Master of Urban Design

Bulletin 2012 - 2013

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Program Director:
Jeremy Nemeth, PhD

College of Architecture and Planning
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | BOULDER
The Master of Urban Design (MUD) is an intensive, calendar year, post-professional program for students already holding a BArch, BLA, MArch, MLA or MCRP/MURP. The interdisciplinary program uses Denver as an urban laboratory but the globe as a reference, educating future designers about the unique place the city holds in addressing the critical problems of our time.

The program began in 1969 and counts several hundred alumni practicing around the world. Our student body is extremely diverse, with recent students from Bangladesh, China, Colombia, India, Iran, Japan, Libya and Saudi Arabia. These students join our domestic students to examine contemporary urbanism and design practice through an interdisciplinary, studio-based curriculum taught by faculty with expertise in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning. Coursework culminates in the International Studio held each summer in China’s rapidly urbanizing Shanghai-Nanjing corridor.

The program is organized around three central themes reinforced by core studios and seminars.
We believe urban designers must recognize the interrelated local and global impacts of their actions and understand the interdisciplinary nature of urban problems. We address design issues at all scales, from the individual public space to the neighborhood, city, region, nation and world. This ecological approach acknowledges that all sites are embedded within larger systems, a concept we engage in all our studios. In the Fall and Spring, students examine the Denver metropolitan area, a progressive, yet prototypical, urban laboratory experiencing significant growth and development and home to every urban condition imaginable, from dense downtown infill to sprawling edge cities to the New Urbanism-inspired Stapleton airport brownfield redevelopment. The Front Range is a national leader in design and planning innovation, as represented by the multi-billion dollar Fastracks transit project, Denver’s groundbreaking new citywide form-based code, Boulder’s open space acquisition policies and energy municipalization effort, Arvada’s GEOS net-zero energy neighborhood, and Fort Collins’s closed-loop brewery-oriented development. Students apply the skills and knowledge gained in their local study in the Summer term via a five-week collaborative studio and design competition in China’s Shanghai-Nanjing corridor with faculty and students from the nation’s top schools of architecture and design at Tongji and Southeast University.

We train our students to become critical, reflective professionals with a deep understanding of urban design theory and practice. All our graduates possess knowledge of contemporary urban thinking as well as exceptional technical, verbal and graphic communication skills. Our curriculum is informed by innovations in current practice: we undertake real projects with real clients, and all studios are taught by leading practitioners from the top design firms in the region. To address the most complex social-ecological problems of our time, we see high demand for graduates who possess multiple talents, a broad understanding of urban planning, architecture, landscape, real estate development, and urban politics and economics, and the ability to work not only with design professionals but also engineers, policy makers, environmental scientists and the public. Students take collaborative, multidisciplinary studios with all College of Architecture and Planning students in an environment that more accurately reflects professional practice, with shorter studios, team projects, and design charrettes. Our prominent MUD internship program and frequent research and teaching assistant (RA/TA) opportunities provide students additional opportunities for professional exposure.

Sustainable Cities
We take a holistic approach to designing the livable city. Since more than half the world’s population lives in cities, with that number set to increase to two-thirds by 2030, we must anticipate the ecological impacts of our design decisions. In preparation for a post-carbon era, we address concerns related to climate change, energy usage, public health, food production and resource availability through an integrated approach to the design of urban settlements. Our students re-imagine and re-interpret urban systems - from transportation networks to hydrological systems to zoning codes to social movements - with the goal of creating cities that at once socially just, economically diverse and ecologically resilient. These challenges are unprecedented and must be urgently addressed; we believe that urban designers are best positioned to meet them head on.

Local to Global
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Innovations in Practice
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CURRICULUM

The post-professional MUD is a 39-credit, calendar-year program. Many students partner the MUD with the MArch, MLA or MURP degree programs, which can reduce required MUD coursework by up to twelve (12) credits.

Our MUD Internship Program aims to place all incoming students into an internship with the region’s top design firms, including recent partnerships with AECOM, Civitas, Design Workshop, Norris Design, RNL Design, OZ Architecture, studioINSITE, and Tryba Architects. College units including the Colorado Center for Community Development (CCCD) frequently hire MUD students as research assistants (RAs) and the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning and Design often hire teaching assistants (TAs) from our incoming MUD cohort.
## FALL TERM (15 CREDIT HOURS)

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>URBAN DESIGN STUDIO 1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>URBAN FORM THEORY</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESIGN PROCESS/PRACTICE</td>
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<td>ELECTIVE</td>
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## SPRING TERM (15 CREDIT HOURS)

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<tr>
<td>URBAN DESIGN STUDIO 2</td>
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<td>DESIGN POLICY/REGULATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUSTAINABLE URBANISM</td>
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<td>INTERNSHIP/ELECTIVE</td>
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## SUMMER TERM (9 CREDIT HOURS)

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<td>INTERNATIONAL STUDIO</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLOBAL DESIGN PRACTICE</td>
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*Image: Moises Gonzales/Peter Chivers, Urban Design Studio I, Fall 2010*
CORE CLASSES

Studios

URBN 6610: Urban Design Studio I (6 credits)
First of a three-studio sequence introduces methods, techniques and language of urban design and presents the city as a complex ecology comprised of interrelated systems or networks. Working on a block, corridor or neighborhood scale, students understand and deconstruct the city into a series of infrastructural layers, attending to environmental factors, land use/public space patterns and transportation networks. Students are charged with analyzing and recomposing these layers as part of a methodology for approaching any urban design problem.

- Fall 2011: Layers of the City: Integrative Urban Design (Instructor: Richard Epstein)
- Fall 2010: Vacant Land as Infrastructure (Instructor: Joern Langhorst)
- Fall 2009: RiNo Arts District: Alternative Futures (Instructor: Jason Rebillot)
- Fall 2007: Denver Stormwater: Resource and Amenity (Instructor: Jeremy Németh)

URBN 6611: Urban Design Studio II (6 credits)
The second of a three-studio sequence operates on the city scale, using Denver as an ideal laboratory to study emerging forms of urbanism in the contemporary city. Students explore the economic, cultural and urban center of the Rocky Mountain West through empirical observation, public engagement and in depth analysis to develop projects that conceptualize forms of urbanism relevant to the needs and challenges of the 21st century city. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking, graphic communication and visual representation and will result in specific urban design propositions.

- Spring 2011: Arapahoe Square: Code Calibration (Instructor: Peter Park)
- Spring 2010: RiNo Arts District: Regulation in Practice (Instructor: Jason Rebillot)

URBN 6612: International Studio (6 credits)
This third and final design studio of the program immerses itself in one of several rapidly urbanizing global regions such as China, India, or the Middle East. The primary focus of the studio is placed on understanding the complexities of conducting global design practice in such an environment, and the advantages and disadvantages of approaching it from a foreign perspective. The studio operates within a fluid network of professional and governmental actors, who are directly experienced in navigating the factors and circumstances relating to contemporary urbanization. Students explore the application of sustainable urban design principles to develop a complete project considering factors of legal, political, economic, and disciplinary consequence.

- Summer 2011: Global Design Practice: Nanjing Adaptive Intervention (Instructor: Jason Rebillot)
- Summer 2010: Design Proposals for the Shanghai Expo 2010 Site (Instructor: Jason Rebillot)
Seminars

URBN 6633: Urban Form Theory (3 credits)
Focuses on the historical and current production of the built environment and centers on realizing the position of urban design within the broader fields of urban development. Students examine how social, economic, political and cultural forces shape urban form and how form shapes human relations. Students deconstruct the various design paradigms from New Urbanism to Landscape Urbanism to many in between.

URBN 6641: Design Process/Practice (3 credits)
Examines the methods, tools, and techniques of urban design and advances current practice by exploring innovative and pioneering methods of design analysis, production, representation, and communication. Issues of community participation and civic engagement are at the core of the seminar. Students are also introduced to the business of urban design through presentations by prominent design professionals.

URBN 6642: Design Policy/Regulation (3 credits)
Argues that urban designers are conscious agents with a responsibility to proactively shape the built environment through a combination of physical intervention and policy development. Students review urban economic and real estate development trends and compare traditional with innovative zoning codes and land use planning techniques to establish links between regulations and built environment quality.

URBN 6644: Sustainable Urbanism (3 credits)
Explores the connections between ecology and urbanism. It will examine the multiple, interrelated ecological and social systems operating in the city. Students will explore innovative design processes and techniques that serve to create a higher quality of life and place with a particular emphasis on the effectiveness of sustainable design approaches at varying scales.

URBN 6645: Global Design Practice (3 credits)
Educates students about critical issues related to practicing design in a global context. Course will examine diverse issues of design and planning practice from contracts, communication and culture to remote research, design opportunities and ethics.

Internship

URBN 6930: Urban Design Internship (3 credits)
Provides professional practice experience in urban design. The MUD Internship Program aims to place all incoming students into 10–20 hour/week internships with the region’s top design firms.
The Master of Urban Design (MUD) Admissions Committee does not allow admission to the program in any Spring semester. Although the MUD program has a rolling admission process, the priority deadline is March 15. Applications will be reviewed on a space-available basis until June 30.

Pre-professional students can enter the MUD with advanced standing by first earning a professional Master’s degree in the College of Architecture and Planning. For more information on the MArch + MUD, MLA + MUD or MURP + MUD, contact the Program Director. All students will be considered for participation in the competitive MUD Internship Program if they indicate such interest in their application.
Evidence of a professional degree (BArch, BLA, MArch, MLA, MURP/MUP) or equivalent
At least a 3.2 undergraduate or graduate cumulative GPA
A portfolio (8.5 × 11-inch bound document) that includes:
- Your statement of purpose (include your educational and professional goals)
- Résumé (which describes your educational and professional background)
- Examples of student or professional projects
- A list of courses that you have taken that relate to design and planning
- A writing sample from previous professional or academic work
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores if available (not required for admission)
- A statement indicating whether you would like to participate in the current year MUD Internship Program. NOTE: If you do agree to participate, your acceptance letter will indicate the firm with whom you have been matched.
Lori Catalano

Lori Catalano is a Senior Instructor and Associate Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at UC Denver. She is dedicated to crafting urban environments that educate, interpret, and explore the integration of culture and ecology. Along with teaching she continues to practice landscape architecture in the Denver metro area, focusing on the design of urban parks and public spaces. She is compelled to integrate her knowledge, interests, experience, and passion as a practitioner with the desire to inspire students to explore beyond the known bounds of landscape architecture and urban design. Lori graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and earned a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.

Richard Epstein

Rick is an architect and urban designer with over 20 years of experience, practicing at both large and mid-size firms as well as his own design firm. The work has entailed a wide variety of scales and types including housing, commercial, infrastructure/industrial and cultural projects as well as planning and urban design, much of which has been done in the Middle East and Asia. Rick is concerned with sustainable design with a particular focus on the deep integration of systems and technology with human experience and design. His work has been the recipient of more than 15 design awards including Colorado AIA Honor and Merit awards and state-wide recognition from the Colorado Renewable Energy Society. He has a Bachelor’s in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine and a Masters in Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with coursework in urban design and landscape architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.
Mark Gelernter

Dr. Gelernter is Dean of the College of Architecture and Planning and Professor of Architecture at UC Denver. He has published two books: Sources of Architectural Form: A Critical History of Western Design Theory, and A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context, as well as numerous articles on architectural history, theory, and design education, both here and in the United Kingdom. Dr. Gelernter’s papers on design education explore how the design skill is acquired, and how design education might be changed to teach the design skill more effectively.

Joern Langhorst

Joern is Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Colorado Denver. He has a background in Landscape Architecture, Architecture and Planning and was educated at the University of Hannover in Germany and University of Edinburgh in the UK. Prior to joining UCD he taught at the University of Oregon and at Iowa State University, as well as serving as adjunct faculty on several European institutions. Langhorst has maintained a consulting practice in Europe that specializes in urban renewal projects in highly contested situations. His research centers on post-industrial and post-disaster landscapes, urban conditions and processes.

Taisto Mäkelä

Dr. Mäkelä is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Architecture at UC Denver. He received his PhD and MA in Architecture from Princeton University and his BArch from the University of Oregon. His research includes aesthetic theory and the modern movement, the legacy of classicism, the art museum, the history of the city, and the vernacular. Professor Mäkelä’s most recent publication is on Pietilä. He is completing a book on Gio Ponti and the Denver Art Museum and an essay on Le Corbusier and visual privilege.
Heath Mizer

Heath Mizer is an award-winning Registered Landscape Architect with ten years of professional practice in Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Planning. He has successfully led several projects from concept to implementation applying a critical and rigorous design process at each phase of the project. While attending the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, Heath won an International Design Competition, “21st Century Park” Sponsored by The Graham Foundation in Chicago. His experience in Urban Design includes master plans for TOD mixed-use brownfield redevelopments, urban plaza and streetscape implementation, urban park design and implementation, resorts, and a variety of technically complex urban projects over structure. Mr. Mizer has worked in Denver for Civitas, Valley Crest Design Group, RNL Design and Landworks Design.

Jeremy Németh

Dr. Németh is Assistant Professor of Planning and Design at the University of Colorado Denver, where he is also Director of the Master of Urban Design program and Assistant Director of Urban Design at the Colorado Center for Community Development (CCCD). His research examines the politics of urban public space and contemporary challenges to personal freedom and liberty, with a particular focus on the impact of the anti-terrorism security response and the privatization of public space. His work has been cited in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times and the Associated Press and he has written editorials in several national newspapers as well as appearing on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox to talk about his work. He has worked on grants totaling over a million dollars, and he sits on editorial and executive boards of a number of organizations, including APA Colorado and the Journal of Urban Design.

Korkut Onaran

Dr. Onaran has been teaching as an Assistant Professor Adjunct in the College of Architecture and Planning, University of Colorado at Denver, since 1997. He has served as President of the Colorado Chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism since its formation in 2008. Korkut is an urban architect with a broad knowledge of development codes and regulation cultures, a subject he explored extensively through his doctoral studies. He has also published several articles on design review and local land use planning. His teaching focuses on producing planning and design solutions for real world situations where students collaborate with local officials planning. He was honored as Mentor of the Year by AIA Colorado North in 2007. In his professional practice, he has extensive experience in designing and managing mixed use projects, preparing master plans, and crafting development codes. Dr. Onaran received his Bachelor and Master degrees in Architecture at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, and his Ph.D. in Environmental Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Matt Shawaker

Matt Shawaker is a landscape architect and urban designer with extensive expertise designing complex mixed-use districts. On behalf of private developers, public agencies and non-governmental organizations throughout the US, China and Middle East, Matt has led projects from master planning through detailed design of streetscapes and public spaces. Most recently, Matt led the planning and design for Horizon Uptown, a $1.5 billion sustainable mixed-use community consisting of 3,800 residential units and 5.2 million square feet of retail/commercial space, schools and community services facilities. Matt graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and earned a Master of Housing and Urbanism from the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, England. In addition he has been a guest lecturer and design critic at the University of Colorado at Denver, the University of Arizona and the University of Panama.

Peter Park

Mr. Park served as planning director of two large U. S. cities over the last 16 years. In Milwaukee and Denver, his integrated approach to comprehensive planning, urban design, and development review resulted in clear visions for sustainable urban development, places of high quality design, and streamlined development permitting systems. In Milwaukee, significant projects include the replacement of the elevated Park East freeway with an at-grade boulevard that catalyzes new downtown development and the Beerline B, a new mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood along the Milwaukee River. Significant work in Denver includes redevelopment of Denver Union Station as the hub of Fastracks (the largest public transit project in the nation), several transit-oriented development (TOD) station area plans, and adoption of a new context and form-based zoning code applied citywide. Before coming to UC Denver, he taught urban design lectures and studios at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and coordinated the Joint Master of Architecture/Master of Urban Planning program. He served as an advisor for a multidisciplinary team of UC Denver students that won the 2005 ULI Gerald D. Hines Student Urban Design Competition and is currently completing a Loeb Fellowship at Harvard in 2011-2012.

Todd Wenskoski

Todd Wenskoski is an urban designer and landscape architect with fifteen years experience designing complex urban redevelopment projects, parks and public spaces. He has planned and designed projects in the United States, China, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, including large-scale urban redevelopments, waterfronts, parks, plazas and private landscapes. He promotes the expanding role of landscape architecture in urban design and often speaks about the "space between buildings" as the engine of the livable city. In addition to his work as a designer, Todd is a regular studio instructor and critic at the University of Colorado Denver and has been a studio critic at the University of Texas, Auburn University and a Career Discovery instructor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. Todd attended the University of Arizona and graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and then attended Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, receiving a Master of Landscape Architecture in Urban Design.