

Laboratory for Responsive Urbanism: Sustainable development strategies for small communities

Spring 2009: Architecture 645/845 + Urban Planning 858

Instructor: Christine Scott Thomson, Adjunct Professor

Problem Statement:

Loss of place and community brought about by the forces of growth, change, and globalization plague small communities throughout the globe. Traditional public places and community building spaces are being replaced by a restructured retail environment and a sprawling residential pattern. Bulk items are offered at low prices in a built environment stripped of the activity and social interchange found in vibrant city markets; the promise of a home of one's own is offered in a built environment that fails to provide places for people to walk, meet, and come together - hallmarks of desirable neighborhoods.

Mukwonago, WI and Radstadt, Austria typify two small communities that have distinct social, historical and cultural histories, yet both must respond to challenges to the traditional community fabric. Growth statistics for the Mukwonago region indicate that occupied housing units are growing at a rate 4% faster than the general population of the region indicating that productive agricultural land is being consumed at a rate that exceeds population growth. Over the last 40 years Mukwonago village has gotten 2.5 times as large, and 88% of the residents commute by car and drive alone resulting in significant environmental, social, and mental health impacts (USGBC 2009).

In Radstadt's region, the growth rate at the turn of the 21st century was 8% higher than throughout the past eighty years, with the exception of 5 years immediately following World War II. New stores can be as much as 10 times the size of shops that have been selling goods since the city charter was issued in 1289. The result of these pressures in both communities is the creation of a physical environment that eliminates public space, reduces the quality of building design and construction (Cannavo, P. 2007[Quote Kelbaugh, D. p. 106]), creates barriers to public health (Frank, L. 2003), consumes farmland (30,000ac/yr lost in State of WI (Lindstrom, M. 2003 p. 260 [SEWRPC p. 188])), and pollutes the water and air.

Objective:

This project educates and engages students with the current issues facing small communities in two different historical, social, and cultural contexts. It requires that he/she engage in discourse around urbanism and develop design strategies that renew community and a sense of place in a small settlement.

The course also seeks to engage students in community events to facilitate design discussion and a local exchange of ideas. In addition, it provides opportunities for international collaboration and comparative research, greatly expanding the positive potential of thoughtful and responsive design. Finally, this project is designed to be a resource for the international design community concerned with global cities (Sassen, S.; Solomon, D.) as it sheds light on the earliest stages of urbanization, that of small cities.

Methodology

The studio will consider a region of Wisconsin that includes 6 communities confronted by growth and include a comparative understanding of a similar

region in Salzburg, Austria. The focus village/city of Mukwonago and Radstadt will anchor each region.

This studio includes intense reading, discussion, case study analysis, data gathering, and spatial analysis. In addition to designing, students will be required to take a critical stance on social issues, develop a knowledge base on the current scholarship of *urbanism*, and propose a self-directed design intervention that will renew community and enhance a sense of place for the identified set of small Wisconsin municipalities.

Goals

- Understand the issues confronting small communities under enormous growth pressures in order to develop alternative responses that are based on principles of sustainable urbanism.
- Take part in a community planning meeting to gain invaluable information about local perceptions and development dynamics.
- Compare cross-cultural conditions, spatial qualities, and approaches to downtown redevelopment to expand the range of creative design responses.
- Embrace the constructed landscape as a positive way to directly address social and economic needs to provide life-affirming environments for everyday living.
- Consider the opportunities and limits to urban communities relative to developing sustainable settlements

Required Graphic Materials (must be obtained by Friday for use in WKSP #1)

Sketchbook – suggested ~5" x 8" or larger
4 Micron Pens – suggested .005, .01, .03, .08
4 Pencils – suggested HB, 2B, 4B, 8B
6 Prismacolor markers – suggested 2 grays; 4 colors based on identified palette
Roll of 12" trace – suggested 24" roll of trace
1 24+ IN/CM desk ruler – Must include imperial and metric units!
1 Architectural scale
1 Engineering scale

Required Texts (suggest purchase, but can use in library or resource center)

- Bürklin, Thorsten & Michael Peterek, **basics Urban Building Blocks** (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2008)
- Girling, Cynthia & R. Kellett. **Skinny Street and Green Neighborhoods: Design for Environment and Community** (D.C.: Island Press, 2005)
- Margolis, Liat & Alexander Robinson. **Living Systems: Innovative Materials and Technologies for Landscape Architecture** (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag AG, 2007)

Case Study Projects:

1. Water garden (J. Kipnis), Columbus, OH
2. Fresh kills (Field Operations), Staten Island, NY
3. Highline (D + S version), New York City, NY
4. Millennium Park, Chicago, IL
5. Yokohama Port Terminal (Foreign Office Architects) Yokohama, Japan
6. Coffee Creek Center (McDonough + Partners), IA
7. Borneo Sporenburg (West 8), Netherlands

Schedule & Assignments

1. Week: 1/26-1/30 – Intro to US/AT project

Assign readings + Case studies

Workshop #1: Public Realm + Tactics (Fri, Jan 30th)

2. Week 2/2-2/6 – Reading + Data Collection

Present Readings

Workshop #2: Data Collection + Analysis (Thurs, Feb. 5th)

3. Week 2/9-2/13 – Case study analysis

Present Case Studies

Workshop #3: Diagramming (Fri, Feb 13th)

4. Week 2/16-2/20 – Case study analysis

Present Case Studies

Develop project proposal

5. Week 2/23-2/27 – Project proposal

INTERIM REVIEW: Present project proposal

6. Week 3/2-3/6 – Site visit

Pre + Post site visit analysis

Site Visit

7. Week 3/9-3/13 – Territory + Strategy Focus

Develop territory + strategy

8. Week: 3/16-3/20 spring break

9. Week 3/23-3/27 – Territory + Strategy Focus

Develop territory + strategy

E. Troy Smart Growth Meeting

10. Week 3/30-4/3 - Territory + Strategy Focus

Develop territory + strategy

11. Week 4/5-4/10 - Design Intervention Focus

INTERIM REVIEW: Develop design intervention

12. Week 4/13-4/17 – Design Intervention Focus

Develop design intervention

CIE Conference: *Sustaining Cities: Urban Lost & Found*

13. Week 4/20-4/24 - Design Intervention Focus

Develop design intervention

14. Week 4/27-5/1 - Design Intervention Focus

Develop design intervention

15. Week 5/4-5/8 - Final presentation

FINAL REVIEW: Project Summary + Final Images + Boards + Booklet

16. Week 5/11-5/15: Final documentation - Booklet & Electronic docs

Course Requirements Attendance & Participation

The studio will meet on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1:30-5:20. Every other week the class will meet on Tuesday and Friday only. All students are expected to prepare in advance of class and work individually and collaboratively in a studio format during the duration of the class. Students are also expected to engage in reading and research as suggested by the instructor and to actively seek critical dialogue with faculty and peers. Students will be responsible for continuing to complete assigned work outside studio. Utilizing the regularly scheduled studio time on alternating Thursdays for independent work is strongly recommended.

Three collaborative workshops will be held throughout the semester. Attendance at these events is mandatory. *For every missed in-studio workshop students will lose ½ grade points* (i.e. if they were receiving an A in the course, their grade will become an A- for one missed workshop, B+ for two, and B for three).

Students will be expected to attend 1 site visit to the Kettle-Moraine territory which includes six independent, but related communities. Each student is expected to complete a general driving tour of the area as well as collect information from an identified site critical to the completion of their design intervention.

In addition, students will be expected to attend a smart growth community meeting in the Village of E. Troy on March 23, 2009. Students will be expected to take notes at the event and incorporate lessons learned into their final project.

Also, students will be expected to attend the 2-day workshop titled: Sustaining Cities: Urban Lost & Found presented through UWM's Center for International Education on April 17th & 18th. Internationally recognized leaders in Landscape Urbanism and City Design will be presenting at the event. Students will be expected to take notes at the event and incorporate lessons learned into their final project.

All students must work in studio and be present for the full class period unless given permission to leave. Students will prioritize studio time for academic learning and will not schedule appointments, work, or other obligations during studio time. Conflicts and unintended absences will inevitably occur. Absences must either be discussed with the instructor one class period in advance or one class period after the absence has occurred to ensure class obligations are being met. *Two unexplained absences will result in grade reduction.*

All students are required to complete daily assignments, meet final project requirements, and verbally present work juried in reviews. *Failure to present your work at the scheduled reviews, without university-sanctioned absence, will result in a failing grade for the project.*

Course Information

Students will be responsible for obtaining the 3 identified textbooks either by purchasing or accessing through library resources including both the Golda Meir Library and the SARUP resources center. All other readings will be provided on the **D2L site**. Students will be able to directly obtain reading from the web resource.

Landscape Urbanism/Ecological Urbanism Articles:

1. Waldheim, Charles. "Landscape as Urbanism" in the Landscape Urbanism Reader (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006)
2. Mitchell, William J. Homes & Neighborhoods chapter in E-topia: "Urban life, Jim-but not as we know it" (MA: MIT Press, 1999)
3. Wall, Alex "Programming the Urban Surface" in On Landscape Urbanism (Canada: Center for American Architecture and Design, 2007)
4. Lootsma, Bart. "Biomorphic Intelligence and Landscape Urbanism" in Topos: European landscape magazine (2002)
5. McDonough, William. Waste Equals Food chapter in Cradle to Cradle (NY: North Point Press, 2002)
6. Lyle, John Tillman. Chapter 2: Science, Design, and Regeneration in Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development (NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1994)
7. Drexler, Hans and Christopher Duisburg. "In Conversation with RUR: On Material Logics in Architecture, Landscape, & Urbanism" in Landscape Urbanism a Manual for the Machinic Landscape (London, AA Publications, 2004)

Web Resources:

Landscape Urbanism Blog
landscapeandurbanism.blogspot.com/
IAAC Advanced Architecture Contest
www.iaacblog.com/AAC2007-finalists/
Awards for Urban Design: AIACC
aia-awards.com/AIACC/
Project for Public Spaces Web Site
www.pps.org

Additional course information, such as a copy of the Syllabus and schedule will be placed on **T: drive** in a folder specified by the class number or instructor name. Students will be permitted to use the T: drive for individual storage of class materials. Students are responsible for creating a set of folders identified by their names and maintaining all electronic files.

Course Grading Policy

Grades depend on a demonstrated ability to think critically, define problems, identify objectives, organize complex tasks, and make compelling graphic and verbal arguments for a particular approach to solving a design problem. Students will receive two grades for the semester, one for each of the two design projects.

Introductory Projects: 20%

Introductory exercises: 20%

Workshops (participation, see requirements above)

Final Project: 80%

Part I: Strategy/Framework 40%

Part II: Design Intervention: 40%

Grading will be based on the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated mastery of scholarship on Landscape Urbanism and Ecological Urbanism
2. Convincing data analysis and graphic argumentation for a design strategy that addresses the topics of small city renewal

3. Consideration of cross-cultural, regional, and building detail design responses
4. Development of a compelling and specific design intervention that forwards the realization of sustainable development strategies for small communities

Instructor Information:

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UWM Administrative Requirements

Grade Appeal Procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the Instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the Department of Architecture. These procedures are available in writing from Joan Simuncak, Assistant Dean, in AUP 225.

Incomplete. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final project or to complete some limited amount of term work. An incomplete is not given unless the student proves to the Instructors that he/she was prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above.

Academic Misconduct. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors.

Financial Obligation. The submission on your registration form and your subsequent assignment to classes obligates you to pay the fee-tuition for those classes or to withdraw your registration in writing no later than **Friday, February 4, 2008**. It is important to both you and the University that you make payment on time. The last day to drop the course without notation, and receive a partial refund on tuition is Friday, February 18, 2008. The last day to drop the course with notation that requires departmental approval is **Friday, March 14, 2008**. This is university policy. These and other important dates may be referenced at the University's web site:

http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/register_course_info/important_dates.cfm

Participation by Students with Disabilities. If a student requires special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, the student should contact the Instructor as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Religious Observances. Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance provided the instructor receives sufficient prior notice of the conflict (not less than one week).

Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. It subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers, educational

experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff. The university will not tolerate behavior between or among members of the university community that creates an unacceptable working environment.

Complaint Procedures. Students may direct complaints to Professor Jeffrey Ollswang, Grievance Officer for the Department of Architecture, by telephoning (414) 229-6023. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed either to Robert Greenstreet, Dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken in the first 5 minutes of class. All students are to be in class for the entire allotted class time—tardiness or leaving class early will have a negative effect on the semester grade. Absence of more than two sessions will result in the loss of one letter grade for the course. Absence of more than four sessions will result in a recommendation to withdraw from the course or risk failure. (Please refer to the Wentworth Catalog, Section D, for additional attendance information.)

Illness

Students are responsible for contacting the course instructor via phone or e-mail prior to class to report an absence. (A message for your instructor may also be left with the architectural receptionist at 414.229.4014.) Instructors may require documentation of illness or other emergency in order for you to receive an excused absence from the class. Students are also responsible for both collecting assignments and other information missed during class and for deadlines and course material regardless of illness or absence. Missing a quiz or an exam without an excused absence will automatically result in a zero grade for that quiz or exam.

Participation/Effort

The study of architecture requires your full effort and participation. Self motivated efforts to challenge yourself, to work with your classmates, to contribute to class discussions, and to work beyond the expectations of the class will be rewarded.

NOTE: Course documents, assignments, and other relevant materials for both courses will be available online on the course's D2L course management website.

Late Work

All assigned work is due at the beginning of class on the date scheduled for submission or review. It is the responsibility of the student to complete readings and other course-work before the start of the class period to which they are assigned.

Written Work

All written work submitted for this course must meet the Standards for English 1. Poorly written documents may be returned to you, without a grade, for revision. Students are encouraged to utilize the Academic Resource Center facility for help in polishing their text.

Academic Conduct

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Student Code of Conduct. Information on academic honesty can be found online at:

http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

Improper conduct will not be tolerated. In addition to these policies, details of other UWM academics policies are available online in the following document.

www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf