

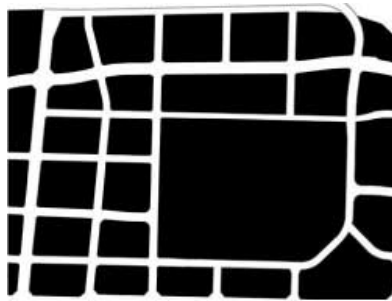
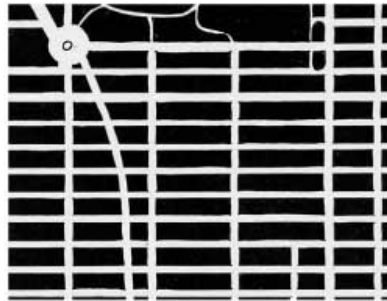
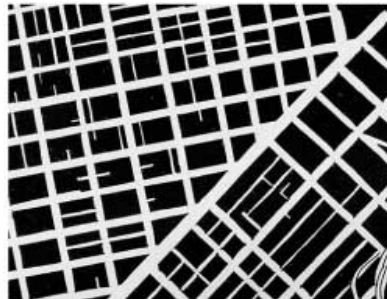
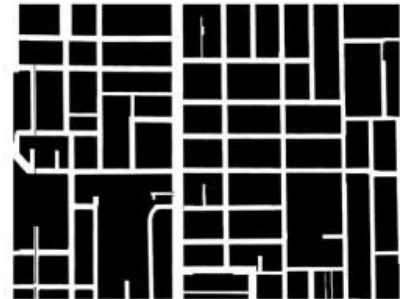
URPL 6633/URBN 6686 (sec 1): URBAN FORM THEORY (Fall 2011)

Instructor: Jeremy Németh, PhD [jeremy.nemeth@ucdenver.edu]

Date/time: Thursday, 10:00 am – 12:45 pm (Room 490)

Office hours: By appointment

Communication: all correspondence will be sent to your @ucdenver.edu e-mail address.

**MISSISSAUGA****BARCELONA****COPENHAGEN****LONDON****NEW YORK****PARIS****ROME****SAN FRANCISCO****TORONTO**

Urban Form Theory focuses on the historical and current production of the built environment and centers on realizing the position of urban design within the broader fields of urban development. In this course, we will look less at the practice of urban form production and more toward theories of urban form and design. We will analyze whether and how urban space is shaped by human relations, and in turn, shapes these same relations for future generations. Students will recognize how social, economic, political and cultural forces shape urban built form. We will also examine the crucial links between design and society, looking particularly at how formal elements can create or sustain diversity and interaction.

This course expects you to read around 75-100 pages each week. When confronted with narrative, your reading can be selective in order to glean the author's main arguments. Nearly all the readings we encounter will be very challenging, thought provoking, and, ultimately, very worthwhile. This class will expose students to a variety of theories surrounding the production and experience of urban form and will teach students to **be critical** of these ideas, while at the same time being able to form and defend their own ways of viewing the built world.

ORGANIZATION

This course is broadly organized in three sections: elements, perspectives and models. The first deconstructs the built environment and examines the various building blocks, elements and formal qualities that comprise blocks, districts, neighborhoods and entire cities. The second examines principles related to the good city and to a normative vision of good urban form. The third works through the contemporary theoretical debates on urbanism and urban design.

Nearly each week, I will select a small group of students to present the salient arguments offered in the reading or set of readings. This group will also lead the class discussion, while I will help to keep us on track, steer the discussion in a certain direction or ask the tough questions that we are sidestepping or avoiding altogether. In this regard, I plan to act as a facilitator, or mediator, for your peer-learning experience.

READINGS

I do not require you to purchase these books but suggest you do; this is, after all, your career. Some, like the *Companion to Urban Design*, is available as a free e-book from the Auraria Library (although only one of you can check this out at a time, but you can always print up to 60 pages...). If you do purchase books from online retailers, make sure to *expedite* shipping. A cheap way to gain access to these books is to buy books as a team – this is a great way to get to know your classmates, but make sure to determine who will keep the book after the semester ends. I will make all articles marked (BB) on Blackboard under “Course Documents”. Note that in the class schedule below I cross-reference the **[BOLD]** abbreviations after these listings.

- Alexander, C., Ishikawa, S., Silverstein, M., Jacobson, M., Fiksdahl-King, I. and S. Angel. 1977. *A pattern language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **[PL]**
- Banerjee, T. and A. Loukaitou-Sideris (Eds.). 2011. *Companion to urban design*. New York: Routledge. **[CUD]**
- Barnett, J. 2011. *City design: Modernist, traditional, green and systems perspectives*. New York: Routledge. **[CD]**
- Kelbaugh, D. and K. McCullough (Eds.). 2008. *Writing urbanism: A design reader*. New York: Routledge. **[WU]**
- Larice, M. and E. MacDonald (Eds.). 2006. *The urban design reader*. New York: Routledge. **[UDR]**
- Krieger, A. and W. Saunders (Eds.). 2008. *Urban design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. **[UD]**

ASSESSMENT

▪ Attendance/participation	20%
▪ Discussion facilitation	15%
▪ Assignments (5 points each) x 5	25%
▪ Final paper	40%

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION (partially adapted from M. Purcell, University of Washington)

There are two components to your attendance/participation grade. First, *attendance* is mandatory unless I have excused you for a religious holiday or personal emergency. If you plan to miss class, please make sure to discuss this with me beforehand. Each unexcused class will incur a deduction of two percentage points from your final grade. Second, *participation* is a fundamental piece of your experience in this class. Participation does not just mean “showing up” and sitting quietly. It also does not mean participating by responding to each and every question posed (i.e. “effective participation is not measured by amount”). It means actively involving yourself in the discussion by showing up on time every day, completing all readings before class, actively listening to whomever is speaking, asking pertinent and pointed questions, offering opinions respectfully, and otherwise being deeply “present” in class. Remember that your statements do not have to be fully resolved before you speak. Discussing honest questions and true struggles within yourself is often the best way to contribute.

Listening is also participating. According to Purcell, “If you do not actively listen and share your questions and ideas with everyone, they can’t benefit from what you have to offer. Each of you has important questions and ideas to share that we can all learn from. Therefore, since you all have something important to contribute, you all have a responsibility to contribute it.” And asking questions of your classmates or instructor is an important skill. If you have a question that you do not already have an answer for, you will genuinely want to hear what your classmates have to say. The worst thing for discussion is a series of unrelated monologues. What we are shooting for are true dialogues in which you engage the comments and questions of others rather than following them up with unrelated comments and questions. Be curious about what others have to say. If you share your thoughts, concerns and questions in an effort to explore the material in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, you will receive a good participation grade.

Each week, I will ask you to prepare for class by writing a short statement in response to the readings. Bring this paper – these notes – to class to refer to this during our class discussion. I will not grade these papers, but I will sometimes collect these without warning. Remember that participation is worth 20% of your final grade so your ability to synthesize the author’s arguments, but MOST IMPORTANTLY to develop your own thinking about the subject, are absolutely key to your success in this class. Here are some possible ways of organizing your thinking about each article; this information can be included in your papers:

1. Understanding: state the author's main argument in a few sentences.
2. Deconstruction: analyze what this author is up to. Why has she written the piece? What is she trying to achieve? Where does she fit in to the debates?
3. Critique: analyze the principle strength or weakness of the author's argument.
4. Application: explore how the author's argument applies to a particular case (preferably one with which you are familiar).

DISCUSSION FACILITATION

Each week, a different group of discussion leaders (chosen on the first day of class) will present the readings to the class. However, *all students in the class* are required to read all of the readings assigned. The idea of the discussion leaders is to have a team of students who serve as facilitators of the discussion. There will be a discussion team for most of the classes that involve discussions of readings. Each of you will facilitate discussion once during the semester. You can sign up for the class you want to facilitate on the circulating sign-up sheet. Everyone should spend lots of time preparing your class. In general, the more preparation facilitators do, the better the discussion goes.

The discussion facilitators will assist the class in an exploration of the important ideas in the readings. Each facilitator has quite a bit of freedom in deciding on the format of the class exploration. Whole-group discussion, structured debates, small-group discussion, jigsaw, role-playing, brainstorming, and fishbowl format are just some possibilities (for more information, refer to the page on techniques for planning a discussion, below). I encourage you to be creative in thinking up ways to inspire the class to engage in an energetic exchange of ideas and opinions. However, don't overdo the structure. Provide a structure that helps the class share their ideas and arguments, not one that is so elaborate it gets in their way.

In preparing their material, the facilitators should complete the readings well in advance and then meet with your team to formulate the content and structure of discussion. The content should include one or more key questions about the readings that will form the backbone of discussion. The idea is for the discussion facilitators to inspire everyone to explore the reading in insightful ways. In preparing questions that will guide discussion, it is a good idea to refer to the section on "good discussion questions" below. The structure of discussion will be up to you. Refer to the page on discussion techniques for some possible ideas to get you started.

Good Discussion Questions

Good discussion questions are "open-ended." They have a complex answer and/or a range of possible answers. They are usually not "closed-ended," meaning that there is a particular, discrete answer. Good discussion questions are also genuine. That means you have not already made up your mind what the answer is. Good, genuine questions can be descriptive. These ask about what actually is happening in the reading or in the world. Example: "Does the author mean to say...?" Good, genuine questions can also be normative. Normative questions ask what should be going on in the readings or in the world. For example, the genuine question above about whether the U.S. is right to intervene in world affairs is normative. Normative

questions open up the issue of values, of what people think the world should be like. You can ask either descriptive or normative questions when facilitating discussion.

The Rest of You

The existence of the discussion leaders is in no way an opportunity for the rest of the class to take it easy. The discussion facilitators will guide the discussion, but they should by no means do most of the talking. Their role is to stimulate you to engage in an insightful discussion. Thus the rest of the class should digest the readings as usual and come prepared to participate fully.

Discussion Techniques

Each of these can be used in combination, or alone. Don't be afraid to invent new techniques as well. In the past, when leaders have tried new things, it has been successful and has helped keep discussion fresh.

Whole group: everyone engages in discussion together at one time. This is good because you can get a greater range of ideas and opinions with a larger group. Large groups are sometimes tricky to manage well though, so having a good set of stimulating questions is important so you can shape the discussion to move in insightful directions that you have thought out beforehand. Large-group can also be a more intimidating setting in which to speak.

Small-group discussion: the class is broken up into small groups to discuss. They can have the same topic to discuss, or they can have different topics. The groups each discuss different aspects of a larger topic, and then they rejoin into a whole group to see how each group's issues/conclusions fit together.

Inverse pyramid: the class starts out in several small groups and each uses their discussion questions to come up with what they think is the most thought-provoking question. The groups then pair off, and the groups in each pair exchange their question with each other. Each group then discusses alone the new question they have been given. Then, the paired groups come together to discuss their responses to the two questions. These paired groups then formulate one question they want to ask the whole class. Then the class comes back together to explore the joint questions of each paired group.

Rotate: each leader develops questions on a particular sub-topic of the day's topic. The class is divided up so we have the same number of small groups as discussion leaders. Then, the leaders move in shifts from group to group so that each leader has a chance to lead each group. That way, each group gets a chance to discuss each aspect of the day's topic.

Brainstorming: the leaders ask the class to come up with ideas about a given topic (say, "reasons why you oppose the war in Afghanistan" and "reasons why you support the war in Afghanistan"). The product of that brainstorming (usually written on the board) can then serve as the basis for discussion, or it can be a way to sum up a discussion. This is a classic planning method commonly used in community planning sessions.

General class presentation tips

The central purpose of any presentation – whether written, oral or visual – is communication. To communicate effectively, you must state your ideas in a clear, concise and interesting manner.

1. Consider your audience. Don't assume they know things they don't.
2. Develop a theme: a clear take-home argument you want the audience to remember.
3. Prepare your script ("Tell them what you going to tell them; tell them, and then tell them what you told them.")
 - Introduction – state the argument clearly, so we can't miss it
 - Body – provide reasons and evidence to convince us of the argument
 - Closing – restate the argument and perhaps point to some new insights or ways forward. Don't trail off at the end and shrug apologetically.
4. Select the proper visuals — people follow your argument more easily when the presentation is reinforced with visualization.
 - Illustrate key points
 - Reinforce the verbal message
 - Stimulate audience interest
 - Focus audience attention
 - Design the visuals carefully
 - Big – can you read everything from the back row?
 - Clear – choose font sizes/colors that enhance legibility
 - Consistent – make sure all slides have a similar design
5. Presentation style
 - Alternate standing still and moving; speaking and listening; doing and thinking
 - Eye contact is your primary tool for establishing audience involvement—look at your whole audience (i.e. don't look at the instructor or just one or two students all the time)
 - Use gestures naturally – avoid nervous gestures (toying with notes, shifting from one foot to the other, etc)
 - Anticipate questions – think of the five most likely questions and plan out your answer (or build answers into presentation)
 - Do not digress – in the presentation or in answering any follow-up questions
6. Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse
 - Rehearse as a group and individually; do not assume you can wing it!

A presenter should *believe*. That is, you should approach the presentation as a golden opportunity to let the world hear your argument, an argument the world *needs* to hear. Project that feeling in your presentation. Make the audience feel the importance of your message. Be excited and animated (but also be organized). Don't give the audience the idea that you are a student who would rather not be doing this but who was assigned this task. Don't be self-effacing and give the impression you are not convinced how interesting your presentation is.

Use visual aids whenever you think they can help you make your point more effectively. But if you are using any technology, *figure out the details far in advance*. This means before the day of the presentation actually seeing your visuals on the screen in the room with the precise equipment you will be using. Do *not* come into class with a flash drive and assume the many

other variables necessary to make the visuals work will magically fall into place, because they will not. And you will flounder in your presentation and disrupt the presentations of others.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

You are required to complete five assignments during the semester. I will discuss each during the first few weeks of class. Submit a pdf version of your paper into the appropriate Discussion Board on Blackboard by **the Wednesday before** class each week. The intent is to be able to react to other papers – we might even select a paper to read and react to in class. Label the pdf “LastnameFirstname_Assignment#.pdf”. Also, bring one copy of your assignment to class on the class after it is due. You can use this to guide your discussion that week.

FINAL PAPER/PRESENTATION

Working in groups of two, you will first discuss the future of urbanism in light of the readings we have done this semester. We know from the various readings that commentators do not agree on this future. But what do you think? Should we adopt the New Urbanist principles? Or those of the landscape urbanists? Or none of the above? I want you to explore your thoughts about the future of cities, spaces and urban society.

Then I want you and your partner to develop a new theory of urbanism. This can be a hybrid theory, with principles pulled from several different sources and on some of your own subjective criteria for “the good city”, or it can draw directly on existing theories. You will then apply the theory in one Denver metropolitan-area neighborhood or district, or, if your theory applies to smaller scale elements of the public realm, to a singular public space, park or street. Your paper should describe the theory and the results of the application. This paper should be descriptive and normative: your goals are both to understand the various components of a place *and* to assess it based on a set of values you have developed. In this regard, you are undertaking a task common among neighborhood planners.

You will also be asked to present your theory and its application briefly (10 minutes) that day. Be creative, clear, concise and confident in your presentations. **Bring a copy of your paper to my office by 4:00 pm on Monday, December 12.**

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Remember that good writing involves multiple drafts. Also know that your papers will be graded on how well it brings together course ideas, how effectively it is written, and how well you follow the format guidelines (below). These papers should be well-organized, well-documented and not have any grammatical or spelling errors. When additional sources are referred to, use appropriate citation/documentation systems. I highly encourage those who are not comfortable with their writing skills to consult the UC Denver Writing Center; they are a wonderful resource.

Format guidelines

- PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS, PLEASE CONSULT ME OR THE UC DENVER WRITING CENTER.
- All assignments should be 1.15-line spaced in 11-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Use a style manual (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style), and be consistent
- Use an appropriate citation system, citing all *ideas* (not just quotes) that are not your own.
- Make sure your name appears on first page.
- Staple all pages (no paper clips).
- Number all pages.
- Do not include cover pages or report covers.
- If quotations are more than three lines, use a block quotation format.
- Always include an alphabetized bibliography.
- Always spell-check, read over, revise papers. Grammatical mistakes will not be tolerated.
- Avoid contractions and informal language.
- Use active verbs wherever possible, avoid passive language.

SCHEDULE

The following table presents the schedule for the semester. Please note that all readings must be completed before the day they are listed. I WILL be adding supplementary readings at times but will always do so at least a week before the related discussion. Any supplemental readings I assign will be available on Blackboard under Course Documents. In addition, I have invited a number of guest lecturers to speak in class and will show several videos in class as well as giving my own lectures and presentations. Therefore, this schedule is just a “bare bones” version that will be fleshed out through the semester.

Week	Date	Topic	Concepts	In class*	Selected readings**	Due
Week 1	Aug 25	Introduction I	Definitions, organization, field	Discussion (Nemeth) Krieger/Vale reading	--	--
Week 2	Sep 1	Introduction II	Why cities matter	Discussion (Nemeth)	WU (BB) Glaser (BB) Campanella (BB)	--
Week 3	Sep 8	Elements I	Urban components	Discussion (Group A)	Alexander (PBB)	
Week 4	Sep 15	Elements II	Urban infrastructure	Discussion (Group B)	MacDonald (CUD) Chapter 7 (UDR)	Assignment 1: elements
Week 5	Sep 22	Perspectives I	Normative theories of city form	Discussion (Group C)	Chapter 2 (UDR) Kriken (BB)	
Week 6	Sep 29	Perspectives II	Modernist and traditional	Discussion (Group D)	Intro, Ch. 1-2 (CD)	Assignment 2: urban manifesto
Week 7	Oct 6	Perspectives III	Green and systems	Discussion (Group E)	Ch. 3-4, Conclusion (CD)	
Week 8	Oct 13	NO CLASS	--	--	--	--
Week 9	Oct 20	Models I	New urbanism	Discussion (Group F) Tavel lecture	pp. 155-202 (WU) Audirac (CUD) Francis (CUD) Talen/GSD (BB)	
Week 10	Oct 27	Models II	Landscape urbanism Ecological urbanism Sustainable urbanism	Discussion (Group G) Wenk lecture	pp. 115-154 (WU) Love (UD) Spirn (CUD) Scheer (CUD) Freiburg (BB)	Assignment 3: Talen critique
Week 11	Nov 3	Models III	Integral urbanism Postmodern urbanism	Discussion (Group H) Mark Johnson lecture	Ellin (CUD) Cuthbert (CUD) Beauregard (BB)	
Week 12	Nov 10	Models IV	Everyday urbanism Loose space	Discussion (Group I)	Kaliski (UD) Hou (CUD) Franck & Stevens (BB)	
Week 13	Nov 17	Models V	Toward a just urbanism?	Discussion (Group J)	Mitchell (BB) Nemeth (BB) Fainstein (BB) Irazabal (CUD)	Assignment 4: just space
Week 14	Nov 24	NO CLASS	--	--	--	--
Week 15	Dec 1	Future	A third way Technology and the city	Discussion (Nemeth)	Sorkin (UD) Talen (UD) Greenberg (UD) Ben-Joseph (CUD) Cuff (WU) Townsend (BB)	Assignment 5: tech in the city
Week 16	Dec 8	Paper due	--	Final presentations		Final paper (due Dec 12)

* Several guest lecturers will speak in class; I will also show several videos in class.

** I will augment this list with readings nearly every week but with ample notice.