Plan 651 Urban Form and Design of Cities

Prof. Andrew H. Whittemore

Spring 2016

Overview

This course examines urban form as a product of environmental, political, cultural, regulatory, technological and social processes. The course will provide a historical survey of urban form in order to build students’ understanding of the role of these processes, and also consider how the built environment works to impede or aid the life of the city. The course also considers self-conscious efforts to design cities. Students will complete the course with knowledge of the way in which traditional and modern urban forms evolved, knowledge of historical and contemporary theories of urban design, and the ability to apply this knowledge in the design process.

Logistics

The class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 1:45 at 38 Graham Memorial. Class sessions will consist of lecture and discussion or student presentations.

Readings

All readings are available on the Plan 651 Sakai class website at https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/plan651sp16

Assignments and Grading

Over the course of the semester, you will work with a partner to (1) analyze the history of the built environment of a city, with attention to how development, specialization, and transformation played out in the built form, (Historical Analysis due 16 February, 2500-3000 words, include photographs and maps!), (2) analyze in text, diagrams and photographs the current urban form, with attention to blocks (size and shape), buildings (use, height, setbacks, and building frontage), lots (width, depth, and coverage), streets (mode split, widths, landscaping and vegetation), and open spaces (size, use, design,
frequency) in two neighborhoods that developed at different times in your city’s history (Urban Form Analysis due 8 March), and (3) propose a solution to a problem you identified through your previous analysis (Design Solution due 28 April). For the design solution you will need to use the modeling software Sketchup: present a 2D scheme showing streets and buildings, and explain this in 1500-2000 words that presents the problem and explains how your solution addresses it. Your design solution should not be confined by what is politically or economically feasible. It should be a conceptual re-imagining of an area of your city that addresses any problem you assess: the past erasure of natural systems, a lack of public open space, ill-fated renewal or housing schemes, neighborhood decline and abandonment, decline and abandonment of industry or ports, lack of connectivity, lack of use diversity, disruptive infrastructure, etc. Before each of the due dates you and your teammate(s) will be required to present your progress on one of the noted presentation dates.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- 10% Class Participation
- 30% Historical Analysis
- 20% Urban Form Analysis
- 40% Final Project

Computer Software

No prior experience with SketchUp is required for the course, but you should familiarize yourself with software prior to our first lab session in March. The best resource for using SketchUp is available online at http://help.sketchup.com/en. Many other online tutorials exist as well. One text on using SketchUp is Daniel Tal’s SketchUp for Site Design: A Guide to Modeling Site Plans, Terrain and Architecture (Wiley Interscience, 2009). You will need to download a free version of the application on your laptop for use at home and in lab sessions. The free version will be adequate for what is required in this class, but CAD (.dwg) files can only be imported on the version available on the 10 GIS PCs in the 2nd floor computer area of Davis.

Contact Information

My office is located at 513 New East and my office hours are 10:30 to 11:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I can be reached via e-mail at awhittem@email.unc.edu.

OTHER ACADEMIC BUSINESS

“The Honor Code represents UNC-Chapel Hill students' commitment to maintain an environment in which students respect one another and are able to attain their educational goals. As a student at Carolina, you are entering a community in which integrity matters—integrity in the work you submit, and integrity in the
manner in which you treat your fellow Carolina community members.”
http://newstudents.unc.edu/content/view/24/77/

We are committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html. If you have questions it is your responsibility to ask the professor about the Code’s application. All written work, and other projects must be submitted with a signature that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

Missing Class:

Students are permitted to miss class for EXCUSABLE absences only (for details about what an excused absence is, see UNC-Chapel Hill’s attendance policy below). Students are allowed one unexcused absence without any questions from the instructors. If a student has two unexcused absences, their professionalism and collaboration grade will be affected.

Disability: The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website http://accessibility.unc.edu, call 919-962-8300 or email accessibility@unc.edu. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

Resources: Our purpose as professors is to help you to excel in this learning environment. Should you need further assistance beyond the help of the professor, please consult the following on-campus resources:

- The Writing Center: http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/
- Academic Success Program (for students with learning disabilities (LD) and/or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/
- Learning Center: http://www.unc.edu/depts/acadserv/learn.html
- Counseling and Wellness Services: http://campushealth.unc.edu
- UNC’s Attendance Policy: http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html#class_attendance
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<td>12 JAN</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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26 JAN  The Traditional City – Europe


28 JAN  The Traditional City – Asia & Africa


2 FEB  The Traditional City – Latin America


4 FEB  The Traditional City – United States


9 FEB Historical Analysis Presentations

11 FEB Historical Analysis Presentations

16 FEB Historical Analysis Due

In-Class Movie: The Naked City (1948)

18 FEB The Modernist Revolution


23 FEB The Modernist Revolution


25 FEB The Modernist Revolution


1 MAR Urban Form Analysis Presentations
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<td><strong>Urban Form Analysis Presentations</strong></td>
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<td>8 MAR</td>
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<td><strong>Visual Theories of Urban Design</strong></td>
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<td>Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas,” 3-18.</td>
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<td>“That Public Squares should be Enclosed Entities,” 170-176; “The Size and Shape of Plazas,” 177-184;</td>
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<td>“Streets,” 198-205.</td>
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**31 MAR**

**Social Theories of Urban Design**


**5 APR**

**Social Theories of Urban Design**


*Movie: Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

**5 APR**

**Sustainability**


**12 APR**

**Biophilia**


**14 APR**

**Retrofit**


19 APR  Workshop Day
21 APR  Design Proposal Presentations
26 APR  Design Proposal Presentations
28 APR  FINAL PROJECT DUE