Great Streets Denver

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Office Hours: MF 11am-12pm (by appointment)
Class Time:  MF 1:00-6:00 p.m.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND RESOURCES
(Additional resources and readings may be assigned in class)

Great Streets, by Allan B. Jacobs, The MIT Press, 1993


http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/topics/what_is_css/
https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/sustainable_street_network_principles_op.pdf
https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/688/documents/DenverSTP_8-5x11.pdf
https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/transportation-mobility/plans.html

DESCRIPTION
This studio will explore the role of infrastructure design in urban place-making, specifically, the design of “great streets.” We will explore the broad spectrum of urban design from general planning policies to specific architectural solutions. We will examine the relationship between planning as a process and plans as products. The course is intended to draw students from different disciplines and link to on-going development initiatives in Denver.

Like most American cities, the Denver street system evolved in ways that favored automobile travel at the expense of a high quality pedestrian realm. This studio will explore the urban design and development opportunities created by transforming several major Denver streets as envisioned in ongoing citywide and localized planning efforts in various Denver neighborhoods. We will study the social, political, economic, and urban design issues related to such transformations and document...
strategies that accommodate significant automobile traffic and public transit and provide for development of pedestrian-scaled urban environments and activities. Emphasis will be on design and development solutions that enhance the pedestrian qualities of streets and improve linkages between neighborhoods through enriched networks.

This will involve examining:

- The contextual framework of physical planning, urban design and development.
- The three-dimensional physical characteristics of land use types relative to planning principles, urban design theories and current design practice.
- Tools for communicating land use planning information at the urban scale.
- The dynamics of change and growth associated with various types of land use and development.
- The elements of robust street networks.
- The role of infrastructure design in the beautification of the city and creating lasting value.
- The relationship between land use and transportation and the role regulations play in shaping the built environment.

The studio will enable students to experience various ways that a designer, working as part of a team, participates in the planning and design of an urban corridor. The studio will highlight the importance of understanding the physical implications that regulatory policies and standards have on the built environment and the quality of the public realm.

Studio work will consist of lectures, short exercises using tools for analyzing urban patterns, a study of precedents for “great streets” and a major design project as follows:

**Part I (Individual)**
**Figure-Ground and Serial Vision Exercises** (details to be provided in class)

**Part II (Individual)**
**Precedent and Case Study Analysis**
Explore street design policies and standards as tools for implementing plans, their influence on urban form, and current innovations in design and development practice that emphasize the pedestrian qualities of streets and creating sense of place. (details to be provided in class)
• **Design Precedent Analyses** of street elements and their relationship to functional capacity.

• **Case Study Analysis** of “great street” corridor redevelopment strategies.

**Part III (team)**

**Corridor Analysis**

• **Physical Form and Character Analysis** of existing conditions at the regional to neighborhood scale including but not limited to: image inventory, video, figure-ground, serial vision, street/block, land use, GIS mapping, etc.

• **People, Community and Policy Analysis** of the social and physical morphology of the place and its historical, social/political, public policy and regulatory context. This will include an inventory analysis of existing regulatory policies and standards (zoning, BID, Historic Districts, etc.) and their influence on the physical form of the street.

• **Economic Performance Analysis** over time including but not limited to: land value, land tenure, employment, businesses, etc.

• **Mobility Performance** over time including but not limited to: traffic volume, ridership, network efficiency, future capacity, etc.

**Part IV (team)**

**Corridor Plan**

• **Urban Design and Development Strategy** that identifies street, block, and square patterns and development scenarios for mixed-use urban development.

• **Specific Street Design(s)** consisting of recommendations for street configuration, design standards for the public realm, and design guidelines for development sites and buildings.

• **Final Document** which compiles all previous work products in a suitable format for reproduction, exhibit, and distribution.
GRADES
Grades will be based on four elements and weighted as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part III</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part IV</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Individual grades on team projects will be subject to faculty evaluation of the team product and peer evaluations. Regular attendance and participation in discussions is mandatory.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. **Design excellence**: Students will be able to produce cohesive and comprehensive statements about the preferential design of the built environment, employing practices that lead to conceptual, analytical and formal transformation of existing problems into preferred solutions, while remaining attentive to germane content knowledge, professional and ethical criteria.

   Specifically, students will be able to:
   - Identify, organize and assess existing physical, social, economic, political, cultural and regulatory constraints and opportunities.
   - Develop cohesive, foundational design solution that resolves extant conflicts or contradictions by responding to the identified contextual constraints, opportunities and processes.

2. **Communication skills**: Students will be able to work individually or in groups to effectively and efficiently convey ideas using verbal, visual and graphic communication techniques appropriate for a wide variety of professional, academic and layperson audiences.

   Specifically, students will be able to:
   - Prepare and present organized, professional, engaging confident and compelling verbal presentations that explain complex ideas and concepts to a wide variety of audiences.
   - Construct a well-organized, legible, coherent and convincingly laid out visual presentation that explains complex ideas and concepts in an efficient and effective manner.
   - Constructively critique the work of others while actively listening to, seeking out, and responding to constructive criticism from peers, instructor and other experts.
   - Act as a respectful member of groups or teams, considering multiple viewpoints and strategies.

3. **Professional expertise**: Students will be able to defend the role of the urban designer in the built environment professions and evaluate the various methods and practices employed in the design field.
Specifically, students will be able to:

- Assess personal and professional predispositions to reflectively participate in a discourse on the motivations, intents and effects of urban design intervention.
- Demonstrate an understanding of urban designers’ legal responsibilities with respect to professional standards for public health, safety, welfare and other factors affecting design, construction and practice.

4. **Substantive knowledge:** Students will develop a critical understanding of the histories, theories and practices of urban design and its role in shaping both built environments and societal relations.

Specifically, students will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss in written, visual and oral form relationships between regulations and built form.
- Develop regulatory framework that enable the production of built form in a manner seen preferable to that which currently exists.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the conventions, standards and applications pertaining to the production of design plans.

**DRAFT SCHEDULE** (August 22, 2016)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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</thead>
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| 1    | 8.22  | Introduction-Urban Design Analysis Lecture  
 Assign Figure/Ground and Serial Vision Exercise |
| 8.26 | Studio Work  
 Confirm F/G locations and Serial Vision images |
| 2    | 8.29  | Studio Work  
 Review F/G diagrams and confirm drawing technique for Serial Vision images |
| 9.2  | Studio Work |
| 3    | 9.5   | Labor Day (no class)  
 Presentation: Figure/Ground and Serial Vision Analysis  
 Assign Part II Precedent and Case Study Analysis |
PART II Precedent and Case Study Analysis
4  9.12  Studio Work
    9.16  Studio Work
5  9.19  Studio Work
    9.23  Studio Work
6  9.26  Studio Work
    9.30  Presentation: Precedent and Case Study Analysis

PART III Corridor Analysis
7  10.3  Denver Staff presentations/Overview of corridors
        Assign Part III Corridor Analysis and form teams
    10.7  Studio Work
8  10.10 Studio Work
    10.14 Studio Work
9  10.17 Studio Work
    10.21 Informal Pin-up
10 10.24 Studio Work
    10.28 Presentation: Corridor Analysis

PART IV Corridor Plan
11 10.31 Studio Work
    11.4  Assign Part IV Corridor Plan
12 11.7  Studio Work
    11.11 Studio Work
13 11.14 Studio Work
    11.18 Juried Pin-up
14 11.21 Fall Break (no class)
    11.25 Fall Break (no class)
15 11.28 Studio Work
    12.2  Informal Pin-up
16 12.5  Studio Work
    12.9  FINAL Presentation: Plan/Code Assessment