

Theories of Urban Design – UP 519/ARCH 519/UD 719

Urban and Regional Planning Program

University of Michigan

Fall 2008

Time/Place: 2108 A&AB 10:30am - 12:00pm Monday and Wednesday

Credits: 3 credit hours

Instructor:

Larissa Larsen, Ph.D. (larissal@umich.edu)

1248C – Art and Architecture Building (beside the MUP cage)

936-0234 (office), 734-997-7621 (home – not after 9 pm)

Office Hours: Wednesday 1 to 3 pm

“Each generation writes its own biography in the cities it creates,”

Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*

Objectives

The purpose of this seminar is to critically evaluate the concepts, theories, and practices that underlie urban design. In the spirit of Lewis Mumford’s quote, we will be exploring the biographies that past generations have written within the design of their cities and we will be discussing what biographies we hope this generation, faced with many new challenges, will “write”. This class is an effort to understand urban visions and the realities that ensued. Therefore, we will consider form systems and spatial patterns, public spaces, the place of nature, the importance of technology, as well as the use of power and the possible exploitation of vulnerable populations.

Our readings are organized around nine themes:

- *Signature moments and movements in the history of urban design and city-making*
- *Future Cities*
- *Criticisms of modern planning and design*
- *Theoretical concepts of place*
- *Place-making practices*
- *Typology and Morphology in Urban Design*
- *Physical form- implications and externalities*
- *Physical elements of urban design*
- *Urban Design Practice*

Grading

1. Participation – Attendance and Class Participation – 20%
2. Assignment One – Paper: The Future of Cities – 20%
3. Assignment Two – Paper: Special Topic – 20%
4. Assignment Three - “Urban Design Theory Cards” -40%

The assignments are described in detail at the end of the syllabus. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. No electronic documents via email will be accepted.

Deadlines

I strive to be fair. Therefore, I must enforce deadlines and penalize students who turn their projects in late. If I don't receive your assignment by the date and time specified, you will be penalized by 10%. I will continue to subtract 10% from your grade for each additional day (each twenty four hour period) that you are late. If incredible circumstances arise, please communicate these to me in advance.

Required Texts:

Jacobs, Jane. 1993. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: The Modern Library.

Larice, Michael, and Elizabeth Macdonald, eds. 2007. *The Urban Design Reader*. The Routledge Urban Reader Series., eds. Richard T. LeGates, Frederic Stout. New York: Routledge.

Lynch, Kevin. 1960. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Wolfe, Tom. 1981. *From Bauhaus to Our House*. New York: Bantam Books. (reprinted in 1999)

Additional Readings (C-tools):

Alexander, Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein. 1977. *A Pattern Language: Towns- Buildings-Construction*. New York: Oxford University Press. (pp. ix-xvii; Section 14 (Identifiable Neighborhoods; Section 15 Neighborhood Boundary; Section 61 Small Public Squares; Section 60 Accessible Green; Section 120 Paths and Goals; Section 204 Secret Place)

Broudehoux, Anne-Marie. 2007. Delirious Beijing: Euphoria and Despair in the Olympic Metropolis, In *Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism: Evil Paradises*, Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk (eds.). New York: The New Press. pp.87-101.

Cranz, Galen, and Michael Boland. 2004. Defining the sustainable park: A fifth model for urban parks. *Landscape Journal* 23: 102-120.

Davis, Mike. 2007. Sand, Fear, and Money in Dubai. In *Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism: Evil Paradises*, Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk (eds.). New York: The New Press. pp.48-68.

Fainstein, Susan. 2000. New directions in planning theory. *Urban Affairs Review* 35, (March): 451-478.

Hackworth, Jason. 2007. *The NeoLiberal City*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. pp. 1-13.

Jackson, J.B. 1979. The Order of a Landscape. In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, D.W. Meinig (ed.), New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 153-163.

Kunstler, James Howard. 2003. *The city in mind: Notes on the urban condition*. New York: The Free Press. pp. 1-40 (Chapter 1 - Paris).

Larsen, Larissa, and Lily Swanbrow. 2006. Postcards of Phoenix: Images of desert ambivalence and homogeneity. *Landscape Journal* 25: 206-217.

Parker, Simon. 2004. *Urban theory and the urban experience*. New York: Routledge. pp. 15-19; 19-26).

Sorkin, Michael. 2007. The end(s) of urban design. *Harvard Design Magazine*. Winter: 5-18.

Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. 2000. *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Tuan, Yi Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis. pp. 3-7.

Ward, Stephen V. 1998. *Selling places: The marketing and promotion of towns and cities 1850-2000*. pp.1-7.

Weinstein, Richard S. 1996. The First American City. In *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja (eds.), Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. pp. 22-46.

Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. pp. 241-256.

General Organization of the Readings by Theme:

Moudon, A Catholic Approach to Organizing What Urban Designers Should Know, pp. 438-460.

Part One – Signature moments and movements in the history of urban design and city-making

Bacon – Upsurge of the Renaissance, pp9-16

Berman – The Family of Eyes and The Mire of the Macadam, pp.17-27

Kunstler’s Paris, pp. 1-40 (bold text indicates that reading is not in the Urban Design Reader)

Olmsted- Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns, pp. 28-34

Cranez & Boland, Defining the Sustainable Park, pp. 102-119

Sitte-The Meager and Unimaginative Character of Modern City Plans, pp.35-42

Mumford – The Garden City Idea and Modern Planning, pp.43-53

Perry – The Neighborhood Unit, pp. 54-65

Le Corbusier – The Pack-Donkey’s Way and Man’s Way, pp. 66-75

Walter Benjamin in Parker– The Exegetial City, pp. 15-19

Henri Lefebvre in Parker – The Production of the City, pp. 19-26

Weinstein, Richard – The First American City, pp. 22-46

Part Two – Future Cities

Hackworth, Jason – The NeoLiberal City, pp.1-13

Davis, Mike – Sand, Fear, and Money in Dubai, pp.48-68

Broudehoux, Anne-Marie – Delirious Beijing, pp. 87-101

Young, Iris Marion – Justice and the Politics of Difference, pp. 241-256.

Part Three – Criticisms of modern planning and design

Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Wolfe, Tom, From Bauhaus to Our House

Alexander, The Timeless Way, pp. 93-97

Jacobs and Appleyard, Toward an Urban Design Manifesto, pp. 98-108

Lynch, Dimensions of Performance, pp. 109-114

Sorkin, The End(s) of Urban Design, pp.5-18

Part Four – Theoretical concepts of place

Relph, Prospects for Places, pp.119-124

Norberg-Schulz, The Phenomenon of Place, 125-137

Tuan, Yi-Fu, Space and Place, pp. 3-7

Jackson, JB, pp.153-163

Oldenburg, The Problem of Place in America, pp. 138-148

Part Five– Place-making practices

Lynch, The Image of the City

Larsen, Postcards of Phoenix

Alexander, C et al., A Pattern Language excerpts

Cullen, Introduction to the Concise Townscape, pp. 167-173

Hough, Principles for Regional Design, pp. 174-182

Kelbaugh, Critical Regionalism, pp. 183-193

Hayden, Place Memory and Urban Preservation, pp. 194-203

Ellin, Themes of Postmodern Urbanism, pp. 204-214

Koolhaas, The Generic City, pp.215-226

Ward, Selling Places, pp.1-7

Part Six– Typology and Morphology in Urban Design

Krier, Critiques and Urban Components

Vidler, The Third Typology

Moudon, Getting to Know the Built Landscape

Part Seven – Physical form- implications and externalities

Gilham, What is Sprawl, pp. 267-307

Congress of New Urbanism, Charter, pp. 308-311

Fainstein, New Directions in Planning Theory

Lozano, Density in Communities, pp.312-327

Frey, Compact, Decentralized or What? The Sustainable City Debate, pp. 328-343

Part Eight – Physical elements of urban design

Whyte, Pieces from The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, pp. 348-363

Gehl, Three Types of Outdoor Activities and Life Between Buildings, pp. 364-370

Marcus and Francis, Urban Plazas, pp. 371-375

Hester, Neighborhood Space, pp. 376-386

Jacobs, Conclusion: Great Streets and City Planning, pp.387-390

Sucher, Getting Around, pp. 391-404

Metro, Green Streets, pp.405-424

Cervero, Drawing Lessons and Debunking Myths, pp. 425-434

Part Nine— Urban Design Practice

Lang, Urban Design as a Discipline and as a Profession, pp. 461-478.

Carmona et al, The Communication Process, pp. 479-489

Scheer, The Debate on Design Review, pp. 490-499

Punter, Design Guidelines in American Cities, pp. 500-516.

Reading Order

Wednesday, September 3 - Overview

Monday, September 8 – Moudon (438-460); Bacon (9-16)

Wednesday, September 10 – Berman (17-27); Kunstler (1-40) (MUD students away)

Monday, September 15 – Olmsted (28-34); Cranz and Boland (102-119) (MUD students away)

Wednesday, September 17 – Sitte (35-42); Mumford (43-53); Perry (54-65) (MUD and MUP students away)

Monday, September 22 – Le Corbusier (66-75); Walter Benjamin in Parker (15-19); Henri Lefebvre in Parker (19-26) (Everyone Returns!)

Wednesday, September 24 – Weinstein (22-46); Hackworth (1-13)

Monday, September 29- Davis (48-68); Broudehoux (87-101); Young (241-256)

Wednesday, October 1 – Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Monday, October 6 – **Assignment 1: Future Cities Due**

Wednesday, October 8 – Wolfe, From Bauhaus to Our House

Monday, October 13 - Alexander (93-97); Jacobs & Appleyard (98-108), Lynch (109-114)

Wednesday, October 15 – Sorkin (5-18); Relph (119-124); Norberg-Schulz (125-137)

Monday, October 20 – No Class – Fall Break

Wednesday, October 22 — Tuan (A14-A18); Jackson (153-163); Oldenburg (138-148)

Monday, October 27 – Lynch, The Image of the City, Larsen and Swanbrough (206-217)

Wednesday, October 29 - Hough (174-182); Kelbaugh (183-193); Hayden (194-203) (**Special Topic - Outline Due**)

Monday, November 3 —Ellin (204-214); Koolhaas (215-226); Ward (1-7)

Wednesday, November 5 - Krier; Vidler, Moudon

Monday, November 10 – Gilham (267-307); CNU (308-311); Fainstein (451-478)

Wednesday, November 12 - Lozano (312-327); Frey (328-343)

Monday, November 17 – Whyte (348-363); Gehl (364-370); Marcus & Francis (371-375);

Assignment Two: Special Topic Due

Wednesday, November 19 – Hester (376-386); Jacobs (387-390); Sucher (391-404)

Monday, November 24 – Metro (405-424); Cervero (425-434)

Wednesday, November 26– Lang (461-478); Carmona et al. (479-489)

Monday, December 1– Scheer (490-499); Punter (500-516)

Wednesday, December 3 – Work Day

Monday, December 8 – **Urban Design Cards Due** at the start of class

UP 519 Theories of Urban Design

Assignment One: The Future of the City

Readings from Sections 1 & 2 describe cities of the past and speculate on cities of the future. This assignment builds on these readings and asks you to 1) describe how the city of the future will be different, 2) envision some of its elements, and 3) identify emerging areas of relevant knowledge.

Specifically, your written essay must address these three topic areas:

1. How will the future city be different from cities of the past? (3 pages)
 - a. Please compare and contrast
 - i. the pedestrian experience in public spaces
 - ii. building forms
 - iii. the overall spatial distribution of the city (land use and the distribution of classes)
2. Three elements of the future city (3 pages)
 - a. describe the context in which you have glimpsed elements of the future city and describe what qualities of these elements/experiences were futuristic?
 - b. be creative!
3. Select two issues urban designers haven't traditionally considered but will need to consider in their design of future cities? (2 pages)
 - a. For each issue, provide a brief overview of the issue's importance and describe the knowledge area(s) or information urban designers will need to address this issue.

This assignment is due on Monday, October 6, 2008 at the beginning of class.

The final paper must not exceed 8 pages (double spaced, 11 point font, normal margins, page numbers bottom right). Don't confuse length and quality. Remember Mark Twain's important quotation: "If I had longer, I would have written you a shorter letter".

Citations and illustrations are not included in the page limit.

The University of Michigan's Sweetland Writing Center is a wonderful resource. Staff at the Sweetland Writing Center will help you to write a clear, concise paper.

Another excellent resource is Strunk and White's small text, *The Elements of Style*. This small book is very inexpensive (check used book stores for greater savings) and should be part of everyone's library. I read it over at least once a year!

UP 519 Theories of Urban Design

Assignment Two: Special Topic

The purpose of this assignment is to allow each student an opportunity to investigate one topic/idea from urban design that relates to his/her personal interests.

On **October 29, 2008**, please submit a one page outline of your proposed paper. Your outline should include:

1. A short description of your topic
2. Three references and their key points
3. Your research question
4. Next steps

Example:

1. I might want to write about how the romantic images of the American West influenced the design and layout of Post WWII subdivisions.
2. I would list three relevant references and their relevant points.
3. Then I would translate my topic statement into a research question: How did some post war suburbs embody the American West? (I would define appropriate symbols, materials, and spatial forms from the American West as the defining criteria)
4. Next steps – I am going to examine photographs, illustrations, and plan views of the American West to identify typical symbols, materials, and configurations. Then I am going to the Library to find examples of advertisements of new developments from the 1950s and 1960s that embody these elements. Finally, I would like to hypothesize that suburban developments were conducive to creating 'ranchscapes' because of their open character (cleared farm fields at the suburban edge) and the mass production of building materials.

I expect that finding your question will be a collaborative effort. Therefore, I look forward to offering refinements to your initial question, identifying possible strategies for your research, and suggesting specific texts.

The final paper is due on Monday, November 17 at the beginning of class.

The paper should not exceed 8 pages (double spaced, 11 point font, normal margins, page numbers bottom right). Citations and illustrations are not included in the page limit.

UP 519 Theories of Urban Design

Assignment Three: The Urban Design Cards

The purpose of this assignment is to challenge you to synthesize this material and categorize it in a manner that is meaningful to you. As you know, a deck of cards has 52 individual cards divided into diamonds, spades, hearts, and clubs. The four suits are color-coded. Spades and clubs are black. Diamonds and hearts are red.

As a final assignment, I would like you to use all of the information that you cull from this class (lectures and readings) to create **52 Urban Design Theory Cards**. Each card must measure 3" X 5". Each card can be two-sided and may contain text and/or images. You must be selective as you won't be able to create a card for every topic.

As well as creating your deck of cards, you must **explain the logic** of your categorization system in one - two pages. The creativity and logic of how you categorize pieces of information will constitute 20% of this assignment's grade. The content of the cards (accuracy, synthesis) will constitute the majority of your grade (60%). The **care in the creation and composition** of your urban design theory cards will constitute the final 20% of this assignment's grade. This assignment will be worth 40% of your semester's final grade.

Please use this assignment as an opportunity for creativity and critical thinking. This assignment will be due on Monday, December 8, 2008 at the beginning of class.