Colorado State University, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

LAND 630 – Topics in Urban Design

Course Syllabus - Fall 2014
Course hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00am – 2:40pm
Location: Natural Environmental Sciences (NESB) B101 and B110

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Urban wildlife corridor study. Stephan Kansman MLA '14

Overview

The study and practice of urban design has traditionally been expressed as an authoritative, top-down process undertaken by designers, legislators and their most influential constituents, often with little regard for the concerns of the very residents that are directly impacted or even displaced by their plans. Recently, more inclusive processes have started to become prevalent, with a wide range of consultants and community members involved in appearance, if not always in fact. Promising new approaches, however, are slowly gaining traction in the urban planning practices of the 21st century. Landscape architects are uniquely positioned to understand and bridge the divides between the often conflicting priorities of government, industry, commerce, citizens and the environment.

This course will serve as an introduction to the exciting and fertile practice of urban design on two important fronts. First, it will introduce students to the history and application of urban design principles and practices through studies of precedents, analytical assessment techniques and scalar shifts in design approach. Second, students will be taught to structure and employ a visionary new framework for a truly collaborative, inclusive and regenerative urban design process. Through these two important goals of the course, students will gain an understanding of landscape architecture's role in shaping urban environments and the populations they serve.   The course will follow a professional approach to the analysis of issues and needs in urban neighborhoods, preparation of master plan strategies and urban visioning documents, and the application of design objectives to individual urban sites. The studio will culminate in the compilation of a comprehensive urban design document based upon students' analysis of, and proposals for, the Mason District in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Organization

This class is organized as a studio course, with a portion of the weekly class time devoted to lectures, demonstrations and discussions, and the remaining time dedicated to individual or group work on assignments and projects. The course schedule will be kept fairly fluid within the allotted time, with lectures, discussions and studio work time scheduled as needed. For this reason, it is critical for all students to attend all class sessions.

The studio will be divided into six distinct modules:
   I.   Research of urban design history and methodology
   II.   Development of new methodologies focused on regenerative urban design; vis-a-vis contemporary precedents
   III.   Data collection, urban analysis and interpretation
   IV.   Urban design master plan proposal
   V.   Individual build-out proposals
   VI.   Final urban design report

Please note that this course assumes no previous training in GIS software, however familiarity with this technology is highly recommended for optimal productivity in this studio.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this studio will be able to:
   o   understand urban design history and traditional methodology
   o   develop new methodologies focused on regenerative urban design strategies
   o   demonstrate an ability for critical thinking and individual research methodology
   o   employ critical analysis and data gathering skills
   o   produce a conceptually sound urban design master plan and strategic build-out proposals
   o   compellingly represent and communicate their design ideation through a variety of media
   o   understand and participate in a collaborative design and learning environment

Suggested Readings

Many of the reading assignments and contents that were used to prepare my lectures were taken from the following books. Required readings will be posted to the course RamCT Blackboard site.
   o   Bacon, Edmund N. Design of Cities. Penguin Books, New York: 1974.
   o   Dunham-Jones, Ellen and June Williamson. Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ: 2011.
   o   Girouard, Mark. Cities and People. Yale University Press, London: 1985.
   o   Jacobs, Alan B. Great Streets. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA: 1995.
   o   Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Random House, Inc., New York: 2002.
   o   Lagro Jr., James A. Site Analysis: Informing Context-Sensitive and Sustainable Site Planning and Design, (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ: 2013.
   o   Lukez, Paul. Suburban Transformations. Princeton Architectural Press, Princeton, NJ: 2007.
   o   Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA: 1960.
   o   McHarg, Ian L. Design with Nature. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ: 1992.

Studio Materials

- o   rolls of trace paper, range from 12" - 36"
- o   black felt tip pens (Sharpie), range from fine to bold; color markers and color pencils
- o   architectural and engineering scales; straight edge rulers
- o   digital camera and USB Flash Drive

Class Policy

Attendance

As a graduate design studio course, this class requires a high level of commitment to the work. Given the rapid succession of assignments and the cumulative knowledge that is to be gained from each assignment, prompt and consistent attendance is mandatory, with exceptions made only for illness and family emergencies. More than three unexcused absences will warrant a mandatory meeting with the instructor to discuss the student's academic status and possible expulsion from the course.

Students are expected to work diligently during the entire class period unless prior arrangements have been made. Attendance at all class presentations, pin-ups and the Final Review is mandatory for an above-average grade in the class.

Additional Assistance

Any students having difficulties due to personal or physical constraints should consult with the instructor prior to the beginning of the semester in order to develop alternative strategies for progressing through the course. The instructor should be informed of any unavoidable absences as soon as possible so that alternate arrangements for the missed class can be made.

Assessment

Students will be asked to work in both team and individual formats. This encourages dialogue and interaction amongst students and simulates the types of conditions typically found in professional practice. Class presentations are expected from each student and should be anticipated at the completion of each major assignment in order to develop the students' public speaking skills and to promote a culture of learning and sharing of ideas within the class.

Students are expected to complete periodic assignments in a timely manner. The specific assignments chosen for the course are sequential by design and serve to incrementally contribute to the students' capacity to complete the final design project for the studio. As such, timely submission of assigned work is critical to the successful completion of this course. Specific grading details are listed below under the Grading Policy category.

Deliverables

All design representation materials to be presented in pin-ups and reviews need to be produced prior to the start of class. All assignment handouts, readings and lectures will be posted on the course RamCT Blackboard site. Unless instructed otherwise, digital materials must be submitted via RamCT Blackboard posting. No application-formatted files (Photoshop, InDesign, AutoCAD, etc.) will be accepted; JPG images or PDF files are expected unless otherwise noted. All files shall be clearly labeled with your name and the title of the assignment or image. Please plan your schedule accordingly to allow for needed production time.

Grading Policy

Grade Breakdown
30%   Mid-semester cumulative average for assignments
40%   End-semester cumulative average for assignments
20%   Final Report
10%   Class Attendance and Participation

Score	Grade	Description
98 or greater	A+	Exceptional Quality of Work
94-97	A	Excellent
90-93	A-	Very Good
87-89	B+	Good
84-86	B	Average
80-83	B-	Below Average
70-79	C	Fair
60-69	D	Poor
59 and below	F	Fail, Incomplete and/or Unacceptable Quality of Work

Late Assignments
Assignments that are completed late will be penalized 1 point for each day past the due date, up to a maximum deduction of 15 points. After 15 days, late work will no longer be accepted and will be assigned a grade of 0.

<u>Schedule of Classes (subject to revision):</u>

Week 1   Class Introduction

Week 2   Urban Design History

Week 3   Contemporary Urban Design Strategies & Methodologies

Week 4   Project Introduction

Week 5   Urban Inventory & Analysis

Week 6   Cross-Mapping

Week 7   Analysis Compilation: Identification of District Needs and Opportunities

Week 8   Master Plan Proposal

Week 9   Individual Build-out Proposals

Week 10   Individual Build-out Proposals

Week 11   Individual Build-out Proposals

Week 12   Individual Build-out Proposals

Week 13   Individual Build-out Proposals

Week 14   *Thanksgiving Recess (no classes)*

Week 15   Design Presentation

Week 16   District Design Document

Week 17   District Design Document

Honor Pledge

This course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. All graded activities of the course will comply. Additional information concerning CSU's academic policies can be found at: http://facultycouncil.colostate.edu/files/manual/sectioni.htm#I.5

- I pledge on my honor that I will not receive or give any unauthorized assistance in this course and endeavor toward meaningful social and environmental responsibility.

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Print student name

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Student signature and date