

# Community Design and Construction

Georgia Institute of Technology  
College of Architecture and College of Building Construction  
Spring 2008

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**Instructor:** Mike Watkins

**Background:** MS Arch Concentration in Classical Design, Georgia Tech, 2008  
Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Director of Town Planning, 19 years  
B Arch, University of Cincinnati

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**Cell phone:** 301 675 6223

**Class time:** Tuesdays from 6 pm until 9 pm.

**Office hours:** Appointments made upon request.

**Course nos.:** ARCH 4803, ARCH 8803, BC 4803, BC 8813

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**Description:** The course will provide an overview of the principles of smart growth, livable communities and new urbanism, and how these principles are implemented throughout the process of creating communities—including zoning and entitlements, design, branding and marketing, construction and life after the developer leaves. These communities bring together a synergistic mix of uses, incomes, and age groups and feature a variety of housing types, parking conditions, and building structures organized around coherent systems of public spaces. The course will study examples at a variety of urban scales and densities and teach students how to understand them in relation to the rural-to-urban transect. Local examples and guest lecturers from the Atlanta design and construction professions will also provide opportunities to examine the impact of these communities on social, economic, transportation and other relevant systems.

Generally, the course will cover of three broad types of material:

## **I. Principles**

The Lexicon of the New Urbanism

The Charter of the New Urbanism

The Transect, Zoning and the transect-based Smart Code

## **II. Precedents and Projects**

Serenbe

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Glenwood Park (or Atlantic Station or Vickery)

Kentlands

### III. Practice and Practitioners

Branding and Marketing, Jackie Benson of Benson Miles

Memorable Mixed-Use, Max Reim of Live Work Learn Play

Retrofitting Suburbia, Ellen Dunham-Jones

Design Controls

The Public Process and the Charrette

Advice to future developers, Andres Duany of Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company

NU in Australia, New Zealand and Dubai, Mike Day & Ludwig Fontalvo-Abello

**Objectives:** At the end of this course, students will have a realistic understanding of how the principles are situated and implemented in the current conditions of American community design and construction practices. Students will have developed a more critical eye for evaluating the characteristics of a community, neighborhood or place. Students will have a working knowledge of the Lexicon, the Charter of the New Urbanism, the Transect and the transect-based SmartCode. Students will be familiar with the characteristics of and differences between a design code and a pattern book.

**Course Format:** The weekly meetings of the course will be conducted in a seminar form. It will usually begin with a presentation of the week's topic by the instructor, guest lecturer, or video recording followed by a comprehensive discussion involving all participants. The open discussion of the readings will be led by assigned students who will prepare a set of questions and issues for discussion. Participation in the class discussions is crucial since learning is approached as a participatory process, benefiting from student/teacher and student/student interaction.

**Requirements and Evaluation:** Grades will be determined as follows:

- 10% **Neighborhood Documentation.** Two 2-page illustrated neighborhood documents. Examples and a specific format will be provided. A 5-minute, 3- to 5-slide PowerPoint presentation of each neighborhood may be made to the class.

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- 15% **Lexicon Illustration.** Photographic illustration of text found in Lexicon to be submitted in a provided hard-copy format. A 5- to 10-minute PowerPoint presentation may be made to the class.
- 20% **Transect Analysis.** Written and photographic transect analysis of a neighborhood in Atlanta. Sample and format to be provided. Could be the same neighborhood as one of the two descriptions above. A 5- to 10-minute PowerPoint presentation may be made to the class.
- 25% **Class participation,** including student-led discussions of the **Required Texts** listed below:

Suburban Nation

Charter of the New Urbanism

Lexicon of the New Urbanism

The Smart Code

**Policy on Absences:** The class is large and absent students may not be missed. Role will be taken on occasion. Two unexcused absences will result in forfeiture of the "Class Participation" portion of evaluation for the course.

- 30% **Design Proposal.** Graphic and written presentation of design proposals based on the application of the principles of the New Urbanism to an assigned design problem.

**Policy for Assignments Submitted Late:** I want you all to get "A's" in this class. But I need your help...

- If you think you have a legitimate excuse, send me an e-mail explaining why the work will be late and offering a date and time when you expect to have the work completed. I will send you an e-mail back either agreeing or not and if not, offering an alternative. This written exchange will avoid any confusion about the degree of leniency extended.
- If you do not e-mail me prior to the start of class on the day the assignment is due, 10% of the grade for that assignment will be forfeited. You may then have until 2pm on the Friday after it is due to submit a hard copy of the work to me in my studio

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and upload it to T-Square (it tells me when things were posted) or forfeit the entire grade for that assignment.

This is done in part to spare me the inconvenience, but much more so to be fair to your classmates who also have busy lives, colds, families, etc. I think you will find me generally reasonable if we communicate, much less so if we don't.

## **Additional Information:**

- Please see me if you feel you need **course adaptation or accommodation due to disability**, if you have any emergency medical information that I should know, 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 to ensure appropriate arrangements. Additional information on the subject is available on the internet at [www.adapts.gatech.edu](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu).
- Students are expected to act according to the **Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code**. It can be found on the internet at [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu).
- The "**Student's Bill of Academic Rights**" can be found on the internet at <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22.php>.
- **Cell phones** must be turned off in the classroom. (Someone please remind me!)
- **Changes in topics, assignments and due dates are likely** given the inclusion of guest speakers and field trips in the course. Students will be notified of any such changes as soon as possible so that business, personal and academic schedules can be adjusted appropriately.
- **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.

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**Course Calendar: February 5, 2008** (and still subject to change...)

## **January 8 (Week 1)**

Introduction to the Course

Sprawl vs. Neighborhood

Nightline Video

- Reading assignment for next week: Suburban Nation, Chapters 1-6 and Town Paper.

## **January 15 (Week 2)**

The End of Suburbia (video)

Discussion of The Town Paper

- Neighborhood description assignment given.
- Reading assignment for next week: Suburban Nation, Chapters 7-11 and Appendices.

## **January 22 (Week 3)**

Marketing Suburbia in 1947 (video)

Marketing Kentlands (videos)

Marketing and Branding the NU. Jackie Benson with Benson Miles

- Reading assignment for next week: Lexicon.

## **January 29 (Week 4)**

- Neighborhood Descriptions due.

The Lexicon

- Lexicon assignment given

Suburban Nation Discussion

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## February 5 (Week 5)

Ellen Dunham-Jones: Redeveloping the Suburbs

Student presentations of neighborhood descriptions

Introduction to Congress for the New Urbanism

Examples of traditional neighborhoods

- Reading assignments for next week: Charter Essays

## February 12 (Week 6)

- Lexicon illustration assignment due.

The Transect

The transect-based Smart Code

- Transect documentation assignment given.

Discussion of Charter Essays.

- Reading assignment for next week: Smart Code and New Urban News.

## SATURDAY, February 16: Glenwood Park Field Trip

We will meet at Perk Coffee Shop at 9:15. Directions can be found at [www.glenwoodpark.com](http://www.glenwoodpark.com). A representative from the development and another from one of the design firms doing work there will meet us for a walking tour. Dress for the weather. It was requested that we patronize one of the local business for coffee before or lunch after the tour.

- Written field observation to be completed and turned in on site using form provided.

## February 19 (Week 7)

Kentlands: the Design Charrette and the Charrette Design

Student presentation of illustrated Lexicon

Discussion of Smart Code, New Urban News and Glenwood Park

Form groups for design assignment

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## February 26 (Week 8)

- Transect documentation assignment due

Max Reim: The Memorable Mixed-Use Environment

Design assignment given.

Design assignment discussion. This may be outside. Dress for the weather.

## SATURDAY, March 1: Serenbe Field Trip

- We will meet at the Blue-Eyed Daisy at 9:15. Directions can be found at [www.serenbe.com](http://www.serenbe.com). A representative from the development will meet us for a walking tour. Dress for the weather. Arriving early to patronize the bake shop is recommended! We should finish there about 11.
- Written field observation to be completed and turned in on site using form provided.

## March 4 (Week 9)

Design Codes, Pattern Books and the like.

Kentlands: Too Plastic? Perhaps. Too Perfect? Far from it...

Student presentations of transect illustrations

Design proposal presentation and discussions.

## March 11 (Week 10)

- \* Draft of design problem due (content 60% complete, presentation format 30% complete)

No class tonight to make up for time devoted to field trip.

## March 18 (Week 11)

Mid-Term Break.

## March 25 (Week 12)

Andres Duany. This class will likely be held in a location TBD.

## April 1 (Week 13)

- \* Design problem due.

Mike Day & Ludwig Fontalvo-Abello on their work in Australia, New Zealand & Dubai.

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## **April 8 (Week 14)**

Student presentations of design problems.

Course Wrap-Up.

## **April 15 (Week 15)**

No class tonight to make up for time devoted to field trip.

## **April 22 (Week 16)**

Dead week. No class.

## **April 29 (Week 17)**

Exam week. No class, no exams!