Course Description:

This seminar focuses on methods, tools and techniques of urban design and advances current practice by exploring innovative and pioneering methods of design analysis, production, representation, and communication. Students are introduced to the practice of urban design through explorations in site programming, diagramming and design studies as well as presentations from local professionals.

Objectives:

A. Students will learn site-testing techniques through individual assignments and group design charrettes.

B. Students will become familiar with current roles of urban designers through presentations made by guest practitioners.

C. Students will deepen their understanding of current trends in urban design theory and representation through assigned readings, group discussion, and lectures.

D. Students will gain practical knowledge by presenting their own analysis and critique of built projects based on the Student’s own methodology.

Learning Outcomes:

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:

A. Identify, organize and assess existing physical, social, economic, political, cultural and regulatory constraints and opportunities.

B. Identify, unpack and reassemble the various layers, flows and systems of infrastructure (both natural and human-made) impacting a project area.

C. Rigorously evaluate alternative physical design strategies before selecting technically sound solution that addresses site and program.

D. Develop cohesive, foundational design solution that resolves extant conflicts or contradictions by responding to the identified contextual constraints, opportunities and processes.

E. Objectively evaluate alternative design responses presented by other students.
Communication skills: Students will be challenged to work individually and 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:

A. Prepare and present organized, professional, engaging confident and compelling verbal presentations that explain complex ideas and concepts to a wide variety of audiences.
B. Construct a well-organized, legible, coherent and convincingly laid out visual presentation that explains complex ideas and concepts in an efficient and effective manner.
C. Clearly articulate and document the iterative process of developing design ideas.
D. Constructively critique the work of others while actively listening to, seeking out, and responding to constructive criticism from peers, instructor and other experts.
E. Act as a respectful member of groups or teams, considering multiple viewpoints and strategies.

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:

A. Assess personal and professional predispositions to reflectively participate in a discourse on the motivations, intents and effects of urban design intervention.
B. Critically develop and apply ethical frameworks to appropriately respond to culturally, socially and economically diverse conditions.
C. 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.

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:

D. Identify the social, economic and political forces that shape the built environment.
E. Analyze and discuss in written, visual and oral form relationships between regulations and built form.
F. Develop regulatory framework that enable the production of built form in a manner seen preferable to that which currently exists.
G. Identify the history and contemporary view of urban design as a professional pursuit.
H. Demonstrate an understanding of the conventions, standards and applications pertaining to the production of design plans.
URBN 6641: Urban Design Process

Grading:

Student evaluation will be based on the MUD Learning Outcomes and attendance:

- Class will start on time. If you arrive after the sign-up sheet has been passed around your attendance will be recorded as an unexcused absent. (Be courteous to our guest lecturers and show up on time.)

- Assignments are due at the beginning of class. One full letter grade will be deducted for assignments turned in late.

- Provide a doctor’s note if you need to miss class due to illness. Assignments that were due on the day missed will be due the following week at the beginning of class.

- Class attendance and participation is mandatory. For every unexcused absence your final grade will be deducted by 1/3rd letter grade.

- Grades will be calculated as follows:

  50% - Class Participation – Attendance, active participation and constructive attitude in site testing exercises, presentations and critique, class discussions, in-class design charrettes and presentations.

  50% - Assignments
Week 1 – 8/19

What is Urban Design?

Reading:


Week 2 – 8/26

Site Observation/ Sketch Analysis

Lecture. Everyday Urbanism

Introduce Assignment 1. Site Observation/ Sketch Analysis. Due 9/2

Reading:


Week 3 – 9/2
URBN 6641: Urban Design Process

Fall 2013 Wednesday: 5:00pm – 7:45pm
Room 440

Instructor: Heath Mizer
hmizer@civitasinc.com
Office: Room 506. Hours by appointment

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**Design Process**

**Guest Lecture**

Students present Assignment 1 – digital pdf – Class critique and discussion

Lecture: Design Process

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**Week 4 – 9/9**

Introduce Assignment 2: Concept Design Site Testing – Due at the end of class.

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**Week 5 – 9/16**

**Class Exercise – Design Charrette 1** – Due at the end of class

Students will produce an urban design framework plan during class time in a charrette format.

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**Week 6 – 9/23**

[bring your laptop to class equipped with AutoCAD, Adobe InDesign, and Google Earth ]

Student Teams present Charrette from last week – The class will critique and judge each team’s product and presentation.

**Site Diagrams**

Lecture: The Process of Effective Diagrams
Introduce Assignment 3: Diagram your Project – Due 9/30

Week 7 – 9/30
Assignment 3 Due – color pdf and 11x17 hard copy

*Green Infrastructure*

Guest Speaker

Lecture: Principles of Urban Park Design

Introduce Assignment 4: Urban Park Design – Due 10/7

Week 8 – 10/7

*Retrofitting Suburbia*

Lecture Part 1: Retrofitting Suburbia

Lecture Part 2: Technical Components of Urban Design

Introduce Assignment 5: Site Testing – Suburban Retrofit – Due 10/15

Reading:


Week 9 – 10/14

Class Exercise – Design Charrette 2 – Due at the end of class

Students will produce an urban design framework plan during class time in a charrette format. Each team will present their project at the end of class. The class will critique and judge each team’s product and presentation.

Week 10 – 10/21

Public Process and Policy in Urban Design

Introduce Assignment 6: Site Testing Real Program – Due 11/4

Reading:

“Democracy Takes Command: New Community Planning and the Challenge to Urban Design” by John Kaliski

“Communitas and the American Public Realm” by Spiro Kostof

“Big Brother is Charging You” by Michael Sorkin

“The politics of Urban Design” by Sue McGlynn and Paul Murrain

Week 11 – 10/28

Class Exercise – Design Charrette 3 – Due at the end of class

Students will produce an urban design framework plan during class time in a charrette format.
Week 12 – 11/4

Student Teams present Charrette from last week – The class will critique and judge each team’s product and presentation.

Introduce Assignment 7: Site Testing – Urban Infill – Due 11/11

Week 13 – 11/11

Students present Assignment 7 – Class pinup and critique.

Introduce Assignment 8: Site Testing – Urban Infill Destination – Due 11/18

Week 14 – 11/18

Class Exercise – Design Charrette 4 – Due at the end of class

Students will produce an urban design framework plan during class in a charrette format.

Week 15 – 11/25

Fall Break – No Class
Week 16 – 12/2

Student Teams present previous Charrette – The class will critique and judge each team’s product and presentation

Landscape Urbanism (and the emergence of the design competition)

Lecture and Discussion

Introduce Assignment 9: Investigative Mapping – Due 12/11

Reading:


Week 17 – 12/10

Finals Week

Students present Assignment 9 – Class pinup and critique.

Celebrate!