

## **Course Syllabus • Fall 2016**

### **UP426: Urban Design and Planning**

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#### **Summary**

The objectives for this class include concepts and techniques of urban analysis, plan making, and implementation essential for effective interdisciplinary work in urban design. The focus is on analysis of urban design, and the course provides basic skills for both computer-generated and manual graphic techniques.

The semester will begin with an exploration of a block in Champaign to provide a basic understanding of urban design. This will include basic graphic communication skills, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis. This project will also provide an opportunity for basic design.

The second project will focus on an area in Chicago as the subject for an in-depth analysis. Students should expect to travel to Chicago for 2 tours, the first of which will occur on Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> (the last day of the Illinois American Planning Association's Chapter Conference). The second tour will be determined by student availability and consensus, while independent visits are encouraged.

The final project will be focused on a neighborhood within Champaign-Urbana. With municipal staff providing a tour of the neighborhood, we will examine the building blocks of the neighborhood, and design potential improvements and interventions to improve its health and vitality.

This is a very intensive time-consuming course, designed to provide skills that we, as professional planners, believe that all planners need. It also provides a great insight for non-planners (architects, LA's, engineers, etc.) to urban design and planning, as well as the associated skills.

#### **Course Description**

What many practicing planners do not often realize is that through their daily duties they are shaping the urban form of their cities, and in essence are more active urban designers than any other profession. Urban design is about creating neighborhoods, districts, cities and regions, extending far beyond yet being inclusive of architecture, streetscape, aesthetics and the design of a plaza or building. It is about arranging land uses, transportation networks and amenities in order to create a fabric that can foster healthy, functional and vibrant communities.

This course will explore the fundamentals of urban design as they relate to all scales of the built environment – focusing on the block and the neighborhood - and will reinforce the basics of sound community planning.

With these foci as the quintessential building blocks, we will explore how these cities and areas have changed, and how the advent of the automobile, rapid suburbanization, and past planning practices have created challenges for today's planners and urban designers.

We will learn how to analyze and measure design, how to apply its principles, how to understand the design process of creating new areas and the fundamentals of retrofitting existing ones, and why connectivity and walkability are critical to healthy communities.

We will answer the question of how a planner, or anyone with an interest, can impact the design of a city positively without designing buildings, and what tools are available to implement urban design plans and policies. Lastly and most importantly, through these projects, we will introduce planning studio techniques and technologies and build presentation skills.

### ***Objectives***

To introduce students to the application of basic urban design;

- to gain practice in the basic skills of urban design analysis;
- to gain an appreciation of both the process and product of the design of the built environment;
- to emphasize the need for planners to learn design, and designers to learn planning;
- to provide practice in visual, graphic and spatial literacy.

### ***Method***

This course emphasizes an appreciation of experiential learning and the interdependence of procedural and substantive knowledge. Fundamental for experiential learning is the studio method, which is typical of all design schools, and often used in workshop courses.

The studio method includes lectures, instructional sessions and discussion, but the emphasis is on student work. Learning by doing through exercises and projects is the focus that is supported by collaboration with colleagues in a cooperative, interactive milieu.

Lectures and discussions, enhanced by the extensive real-world professional experiences of the instructors, will be supplemented by multiple exercises and group projects that will provide students with practical experience for a fundamental understanding of urban design.

### ***Student Projects, Exercises and Evaluation***

Please note that all exercises and projects are to be scanned and submitted digitally on Compass. Projects will also be subject to multiple oral/visual presentations. Please be ready to work hard & long, and contribute your best to your group work! You will be rewarded in your professional life. Through much experience, we know this to be true.

### **Graphic Exercises**

The tools for urban analysis may now seem to be mostly digital, but there continues to be a need for manual graphic skills. From taking notes at a community meeting (requiring good lettering skills), to creating simple sketches on a napkin or a board at a meeting, (requiring basic drawing skills), the planning profession still benefits from those that can "do it by hand". In almost all design offices, initial ideas are still discussed with pen and paper.

These lessons and exercises will include both high-tech and low-tech skills, including the proper use of markers, paper and scales. High tech tools we will use include SketchUp, Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, ArcGIS, Google Earth, and others. Most will be incorporated into the projects.

### **Projects**

As noted above, there will be 3 projects, consisting of:

#### **Project 1: The Champaign Block**

This will provide an introduction to basic observation, analysis, quantitative methods, and a preliminary introduction to the design of a block and a streetscape. The challenge will be to master manual (hand-drawn) graphic skills to develop and present the project.

#### **Project 2: The Chicago Block**

Similar to Project 1, this will provide an opportunity to analyze a block and streetscape in Chicago. Students will be expected to provide a design intervention using computer techniques.

#### **Project 3: The Neighborhood**

Building upon the previous projects, the analysis of a neighborhood will provide students with the fundamental tools and understanding of urban design as it applies to the larger scale. Focusing on a local neighborhood, this project will require intensive analysis to develop recommendations for its future.

### **Evaluation**

Exercises	15%
Project 1	15%
Project 2	20%
Project 3	25%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Test	5%
(subject to change)	

### ***Readings and References***

Readings on Compass

Lynch, Kevin (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Simmons, Jason (2010). *The Designer's Desktop Manual, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Cincinnati, OH: How Books.

References provided in the Bibliography

***Please note that all of the above is subject to change.***

## ***Required Materials***

12" wide Sketch Paper

- you may share the cost, as you won't use an entire roll for this class

Grid Paper (8.5" x 11") 5 squares per inch

- no other will do!

Engineer's Scale

- with increments of 10,20,30,40,50,60 feet/inch
- engraved/etched grooves preferable to printed

Straight-edge

- a cheap ruler, as long as one edge is slightly raised (like an old-fashioned wooden ruler with a metal insert edge)

3 Black Markers (felt, fiber or plastic tip) in 3 sizes (fine, medium, broad) for 8.5 x 11 format (thicker markers may be required for larger formats). For example:

- "Sharpie" Pen Fine for fine
- "Sharpie" Ultra-fine Marker for medium
- "Flair" marker as broad

TEST your choices before purchasing.

Drafting/Artists tape (share the cost)

- this is a less sticky version of masking or regular tape that won't tear paper
- hint: see if sticker dots, post-it notes or tack will work for you to secure the drawings you're working on to your underlay
- PLEASE have these available to post your work during class critiques/presentations

Cardboard for underlay

- should be larger than the drawings you are working on; 11 x 17 preferred, 9 x 12 okay