

# UrbDP 503: Communication and Analysis

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DESIGN & PLANNING  
SYLLABUS, WINTER 2020



*Chris Ware*

Meeting	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:50pm, Community Design Building
Instructor	Peter Dunn Doctoral Candidate, Interdisciplinary PhD in Urban Design & Planning ptdunn@uw.edu <i>Office hours:</i> Wednesdays, 12:30 – 1:30pm, CDB (and by appointment)
TA	Mia Ho Doctoral Candidate, PhD in the Built Environment mho2015@uw.edu <i>Office hours:</i> Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1 – 2pm, CDB

## OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Welcome to UrbDP 503, “Communication and Analysis.” This class focuses on skills you have been using for a long time already: learning about the built environment by looking, and using graphics to communicate ideas about urban spaces. All of us have probably inferred something about the people in a neighborhood by the way their buildings look, or sketched a map on a napkin to give a friend directions, for example. When we do these things, however, we too often do so with little care or attention. This neglect, common even among professional planners, is unfortunate. Done well, visual analysis and communication give us powerful tools for understanding and shaping cities. Like any tools, their effective use in craft demands careful practice. This class gives you an opportunity for such practice.

Urban planning requires continual translation between lived urban spaces and their representations. In this class we focus on hand drawing because of its unique ability to engage your eyes, mind, and hand in this translation. Learning and sharing by putting pen to paper is a worthwhile skill in itself, but developing this capacity will also make you a better user of digital graphics. In addition to our primary focus on techniques in hand drawing borrowed from art and architecture, we will take inspiration and instruction from practices in cartography, typography, photography, publication design, information design, data visualization, urban ethnography, public speaking, and public meetings. Topics include the measurement of built environments; representations of building, site, and neighborhood in plan, section, elevation, an axonometric views; the visual study and representation of place character, legibility, patterns, and activity; and the communication to public audiences of information about and proposed transformations to the built environment.

The format of the class is primarily that of a studio, with occasional seminar elements. This is a core class in the Master of Urban Planning curriculum.

At the completion of this class, you will be able to...

- *Observe* the spaces of the city, perceiving the built environment with the eyes of a design or planning professional.
- *Interpret* spatial forms and their associated social patterns.
- *Represent* built environments and urban patterns visually (especially with hand-drawn graphics) and verbally; and develop a capacity to critically evaluate others' such representations.
- Consider more carefully how you can *transform* the built environment in your professional career with a foundation of such visual analysis and communication.

## EXPECTATIONS

### *Student Responsibilities*

To make this class as a success, your responsibilities are to:

- Actively attend each class meeting.
- Take class assignments seriously; complete assignments on time and to a high standard.
- Respect your classmates and their work.
- Think about how *you* can get the most out of this class.

If you do all of these, you will learn a lot, you will get a good grade, and you might even have fun.

### *Instructor Responsibilities*

The responsibilities of the instructor and TA mirror yours: to arrive prepared for all classes; to provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments; to

create an environment in which all students can learn; and to take your academic goals, your work, and the class material seriously.

## WORK AND EVALUATION

### *Studio*

Much of this class functions as a studio. The bulk of our time together in class will be spent working at your table on class assignments and projects. However, this is not simply independent work time. The instructor and TA are available to review your work and answer questions. We will have regular desk crits and group crits. A desk crit (short for critique) is a one-on-one dialogue between a student and an instructor about the student's project and progress. A group crit is a discussion among instructors and any number of students on issues related to a design project. You are also expected to offer and solicit feedback to and from your peers. Studio is an environment and a culture, and full participation in it is essential to your success in this class.

### *Sketchbook*

Learning to more carefully look and represent demands continual practice with your eyes and hands. The sketchbook is your primary tool for this practice. Your sketchbook is a place for you to record field observations, note ideas, try out new approaches, and develop techniques throughout the quarter. In addition, each week you will complete a small sketchbook exercise designed to develop your spatial perception and drawing skills. Choose your sketchbook wisely, and carry it with you at all times.

### *Building Study*

We will spend the beginning of the quarter on several assignments intended to develop foundational skills in looking and drawing at the building scale. These assignments will be completed individually.

### *Area Study*

The Area Study is the core work of this class. Through it, you will create a detailed portrait of a local neighborhood based primarily on your attentive field observations. It gives you the opportunity to develop and demonstrate your skills in observing, interpreting, and representing the built environment. Work will be broken into several separate assignments, generally one per week. Most assignments will be completed in groups. The culmination of the study will be an oral presentation, a packet, and display boards that communicate what you have learned about the neighborhood.

### *Public Meeting Study*

The public meeting is one common situation in which professional planners use graphic analysis and communication. You will study this practice by observing a public meeting of your choice related to a planning project in the

Seattle area, then reflecting on the visual and verbal communication used in the meeting. You should also visit the specific site under review. You will then summarize and critique the public meeting in an in-class presentation to your peers. This assignment will be completed in small groups.

### *Seminars*

To inspire our work, we will read and discuss a small sample of the vast body of literature addressing visual analysis and communication as related to urban environments. The specific texts have been chosen for their applicability to the work of the class. Three of our class meetings will be seminars. Before each seminar, you will read the assigned texts and write a short reflection submitted to Canvas. Come to seminar prepared to discuss the reading and consider how we might apply its ideas to our own work. PDFs of the readings will be available on the class Canvas site.

### *Graphic Pick*

Part of how we learn to produce better graphic communication is by studying other communication. We will look closely at graphics to understand how they work. You will bring a graphic of your choice to one class, and we will discuss together for a few minutes. Consider paintings, photographs, illustrations, digital renderings, infographics, data displays, publication layouts, advertisements, logos, posters, maps, signs, packaging, or any other visual communication you can share with the class. Your pick does not need to be exemplary, but it should have something to teach us. In class, you might spend a minute setting the context for the graphic, but we will spend most of the time looking at and reacting to it as a class.

### *Evaluation*

Your final grade will be calculated based on your assessed performance on the above elements according to the following weights:

- 10% Studio Participation (including Graphic Pick)
- 10% Sketchbook (including assigned sketchbook exercises)
- 15% Public Meeting Study
- 15% 3 Seminars (written reflections and participation)
- 15% Building Study assignments
- 35% Area Study assignments

## POLICIES

### *Attendance*

Attendance at every class meeting is expected. If for any reason you are unable to attend class, please inform the instructor and TA in advance. Three consecutive unexcused absences will be interpreted as you dropping the class, and you will not receive credit for any further work.

In addition to being physically present in class, you are expected to be *actively* attending to the class. Note that studio environment can be relatively unstructured time. However, if you are not engaged in our studio work, then you are not attending class and will be considered absent.

### *Deadlines*

Respect deadlines. In professional contexts, deadlines are often not flexible. Learn now to meet them. For assignments with a pin-up review, late submissions cannot be accepted. Other submissions will be penalized 10% of the total available points for each day past the deadline. No assignments will be accepted more than seven days late. (If an extraordinary circumstance prevents you from meeting a deadline, please discuss the possibility of an accommodation with the instructor.)

### *Work space*

Each student will be given their own work space in the Community Design Building. You may store your belongings in a locker or other secure location. Please respect other students' materials. Common spaces and tables may be used during class time when available, but should be cleaned up at the end of class.

### *Fieldwork*

This class will require visits various study sites off campus. You are responsible for arranging these trips, preferably in coordination with the members of your group. Respect private property and all applicable laws. All of your fieldwork can be done from publicly accessible sites. You are responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions to access private property if needed.

### *Group work*

As with the practice of urban planning, much of the work in this class is collaborative. Each member of a group is expected to contribute equitably. You are expected to be able to negotiate these issues independently, although the instructors are available to address issues as needed.

### *Accommodations*

The instructor and TA are committed to creating an environment in which all students have the opportunity to learn. If you require an accommodation for a religious observation or practice, simply notify the instructor. If you would benefit from accommodations for a disability, please discuss with the instructor and with Disability Resources for Students. DRS is located in 448 Schmitz and can be reached at 206-543-8924 (V) or 206-543-8925 (TTY). More information is available at <https://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs>. Please note that instructors are unable to provide accommodation without prior notification from DRS.

*Conduct and Academic Integrity*

As always, students are expected to adhere to the UW's code of conduct. Be respectful of each other. Also remember that students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in all of their work.

## READING

There are no required texts for this class. Readings for seminars will be available on Canvas. The following references are also recommended. Some may be found through the UW library either as hardcopy or e-book, and some are available for use in the Community Design Building.

- Ambrose, Gavin. *Layout for Graphic Designers: An Introduction*. (Bloomsbury Visual Arts). 2018
- Amoroso, Nadia. *Representing Landscapes: A Visual Collection of Landscape Architectural Drawings*. (Routledge). 2012.
- Amoroso, Nadia. *The Exposed City: Mapping the Urban Invisibles*. (Routledge). 2010.
- Amoroso, Nadia. *Representing Landscapes: Digital*. (Routledge). 2015.
- Bang, Molly. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. (SeaStar Books) 2000.
- Bentley, Ian. *Responsive Environments: a Manual for Designers*. (Architectural Press). 1985.
- Ching, Francis and Juroszek, Steven. *Design Drawing*. (VNR) 2010.
- Ching, Francis and Winkel, Steven. *Building Codes Illustrated*. (John Wiley) 2012. (e-book available)
- Ching, Francis. *Architectural Graphics*. (John Wiley) 2003.
- Ching, Francis. *Architecture, Form, Space and Order*. (VNR) 2007.
- Ching, Francis. *Drawing, a creative process*. (VNR) 1990.
- Cogan, Elaine. *Successful Public Meetings: A Practical Guide*. (Planners Book Service, American Planning Association). 2000.
- Corner, James and Alison Bick Hirsch, eds. *The Landscape Imagination: Collected Essays of James Corner 1990–2010*. (Princeton Architectural Press) 2014.
- Davis, Meredith. *Visual Communication Design: An Introduction to Design Concepts in Everyday Experience*. (Bloomsbury Visual Arts). 2017.
- Edwards, Betty. *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. (Harper Collins) 2008.
- Gehl, Jan. *Life between buildings: Using public space*. (VNR) 1987.
- Kasprisin, Ronald. *Urban Design: The composition of complexity*. (Routledge) 2011. (e-book available)
- Kasprisin, Ronald and James Pettinari. *Visual thinking for architects and designers*. (VNR) 1995.
- LaGro, James. *Site Analysis: Informing Context-Sensitive and Sustainable Site Planning and Design*. (John Wiley and Sons) Third edition, 2013. (ebook available.)
- Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. (Technology Press) 1960.
- Lynch, Kevin. *Good City Form*. (MIT Press) 1984.
- Lupton, Ellen. *Graphic Design: The New Basics*. (Princeton Architectural Press) 2015. (ebook)

- Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking With Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors & Students*. (Princeton Architectural Press). 2010. (ebook available)
- McHarg, Ian. *Design with Nature*. (Doubleday). 1971.
- Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. (SAGE Publications). 2007.
- Sullivan, Chip. *Garden and Climate*. (McGraw-Hill). 2002.
- Sullivan, Chip. *Drawing the Landscape*. (Wiley). 2013.
- Trancik, Roger. *Finding Lost Space*. (VNR) 1986.
- Tufte, Edward. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*. (Graphics Press) 2006.
- Tufte, Edward. *Visual Explanations*. (Graphics Press) 1997.
- Tufte, Edward. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. (Graphics Press) 1983.
- White, Edward T. *Site Analysis: Diagramming Information for Architectural Design*. (Architectural Media Ltd.) 1983.

## MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

Some equipment can be shared, but please make sure you have adequate access to all of the tools you need in order to complete assignments on time. Some materials and supplies are available for common use in the Community Design Building.

- Sketchbook
- 18 × 24" drawing paper: Strathmore drawing (not sketching) paper or equivalent
- Tracing paper: white, at least 18" wide
- 100% rag tracing paper ('drafting vellum'), no grid, 11 × 17" (can share)
- Mechanical pencils in few different sizes (0.3mm, 0.5mm, 0.7mm), at least HB, other weights if you like
- Erasers and erasing shield
- Permanent felt-tip drafting pens: 0.05mm, 0.1mm, 0.3 mm, 0.5mm (e.g., Staedtler Mars Graphic Pigment Liner, Alvin Tech-liner, Micron Pigma, Niji Stylist)
- Tape measure
- 12" engineer's scale (10 increments per inch), NOT an architect's scale (16 increments per inch)
- Adjustable triangle or 45° and 30°/60° triangles
- Scissors
- Clipboard
- Drafting dots

In addition to the supplies listed here, you can expect to incur additional expenses for printing and document preparation. These should be modest. Please make sure that expenses incurred in group work are distributed equitably across all members.

## SCHEDULE

*Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at the start of class. Scan your work and submit via Canvas, then bring your original to class.*

	In Class	Deadlines
<i>Week 1</i>		
Tu., Jan. 7	Class introduction Public Meeting Study issued Sketchbook Exercise 1 issued Building Drawing 1 issued	Signup for your Graphic Pick presentation date
Th., Jan. 9	Graphic Picks	Purchase supplies, set up work space
<i>Week 2</i>		
Tu., Jan. 14	Graphic Picks Sketchbook Exercise 2 issued	Sketchbook Exercise 1 Groups and schedule for Public Meeting Study
Th., Jan. 16	Graphic Picks Building Drawing 2 issued	Building Drawing 1
<i>Week 3</i>		
Tu., Jan. 21	Seminar 1 Graphic Picks Sketchbook Exercise 3 issued	Seminar 1 Response Sketchbook Exercise 2
Th., Jan. 23	Graphic Picks Area Study 1 issued	Building Drawing 2
<i>Week 4</i>		
Tu., Jan. 28	Graphic Picks Public Meeting presentations Sketchbook Exercise 4 issued	Sketchbook Exercise 3
Th., Jan. 30	Graphic Picks Area Study 2 issued	Area Study 1
<i>Week 5</i>		
Tu., Feb. 4	Seminar 2 Graphic Picks Sketchbook Exercise 5 issued	Seminar 2 Response Sketchbook Exercise 4
Th., Feb. 6	Graphic Picks Area Study 3 issued	Area Study 2



	In Class	Deadlines
<i>Week 6</i>		
Tu., Feb. 11	Graphic Picks Public Meeting presentations Sketchbook Exercise 6 issued	Sketchbook Exercise 5
Th., Feb. 13	Graphic Picks Area Study 4 issued	Area Study 3
<i>Week 7</i>		
Tu., Feb. 18	Seminar 3 Graphic Picks Sketchbook Exercise 7 issued	Seminar 3 Response Sketchbook Exercise 6
Th., Feb. 20	Graphic Picks Area Study 5 issued Final Area Study requirements issued	Area Study 4
<i>Week 8</i>		
Tu., Feb. 25	Graphic Picks Sketchbook Exercise 8 issued Public Meeting presentations	Sketchbook Exercise 7
Th., Feb. 27	Graphic Picks	Area Study 5
<i>Week 9</i>		
Tu., Mar. 3	Graphic Picks Public Meeting presentations	Sketchbook Exercise 8
Th., Mar. 5	Area Study draft review	Draft materials for final Area Study review
<i>Week 10</i>		
Tu., Mar. 10	Public Meeting presentations	
Th., Mar. 12	Final Review: Area Study	All Area Study materials due