

**Urban Design and Planning 470 Spring 2014 (3.0)**  
**INTRODUCTION TO URBAN DESIGN**

Class Meeting Time and Place: Monday & Wednesday 12:00 –1:20am Gould Hall Room 100  
Instructor: Dan Abramson, PhD, Associate Professor  
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Office Hours: Gould Hall 448F; Monday 2:00-5:00pm or by appointment

Catalyst website: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/abramson/44308>

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course introduces students to the discipline and practice of urban design, through a combination of readings, class discussion, and hands-on exercises dealing with the urban environment of Seattle. Students will become familiar with key theoretical foundations of urban design, and practiced in methods and skills that support urban design.

Hands-on field exercises in the city will provide students with an opportunity to develop and exercise their spatial, visual and graphic “literacy” in order to make sense of the urban environment for design purposes. Students will work individually and in teams using methods of "rapid urban assessment": imageability studies, thematic mapping, textual and photographic "thick description" of urban environments, and observation of social behavior in public space. A final report will give students a chance to analyze urban design issues in a particular case and propose basic design-related policy recommendations of a level commonly associated with professional community-scale urban and architectural design and neighborhood planning.

UrbDP 470, *Introduction to Urban Design*, is a required course for the Master of Urban Planning Specialization in Urban Design, and also counts towards either the core requirement or the urban design methods requirement for the Urban Design Certificate.

**FORMAT**

The course meets for two 80-minute seminar-style sessions each week. Class feature discussions of the reading, lectures by the instructor or guest speakers, and/or presentations of field work by students. Class meetings are for discussion and interaction. Students who arrive late, leave early or absent themselves for part of the session without explanation disrupt the class, and will lose points for participation.

There will be no test on the readings. However, except for the first class meeting, students are expected to read these texts *before* the class meeting to which they are relevant; to post their comments on the course Catalyst GoPost online discussion board as prompted; and to participate fully in class discussion. Comments on each of the readings must be posted to the course GoPost discussion board by 5pm on the day before the class meeting scheduled to discuss that reading. For each class meeting, the GoPost will identify which readings students should discuss; what particular questions or issues they should address; and any other instructions to help focus the discussion. In many cases students are expected to illustrate their comments with images they find or sketches they make. Students will also be expected to refer appropriately to the course readings in their final reports.

## READINGS

Course readings include classic essays on theory, commentaries on the discipline of urban design, and writings urban environmental research and design methodology, which are mostly included in the main course text, *The Urban Design Reader*, Second Edition, edited by Michael Larice and Elizabeth Macdonald (London and New York: Routledge, 2013). This book is available at the University Bookstore. Three other key texts are also available at the bookstore: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (NY: Vintage Books, 1961); Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); Kevin Lynch, *What Time is This Place* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972). Another main text is *Companion to Urban Design*, edited by Tridib Banerjee and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2011), available as an e-book for limited readings/downloads/printing through UW Libraries (HT165.5.C647 2011). Miscellaneous other readings will be available as books on reserve in the Built Environments Library, as web links, attachments to the discussion board or as library e-reserves (<https://eres.lib.washington.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=8796&page=docs/>).

The course schedule below shows the topics for each class meeting, and the relevant texts. Readings are given as references for the topics of discussion for each session. In some cases the instructor may replace or supplement these with other readings, especially if they would be particularly relevant to alternative assignment topics that students propose.

## FINAL REPORT

The final report will discuss a case of a recently built project or a site for which a project is proposed or might be proposed. If students are unsure of what site they might report on, they should consult projects that are currently under review by the City of Seattle, as scheduled at: <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/UpcomingReviews/default.asp> Usually within a week or two of a scheduled review meeting, the actual design proposal for a project will be made available on this website. Students may view the proposal, and then decide which review meeting to attend as part of their research on that site. For example, at 6:30pm on Monday, April 7, 2014, there is a review meeting of the Northeast Design Review Board at the University Heights Community Center, 5031 University Way NE, Room #209 for a project proposed for 5755 NE 63<sup>rd</sup> St.

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Digital camera; scale ruler (engineering); notebook; graph paper; colored felt-tip pens and/or pencils; presentation-size posters/boards; poster-sized printing costs. Students who already have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Photoshop, and/or SketchUp or other 3-D architectural modeling software will be encouraged to use that software to complete some of the exercises.

## EVALUATION

Grades will be determined as follows:  
45% for the first three field exercises (15% each);  
25% for the final report;  
20% for participation in online discussion of readings;  
10% for participation in class discussion of readings.

## SCHEDULE

### *Topics*

### *Readings*

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#### Monday March 31

Introduction to course and to each other

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#### Wednesday April 2

Epistemological theories of urban design  
 – objective vs. normative approaches  
 – empirical vs. rational approaches

Anne Vernez Moudon, "A Catholic Approach to Organizing what Urban Designers Should Know," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.235-257.

For discussion: What is urban design?  
 How is it different from architectural or landscape architectural design?  
 How is it different from urban planning?

Alex Krieger, "Where and How Does Urban Design Happen?" *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.585-594.  
 On e-reserve.

**Handout Exercise #1:** "A Walk Around the Block": Qualitative Visual Analysis – photo and written interpretation

**Illustrated essay due** in Catalyst on **Sunday, April 13, 5pm**

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#### Monday April 7

Why observe? The normative socio-economic basis of urban environmental "thick" description

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Ch.1 "Introduction" and Ch.3 "The uses of sidewalks: contact," (these two chapters also in *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.80-92); also Ch.2 "The uses of sidewalks: safety", Ch.9 "The need for small blocks", Ch.10 "The need for aged buildings", Ch.16 "Gradual money and cataclysmic money".  
 Christopher Alexander, "City is Not a Tree," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.152-166.

For discussion: How does observation aid urban design?

In a Corbusian world, what is the role of socio-spatial observation?

Le Corbusier, "'The Pack-Donkey's Way and the Man's Way' and 'A Contemporary City'" *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.90-99.

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#### Wednesday April 9

Theory: Cognitive-perceptual bases for conceiving of urban design, and for analyzing urban space-time

K. Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Ch.1, "The Image of the Environment," pp. 1-13.  
 K. Lynch, *What Time is this Place?* Introduction, and Ch.1, "Cities Transforming," pp.1-28.  
 Gordon Cullen, "Introduction to the Concise Townscape" *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.118-124.

Method: off-site and on-site observation  
 - What to look for in an urban environment and how to look

Allan B. Jacobs, *Looking at Cities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), "Clues," pp.30-83; "Seeing Change" and "Observing the Unknown," pp.99-132. Book on reserve. These chapters also on reserve as a separately bound photocopy.

In-class Exercise: "What (time) is this place?" warm-up qualitative visual analysis – photo interpretation

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**Sunday April 13, 5:00pm – Exercise #1 "A Walk Around the Block" Due** in Catalyst Dropbox.

<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>
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**Monday April 14**

Discuss Exercise #1	K. Lynch, "A Walk Around the Block." [Distributed before class]
Method: cognitive mapping and photo-interpretation	K. Lynch, <i>The Image of the City</i> , Appendix B, "The Use of the Method," pp. 140-159. K. Lynch, <i>What Time is this Place?</i> , Ch.6 "Boston Time," pp.135-162.

**Handout Exercise #2:** Mapping the city image. **Due** in class as presentation, and in dropbox **Monday April 28.**

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**Wednesday April 16**

Method: cognitive mapping continued, and thematic mapping	K. Lynch, <i>The Image of the City</i> (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), Chapter III, "The City Image and Its Elements," pp. 46-90. K. Lynch, <i>The Image of the City</i> (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), Appendix C, "Two Examples of Analysis," pp.160-181.
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In-class Exercise: Cognitive mapping – how city image is structured in your memory

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**Monday April 21**

Urban Elements and Typomorphology	Guest Speaker: Philippe Panerai  Anne Vernez Moudon, "Getting to Know the Built Landscape: Typomorphology," on e-reserve. Choose a chapter from Philippe Panerai et al, <i>Urban Forms: The Death and Life of the Urban Block</i> (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2004).
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**Tuesday April 22, 6:00pm – Philippe Panerai** public lecture on Grand-Paris metropolitan planning.

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**Wednesday April 23**

Typo-morphology continued, and New Urbanism	Leon Krier, "'Critiques' and 'Urban Components'," on e-reserve. Congress for the New Urbanism, "Charter of the New Urbanism," <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.328-332. Allan Jacobs & Donald Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.218-228. Brenda Case Scheer, "A Crisis in the Urban Landscape", etc., <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.307-327.
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In-class Exercise: Map-reading - Seeing without ever having been there

**Handout Final Project: Topic Abstract Due on Friday, May 10, 5pm. Project Due Friday, June 6, 5pm.**

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<b>Monday April 28</b>	<b>Exercise #2 DUE</b> No readings; students present and discuss Exercise #2
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**Handout Exercise #3:** Environment-behavior; mapping the public realm as a temporal-socio-spatial ecology  
**Due** in class as presentations **Monday May 12.**

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**Wednesday April 30**

Method: Observation in public spaces. In-class video	Whyte, William H., <i>The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces</i> (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1980). On reserve.
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**Monday May 5**

- Elements of the Public Realm I – Places/Nodes/Cores: *being* in public
- Mark Francis, “Mixed-life Places,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.33. UW Library e-book.  
Gary Hack, “Urban Flux,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.34. UW Library e-book.  
Ronald Lee Fleming, “Questions to Ask a Place.” *Places: A Forum of Environmental Design* 6(4): 12-13. On e-reserve, and online at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/ced/places/vol6/iss4/RonaldLeeFleming>
- For discussion: What questions would you “ask” public places your are investigating?
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**Wednesday May 7**

- Elements of the Public Realm II – Networks/Paths: *moving* (and being) in public
- Allan B. Jacobs, “Conclusion: Great Streets and City Planning,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.214-217.  
Ellis, William C., “The Spatial Structure of Streets,” in Stanford Anderson, ed., *On Streets* (MIT Press, 1986): 114-132. Book on reserve.
- Elements of the Public Realm III – Building presence (facades, edges, bulk): bounding public space
- Schumacher, Thomas, “Buildings and Streets: Notes on Configuration and Use,” in Stanford Anderson, ed., *On Streets*: 132-149. Book on reserve.  
Scherr, Richard, “The Urban Streetwall Redefined,” in *Architectural Education: Where We Are/Proceedings of the 80th Annual Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture* (Washington DC: ACSA Press, 1992), pp. 148-153. On e-reserve.
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**Friday, May 9, 5pm - Final Project Topic Abstract Due**

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**Monday May 12**

- Sense of place
- Edward Relph, “Prospects for Places” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.266-271.
- For discussion: What were/are the “third places” in the area you are investigating?
- Christian Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.272-284.  
Ray Oldenburg, “The Problem of Place in America,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.285-295.  
Rem Koolhaas, “The Generic City,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.358-372.  
Michael Southworth & D. Ruggeri, “Beyond Placelessness: Place Identity and the Global City,” in *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.37. UW Library e-book.
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**Wednesday May 14**

- Other Urbanisms I: Multicultural sense of place
- Margaret Crawford, selections from “Everyday Urbanism,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.344-357.
- For discussion: how is the public realm defined and designed, multiculturally?
- Denise Lawrence-Zuñiga, “Influences of Anthropology on Urban Design,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.10. UW Library e-book.  
Clara Irazabal, “Ethnoscapes,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.42. UW Library e-book.  
Abramson, Manzo and Hou, “From Ethnic Enclave to Multi-ethnic Translocal Community: Contested Identities and Urban Design in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District,” On e-reserve.
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**Monday May 19**

**Exercise #3 DUE**

No readings; students present and discuss Exercise #3

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**Wednesday May 21**

Other Urbanisms II: Ecological and Resilient Urban Design

Anne Whiston Spirn, "Ecological Urbanism," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.45. UW Library e-book.  
Peter Newman et al, "Urban Resilience: Cities of Fear and Hope," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.569-579.  
Mahyar Arefi, "Design for Resilient Cities: Reflections from a Studio," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.52. UW Library e-book.

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**Monday May 26**

*NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY*

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**Wednesday May 28**

Other Urbanisms III: Urban Design in Recently, Rapidly Urbanizing Societies

Shelton, Barrie, et al. *The Making of Hong Kong: From Vertical to Volumetric* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2010). UW Library eBook.  
Marshall, Richard. *Emerging Urbanity: Global Urban Projects in the Asia Pacific Rim* (London; New York: Spon Press, 2003), Chaps.1, 2, 6, 7, and especially 11.  
Vinit Mukhija, "Urban Design for a Planet of Informal Cities," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.43. UW Library e-book.

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**Monday June 2**

Method: Intervention types  
- Design projects  
- Design guidelines  
- Design review  
- Participatory/Community Design

K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), Chapter IV, "City Form," pp. 91-118.  
John Punter, "Design Guidelines in American Cities: Conclusions," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.601-617.  
Brenda Case Scheer, "The Debate on Design Review," on e-reserve.  
Jeffrey Hou, "Citizen Design: Participation and Beyond," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.25. UW Library e-book.

For discussion: How and why are/might each of these types of intervention be appropriate in the urban sites you have investigated?

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**Wednesday June 4**

*LAST CLASS* – Wrap-up and in-class written evaluation

For discussion: Now that the course is ended, how do you find urban design as discussed here useful or relevant to your own studies and career aspirations?

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**Friday, June 6, 5pm - Final Project Due** in dropbox.