. And the course will give them a handle on where they might fit into the realities of planning and implementation processes – how to get it done.

Ultimately, if effective, urban design can contribute positively to citizens' aspirations for an improving daily life.

Readings

There are two parallel tracks for the readings: my book, Urban Design and People, (Wiley 2009) and articles or chapters of your choosing on assigned topics. The assignments call for readings from the book, together with the preparation of one page abstracts of the readings you choose on the same topic as the book readings. Read the book assignments prior to the class that covers the exposition of the topic(s) of the week. Read each other's abstracts of your chosen readings for the topic of the week, which you will have placed in the course folder for all to read well in advance of the discussion class, as specified in the schedule below. The readings together then will provide the basis for discussions on the week's topics. For the abstracts, I am anticipating three groups of about seven students each, with each group responsible for a total of three or four sets of abstracts over the course of the semester. Beyond encouraging self-directed exploration of the literature and providing a foil for the text, the paired readings will provide a range of information and viewpoints on the topics discussed in class.

Other readings are recommended, some particular to the Field Study work, and others by urban design-oriented practitioner/authors for further reading according to the topic of interest. These will be placed on reserve and include:

- The Practice of Local Government Planning, Fourth Edition, compiled and published by the International City Managers Association in 2008.
- The Urban Design Handbook, by Urban Design Associates, Norton, 2003
- Redesigning Cities by Jonathan Barnett, APA Planners Press, 2003
- The Regional City by Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton, Island, 2001
- Lexicon of the New Urbanism by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, download at www.dpz.com
- Retrofitting Suburbia by Ellen Dunham-Jones, Wiley 2008
- Sustainable Urbanism by Douglas Farr, Wiley, 2008
- The American City by Alex Garvin, McGraw-Hill, 2002
- The Death and Life of Great American Cities, by Jane Jacobs, Random House, 1961
- The Image of the City, by Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1960
- Time Saver Standards for Urban Design by Donald Watson, Alan Plattus, and Robert Shibley, McGraw/Hill 2003

All of these as well as others can be sources for preparing abstracts and in any event should be at least looked at by all in the class. Finally, visit the periodicals section in the library as well as any number of websites (many are listed in Chapter 10 of the text, and I particularly call to your attention pps.org, cnu.org, bettercities.net, and uli.org – plus take a look at hard copy issues of “Places,” (recent editions only on-line) “Journal of Urban Design,” “Engineering News Record,” “Architectural Record,” “Planning,” “JAPA,” “JPER,” “Landscape Architecture,” “Metropolis,” and others, all in

the library). Together, these cut across the range of content and thought for the course. I encourage you to follow whatever is your interest in exploring these materials for the purpose of fulfilling your abstract requirements.

Field Studies

The field studies are the central deliverable for the course. Students will carry out a two-part field study over the course of the semester, documenting and assessing physical conditions of sites and environs and their regulatory contexts. The field studies are designed to connect the course content as well as your direct experience to a baseline understanding of why and how places look like they do and strategies for improving them over their present condition. They will offer each student the opportunity to develop your own perceptual, analytic, and representational skills as well as to test the principles developed in the course. The format for these studies will be assigned according the schedule below.

Other Activities

Rules of Thumb: Over the course of the semester, students will develop their own digest of key measures used for understanding, designing, and implementing strategies for making places better. There will be a handout to assist in organizing this work, with the due date according to the schedule.

Public Meetings: Each student will be required to attend at least one City of Atlanta (Zoning Review Board, Council Committee, NPU, or other) or other jurisdiction's public committee meeting where issues involving physical space are being debated and decided. These can relate to zoning, subdivision, transportation, urban design, historic preservation, tree conservation, land use or other issues, either as proposed by developers or initiated by a public entity. Agendas for such meetings are generally available on-line for most jurisdictions. Each student will prepare a one page summary of that meeting according to the schedule below.

Quiz

One quiz is scheduled in class on October 30 (80 minutes). The readings, lectures and class discussion up to that point will be covered in the quiz. There will be no opportunity to make up the quiz except in a true emergency and with advance approval.

Evaluation

To succeed in the class, students must complete all assignments according to the schedule, participate in the class discussions, and attend class (note that more than three unexcused absences may result in a reduction of grades). Final grades will be determined according to the following weighting:

Readings and class discussion:

25

Timely submittal of abstracts, (including public meeting summary) together with evidence of having read the other reading assignments (like answer when called upon), and participation in class discussion will be the basis for evaluating this criterion

Field studies:

50

The field studies are to be carried out in stages, in which students must demonstrate progress in each stage, as well as in preparation of final products.

"Rules of Thumb"

5

Students must complete the rules of thumb exercise as assigned
(or beyond) on schedule.

Quiz:

20

Total:

100

Notes:

- Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity and honor. Accordingly, the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code will provide the ethical framework for monitoring and evaluating behavior and producing work for this studio. Please review it at http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules_regulations/#18.
- Please see me at the beginning of the semester if you feel you need course adaptations or accommodations due to disability, or if you have any emergency medical information that I should know about, or if you need any special arrangements in the event the building must be evacuated. Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations must obtain an accommodations letter from the ADAPTS Office [www.adapts.gatech.edu] to ensure appropriate arrangements.
- All cell phones should be turned off during class
- Laptops and PDAs are permitted in the classroom for the purpose of taking notes or for conducting research assigned in the class only – no pleasure surfing
- In case of emergency (i.e. fire, accident, criminal act), please call the Georgia Tech Police at 894-2500. Please note that Perry Minyard, IT Support

Administrator, is also a firefighter and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified in performing CPR.

Office Hours and Availability:

Generally, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:00, or as arranged in advance. I will do my best to respond to brief email questions, briefly, within 48 hours.

Class Schedule - CP6834/AR6303

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:35 – 10:55, room 260, Architecture West

The class schedule is divided into three parts:

- Part I, August 21 – October 4: focus on **what** urban design is, where it fits into the grand scheme of who and what make cities, evolving standards and “truths,” why urban design is important, both in general and for city planning, architecture, landscape architecture, civil engineering, and development, its principles, and its players
- Part II, October 9 – November 15: focus on **how** to get the stuff of urban design - and related disciplines’ - actually done, what are the principles in play, who are the players involved in implementation and how urban design relates to current hot button policy and practice issues
- Part III, November 20 – December 6: focus on field studies as applications of the substance of the course as a whole

PART I What, Where, and When August 21 – October 4:

Week 1

1. August 21 **Overview; self-introductions; syllabus review; course folder; in-class drawing exercise**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Part One, Background, Overview and Chapter 1, People and Place, for class on August 28
 - Abstract One, Group A, How everyday citizens have shaped their world; **DUE** August 27, for discussion on August 30
2. August 23 **Atlanta urban design overview:** people, environment, character, places, policies, issues, presentation and Q and A. **Introduction of urban design theory and practice** - the background, content, principles, processes and strategies of urban design

WEEK 2

3. August 28 **Background: People and Place**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Chapter 2 Background: Urban Design Traditions and Chapter 3 The Physical Environment, for class on September 4
- Abstract Two, Group B, spatial and environmental models in the built world, **DUE** September 3, for discussion on September 6

Public meeting assignment, **DUE** October 11

4. August 30 **Discussion** of text and abstracts: roles of citizens in place making

Field Study One assigned, **DUE** October 4

WEEK 3

5. September 4 **Background: Urban Design Traditions and The Physical Environment**

- Reading assignments: Urban Design and People, Processes, Chapter 9, Rules, for class on September 11
- Abstract Three, Group C, the rules that make places what they are - **DUE** September 10 for discussion on September 13

6. September 6 **Discussion** of text and abstracts: Urban Design Traditions and The Physical Environment

"Rules of Thumb" assignment, DUE November 8

WEEK 4

7. September 11: **Processes: Rules**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Chapter 4, Human Activity, and Chapter 5, Connections, for class on September 20
- Abstract Four, Group A, what we do and how we connect with each other and our places, **DUE** September 20 for discussion on September 25

8. September 13: **Discussion** of text and abstracts: **Rules**

WEEK 5

9. September 18: **CODE WALK**: Meet on the 5th Street bridge, **promptly** at 9:35

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Principles, Chapter 6, Design, and Chapter 11, Techniques, pages 308–325 for class on October 2
- Abstract Five, Group B, design for the civic realm, **DUE** October 1 for discussion on October 4

10. September 20: **Content: Human Activity and Connections**

Review: Status of Field Study, Rules of Thumb and Public Meeting Attendance

WEEK 6

11. September 25 **Discussion of text and abstracts: Human Activity and Connections**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Processes: Chapter 11, Techniques, for class on October 6
- Abstract Six, Group C, techniques for turning rules to tools, **DUE** October 7 for discussion on October 11

12. September 27 **GPA CONFERENCE IN COLUMBUS**

For those not going: Continued Review: Status of Field Study, Rules of Thumb, and discussion of work to date

WEEK 7

13. October 2 **Principles: Design**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Processes: Chapter 10 and 11, Tools and Techniques, for class on October 9
- Abstract Six, Group C, tools and techniques for turning rules to tools, **DUE** October 8 for discussion on October 11

14. October 4 **Discussion of text and abstracts: Design for the civic realm**

FIELD STUDY #1 DUE

Field Study #2 Assigned

PART II: How, Why, and Who October 9 – November 15

WEEK 8

15. October 9 **Processes: Tools and Techniques**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Principles: Chapters 7, Change, for class on October 23
- Abstract Seven, Group A, how change happens to people and places, change forces and change management, **DUE** October 22 for discussion on October 25

16. October 11 **Discussion of text and abstracts: Tools and Techniques**

PUBLIC MEETING ASSIGNMENT DUE

WEEK 9

17. October 16 **FALL RECESS**

18. October 18 **Review Field Study 1**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Principles, Chapter 8, Organization, before QUIZ on October 30 and for class on November 6

- Abstract Eight, Group B, coordination, collaboration, and partnership in place making, **DUE** October 29 for discussion on November 8

WEEK 10

19. October 23 **Principles: Change**

20. October 25 **Discussion** of text and abstracts: Change management

WEEK 11

21. October 30 **QUIZ**

Reading assignments:

- Urban Design and People, Strategies, Chapter 12 for class on November 13
- Abstract Nine, Group C, putting the pieces together to act strategically (and effectively) design for the civic realm, **DUE** November 12 for discussion on November 15

22. November 1 **CODE WALK** - meet at offices of Central Atlanta Progress, promptly at 9:35 (and earlier if you can)

WEEK 12

23. November 6 **Principles: Organization**

24. November 8 **Discussion** of text and abstracts: organizational forms in

planning, design, and development

Review of status of Field Study 2

“RULES OF THUMB” ASSIGNMENT, DUE

WEEK 13

25. November 13 **Strategies**

26. November 15 **Discussion** of text and abstracts: Strategies

PART III: YOU November 20 – December 11

WEEK 14

27. November 20 **Field Studies Drafts - Pin-up**

28. November 22 **THANKSGIVING**

WEEK 15

29. November 27 **Field Studies Pin-up (continued)**

30. November 29 **Strategies:** As applied to field studies, sample problems and
case studies

WEEK 16

31. December 4 Applications of course content to current issues facing the
Atlanta Region (and the nation and world)

32. December 6 Continuation of December 4 discussion and wrap-up

FINAL FIELD STUDY TWO DUE

FINALS TIME SLOT: Tuesday, December 11 at 8:30 – Noon

FINAL Field Study Pin-up and Review: