



## URBDP 423/523 INTRODUCTION TO URBAN DESIGN

SPRING 2021

**Lecture:** Tuesdays & Thursdays | 10:00-11:20 am

**Instructor :** Dan Abramson, PhD, Associate Professor

**Course website:** <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1451057>

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the discipline and practice of urban design, through a combination of classic and contemporary readings, class discussion and lectures, and hands-on exercises analyzing the urban public realm. Students will become familiar with key theoretical foundations of urban design, develop their capacity to critique and recommend improvements to projects, policies, and environments using arguments based on the readings and the results of their observations. The main components of the course are:

- **Seminar** readings, reflection and discussion, both in-class and online;
- **Design review or other design policy** documents analysis;
- **Field exercises** to develop spatial, visual and graphic literacy for urban design purposes based on imageability studies, thematic mapping, textual and photographic "thick description" of urban environments;
- **Case study** final report synthesizing findings from these other components urban design issues in a particular case or site, and proposing appropriate design strategies or design-related policy recommendations of a level commonly associated with professional community-scale design and neighborhood planning projects.

UrbDP 523 is required for the Master of Urban Planning Specialization in Urban Design, and also counts towards the urban design methods requirement for the Urban Design Certificate.

### FORMAT

The course meets for two 80-minute seminar-style sessions each week. Class meetings 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 prior explanation disrupt the class, and will lose points for participation. Students are expected to read the assigned texts before the class meeting for which they are scheduled; to post their comments on the course online discussion board as prompted; and to participate fully in class discussion. *Comments on each of the readings must be posted to the online discussion board by 5pm on the day before those readings are scheduled to be discussed in class.* Assignments are to be submitted to Canvas.

## READINGS

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 relevant to the direction of seminar discussion. Course readings include classic essays on theory, commentaries on the discipline of urban design, and writings about urban environmental research and design methodology. Readings are either provided on Canvas as web links or scanned electronic files, or are found in the main course texts:

- *Companion to Urban Design*, edited by Tridib Banerjee and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2011)
- *The Urban Design Reader*, 2nd Edition, edited by Michael Larice and Elizabeth Macdonald (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

*Both are available in e-book format for limited readings/downloads/printing through UW Libraries. You may wish to purchase or borrow hardcopies of these texts for your personal use.*

Other key texts are: 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); Whyte, William H., *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1980). For students already familiar with these texts, a further key text is Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., intro. Margaret Canovan, 1998). Other readings will also be available on reserve in the Built Environments Library.

## COURSE PROJECT

In addition to discussing readings, students must complete a course project, focused on a case study, which incorporates all the assignments and exercises apart from the readings. A detailed description of the course project is provided separately.

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Digital camera; scale ruler (engineering); note/sketchbook; graph paper; colored felt-tip pens and/or pencils. Students who already have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Photoshop, and/or SketchUp or other 3-D architectural modeling software are encouraged to use that software to complete some of the exercises.

## EVALUATION

Grades will be determined as follows:

- 5% – Case study topic proposal
- 15% – Participation in class discussion of readings and exercises
- 25% – Participation in online discussion of readings
- 20% – Allan Jacobs/Kevin Lynch-style micro- and macro-scale observation of urban environment / Gordon Cullen-style townscape analysis of UW campus or other environment
- 35% – Final report on case study

## COMMUNITY

Treat others as you would like to be treated – with respect. Be prepared to offer constructive critique – i.e. to discuss ideas on their merits, distinct from the people who express them.

We have a special challenge to maintain community in this time of pandemic, when all our class activities must be online. This course is scheduled to run synchronously at the scheduled class time via Zoom. These Zoom class sessions will be recorded so students may review class sessions later. The recording will capture the presenter's audio, video and computer screen. Chats will also be recorded and student audio and video will be recorded if they share their computer audio and video during the recorded session. The recordings will only be accessible to students enrolled in the course to review materials. These recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public. In the interest of enabling interaction, participation, and a sense of community in the class, it is preferred that students turn on video during class discussion, if not when the instructor is lecturing. The University and Zoom have FERPA-compliant agreements in place to protect the security and privacy of UW Zoom accounts. Students who do not wish to be recorded should:

- Change their Zoom screen name to hide any personal identifying information such as their name or UW Net ID, and
- Not share their computer audio or video during their Zoom sessions.

As always, plagiarism will not be tolerated. For more information, please refer to UW guidelines, at <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>.

If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to carry out the coursework as outlined and/or requires accommodations, such as recruiting note-takers, readers, or extended time on assignments, please contact me, or the UW Disability Services Office, within the first week of the quarter. The DSO website and contact information is at <http://hr.uw.edu/dso/>.

## SCHEDULE

<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>
<b>WEEK 1</b>	
<b>Tuesday March 30</b>	Introduction to course and to each other
<b>Thursday April 1</b>	
Adapting urban design inquiry to a time of pandemic social isolation	No advance readings; online breakout groups to discuss upcoming reading questions Get started on selecting a Course Project Case Study topic
<b>WEEK 2</b>	
<b>Tuesday April 6</b>	
Concepts: What is urban design? Epistemological and practical definitions	Anne Vernez Moudon, "A Catholic Approach to Organizing what Urban Designers Should Know," <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.235-257.  Alex Krieger, "Where and How Does Urban Design Happen?" <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.585-594. Sternberg, Ernest. "An Integrative Theory of Urban Design." <i>Journal of the American Planning Association</i> 66(3) (Summer 2000): 265-78.
<b>Thursday April 8</b>	
For discussion: What is urban design in Seattle?	John Owen, "Designing Seattle: The Role of Urban Design in the City's Evolution: 1970 to 2020," in Jill Sterrett et al, eds., <i>Planning the Pacific Northwest</i> (Routledge, 2017), Ch. 9, pp.96-107.
<b>WEEK 3</b>	
<b>Sunday, April 11, 11:59pm – Course Project Case Study Topic Due.</b> Submit to Canvas.	
<b>Tuesday April 13</b>	
Concepts: Historical paradigms and the appreciation of complexity	Robert Fishman, "The Open and the Enclosed: Shifting Paradigms in Modern Urban Design," <i>Companion to Urban Design</i> , pp.30-40.  Le Corbusier, "'The Pack-Donkey's Way and the Man's Way' and 'A Contemporary City'" <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.259-286. Jane Jacobs, <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> , Ch.1 "Introduction" and Ch.3 "The uses of sidewalks: contact" (in <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> ); 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," <i>The Urban Design Reader</i> , pp.422-462.
Method: visual interpretation	Allan B. Jacobs, <i>Looking at Cities</i> (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. K. Lynch, <i>What Time is this Place?</i> Introduction, and Ch.1, "Cities Transforming," pp.1-28; Ch.6 "Boston Time," pp.135-162.
In-class Exercise: What Time is this Place? – Slide image urban environmental interpretation	

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**Topics****Readings**

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**WEEK 3 continued****Thursday April 15**

Concepts: 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, and Ch. 3, "The City Image and Its Elements," pp. 46-90 (also in *The Urban Design Reader*); Appendix B, "The Use of the Method," pp. 140-159; Appendix C, "Two Examples of Analysis," pp.160-181.  
K. Lynch, "A Walk Around the Block."  
Gordon Cullen, "Introduction to the Concise Townscape," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.331-348.

In-class Exercise: Cognitive mapping – how city image is structured in your memory

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**WEEK 4****Tuesday April 20**

For URBDP 423 (not CEP) students: submit discussion posts on Lynch and Cullen readings.

Concepts: "the space of appearance"; why the visual is important to the public realm

For URBDP 523 and CEP students: Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, Chapters 1, all of Part II, and Chaps. 24, 25, 28 and 29.

**Thursday April 22**

Concepts: Urban Elements, Typo-morphology and New Urbanism

Anne Vernez Moudon, "Getting to Know the Built Landscape: Typomorphology," from *The Urban Design Reader* (1<sup>st</sup> edition only), available for this course as a separate e-reading  
Leon Krier, "'Critiques' and 'Urban Components,'" on e-reserve.  
Congress for the New Urbanism, "Charter of the New Urbanism," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.896-905.  
Allan Jacobs & Donald Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.594-623.  
Brenda Case Scheer, "A Crisis in the Urban Landscape", etc., *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.837-895.

**WEEK 5**

Sunday, April 25, 11:59pm – Field Exercise #1 Walk Around the Block essay DUE to Canvas.

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**Tuesday April 27**

Concepts: Elements of the Public Realm I – Places/Nodes/Cores: *being* in public  
For discussion: What questions would you "ask" the public places you are investigating?

Mark Francis, "Mixed-life Places," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.33.  
Gary Hack, "Urban Flux," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.34.  
Ronald Lee Fleming, "Questions to Ask a Place." *Places: A Forum of Environmental Design* 6(4): 12-13.

Method for Field Exercise #3: Observation in public spaces.

Whyte, William H., *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1980). On reserve.  
Whyte, William H., Municipal Art Society of New York. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Direct Cinema, 2005.  
Available online through UW Library as eVideo at <https://washington.kanopy.com/video/social-life-small-urban-spaces-0>

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**Topics****Readings**

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**WEEK 5 continued****Thursday April 29**

Concepts: 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.583-593.

Ellis, William C., "The Spatial Structure of Streets," in Stanford Anderson, ed., *On Streets* (MIT Press, 1986): 114-132.

Concepts: 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. E-reading.

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.

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**WEEK 6****Tuesday May 4**

Concepts: Sense of place and urban design  
as place-making

Ray Oldenburg, "The Problem of Place in America," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.776-806.

Rem Koolhaas, "The Generic City," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.977-1014.

Michael Southworth & D. Ruggeri, "Beyond Placelessness: Place Identity and the Global City," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.37.

For discussion: What were/are the "third  
places" in the area you are investigating?

Edward Relph, "Prospects for Places" *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.725-740;  
or Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.741-775.

Randall Hester, "Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart ." *Places*, 2(3), 10-22. (Optional)

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**Thursday May 6**

Public Process: Intervention types  
- Regulation and management  
- Design review  
- Design guidelines  
- Design charrettes  
- Participatory/Community Design

William C. Baer, "Customs, Norms, Rules, Regulations, and Standards in Design Practice," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.21.

John Punter, "Developing Urban Design as Public Policy: Best Practice Principles for Design Review and Development Management," *Journal of Urban Design*, 12:2 (2007), pp.167-202.

Brenda Case Scheer, "The Debate on Design Review," *The Urban Design Reader* (1<sup>st</sup> edition only), on Canvas as a separate e-reading.

Slides on design review by Katie Idziorek

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**WEEK 7**

**Sunday, May 9, 11:59pm – Field Exercise #2 City Image Map / Townscape Analysis DUE to Canvas.**

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**Tuesday May 11****No readings; present and discuss Field Exercise #2**

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**Thursday May 13**

Public Process: Intervention types  
(continued)

Matthew Carmona, "Decoding Design Guidance," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.22.

John Punter, "Design Guidelines in American Cities: Conclusions," *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.1615-1661.

For discussion: How and why are/might each  
of these types of intervention be appropriate  
and implemented in your case study?

Douglas S. Kelbaugh, "The Design Charrette," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.24.

Jeffrey Hou, "Citizen Design: Participation and Beyond," *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.25.

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**Topics****Readings**

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**WEEK 8****Tuesday May 18**

“Other” Urbanisms I: Multicultural sense of place

Margaret Crawford, selections from “Everyday Urbanism,” *The Urban Design Reader*, pp.939-976.  
Denise Lawrence-Zuñiga, “Influences of Anthropology on Urban Design,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.10.  
Clara Irazabal, “Ethnoscapas,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.42.  
Abramson, Manzo and Hou, “From Ethnic Enclave to Multi-ethnic Translocal Community: Contested Identities and Urban Design in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District.” (Optional)

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**Thursday May 20**

“Other” Urbanisms II: Ecological and Resilient Urban Design

Anne Whiston Spirn, “Ecological Urbanism,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.45.  
Mugerauer, Robert, and Liao, Kuei-Hsien. (2012). "Ecological Design for Dynamic Systems: Landscape Architecture Conjunction with Complexity Theory." *Journal of Biourbanism* (2), 29-49.

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**WEEK 9****Tuesday May 25**

“Other” Urbanisms II: Ecological and Resilient Urban Design (cont'd)

Penny Allan, et al. (2013) “The Influence of Urban Morphology on the Resilience of Cities Following an Earthquake,” *Journal of Urban Design*, 18:2, 242-262.

*Optional additional recommended readings*

Diane Brand & Hugh Nicholson (2016) “Public space and recovery: learning from post-earthquake Christchurch,” *Journal of Urban Design* 21:2, 159-176.  
Penny Allan & M. Bryant (2011) “Resilience as a framework for urbanism and recovery,” *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 6:2, 34-45.  
Mura Quigley, Neale Blair & Karen Davison (2018) “Articulating a social-ecological resilience agenda for urban design,” *Journal of Urban Design*, 23:4, 581-602.  
Jeffrey Hou & David Grohman (2018) "Integrating community gardens into urban parks: Lessons in planning, design and partnership from Seattle." *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 33 (June): 46-55.

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**Thursday May 27**

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

Vinit Mukhija, “Urban Design for a Planet of Informal Cities,” *Companion to Urban Design*, Chap.43.  
Zhongjie Lin, “Vertical Urbanism: Re-conceptualizing the Compact City,” in José L. S. Gámez, eds., *Vertical Urbanism: Designing Compact Cities in China*. Routledge, 2018. Chap.1, pp.25-40.  
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.  
Shelton, Barrie, et al. *The Making of Hong Kong: From Vertical to Volumetric* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2010).  
Chapter 1 plus additional selected chapters (your choice) of Manish Chalana & Jeffrey Hou (2016) *Messy urbanism: Understanding the “Other” Cities of Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press).

*Optional additional recommended readings*

<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>
<b>WEEK 10</b>	
<b>Tuesday June 1</b>	Catch-up
<b>Thursday June 3</b>	
<b>LAST CLASS</b> – Wrap-up and in-class online 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?
<b>Wednesday, June 9, 11:59pm - Final Project Due</b> in Canvas.	