



PLA 1654H Urban Design Research Methods (Understanding Built Environments for Designers and Planners)

First Semester (Fall), 2016, Monday 10:00-1:00, University College 248

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Course Description

This course is appropriate to all students interested in understanding the built form of cities and interactions between built form and people at the scale of human experience. It does not attempt to teach design skills. Rather, the purpose of the course is to introduce students to a number of research areas broadly useful to planning/urban design practice and inquiry, and to further develop their skills for understanding and critiquing both research methods and findings. The course should help students define their own research interests and help them identify methods useful in answering their research questions. A conceptual framework will be used to help organize knowledge areas as well as facilitate understanding between different approaches. Environment-behaviour and typo-morphological approaches will be given special attention as they have the clearest links to practice, but students will also have opportunity to focus on other research approaches of their choice.

Requirements and Evaluation

Class format: The class will be run as a seminar with the focus on discussions of readings and concepts. In this regard students are expected to: (1) critically read assigned readings prior to class, and (2) actively participate in discussions, and (3) listen to and be respectful of the ideas of others.

Note that class participation is weighted heavily in the evaluation of students. Students who have a very difficult time speaking in seminar settings should consult with me. I am committed to the principles of accessibility. Please also see below for information on accessibility services.

Readings: Readings will be heavier in some weeks, lighter in others. I will try to guide students on which readings should be read closely and which can be reviewed more quickly. Readings will be available on the course **blackboard site** or, in some cases, on my homepage:

http://faculty.geog.utoronto.ca/Hess/hess_home.html. I tend to tinker with the course syllabus, and readings may change for some weeks.

Assignments: There are two main assignments in this course. In the first, students will take a walk through a series of contiguous neighbourhoods and assess their findings based on themes from the readings. Walks may be done in pair, but assessment and write-up is expected to reflect individual work. In the second assignment, students will propose a short, simple research project of their own choosing. This may be done individually or in small, self-organized groups. The goal of the exercise is to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of using a

particular method or set of methods. Students are encouraged to use field based methods such as recording physical traces, using visual observations, or conducting behavioural mapping to understand the use patterns of a particular type of space or urban environment. Students may, as well, propose to use other kinds of methods for the assignment. The exercise will consist of a simplified research proposal that will be presented and discussed in class, the research exercise or experiment, a presentation and a research report. The presentation will be given in the last sessions of class.

Additionally, students are asked to form small groups and help lead a seminar. As part of the seminar they should present methods used in the research area and discuss theoretical and methodological issues. I will give more information on expectations the second week of class when I have a better idea of class size.

Evaluation and due dates:

Class participation/seminar prep	25%	
Interpretive Walk Write-up	25%	Due Oct. 31
Presentation of research proposal	-	Due Nov. 7
Research presentation	20%	Due Dec. 2
Research report	30%	Due Friday, Dec 19
Total	100%	

Late submission of work: Work that is submitted late will be deducted 10% per day, weekends counted as one day, unless there is medical reason (provide documentation).

Office hours: I do not maintain official office hours for this class but I am readily available for students that want to meet. You can email to set up meetings on an individual or group basis. I also have an “open door policy” and am available to listen to any student ideas and concerns related to the class. Please stop by my office anytime the door is open – which is often. If I am in the office and my door is closed, I do not want to be disturbed.

Accessibility Needs: If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Topics and Readings

Class 1 – Sept. 12

Course Introduction; Framework for Research Areas and Approaches

Local Area Field Trip – reading the built environment: issues and questions

Class 2 – Sept. 19

Urban Design Definitions; Catholic Approach

Introduce Class Research Project

Required Readings:

- Moudon, Anne Vernez (1992) “A Catholic Approach to Organizing What Urban Designers Should Know.” *Journal Of Planning Literature* 6(4): 331-349.
- Madanipour, A. (1997). “Ambiguities of urban design,” *Town Planning Review*, 68 (3), 363-383.

- Gunder, M. (2011). "Commentary: Is Urban Design Still Urban Planning? An Exploration and Response," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31 (2), pg. 184-195
- Banerjee, T. (2011). "Response to 'Commentary: Is Urban Design Still Urban Planning?': Whither Urban Design? Inside or Outside Planning?," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31 (2), pg. 208-210

Additional readings (all on blackboard)

- Talin, E. (2011). "Response to 'Commentary: Is Urban Design Still Urban Planning?': Whither Urban Design? Inside or Outside Planning?," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31 (2), pg. 211-212
- Forsyth, A. (2007). "Innovation in Urban Design: Does Research Help", *Journal of Urban Design* 12(3): 461-473.
- Schurch, Thomas W. (1999). "Reconsidering Urban Design: Thoughts About Its Definition and Status as a Field or Profession." *Journal of Urban Design* 4(1): 5-28.
- Cuthbert, A (2010). "Whose Urban Design?," *Journal of Urban Design* 15 (3): 443-448.

Class 3 – Sept. 26

Typo-morphology Studies I: Schools of Typo-morphology

Readings:

- Moudon, A. V. (1997). "Urban Morphology as an Emerging Interdisciplinary Field." *Journal of Urban Morphology* 1(1).
- Conzen, M. R. G. (1981 (1962)). *The Plan Analysis of an English City Center. The Urban Landscape: Historical Development and Management.* Papers by M.R.G. Conzen. J. W. R. Whitehand. London, Academic Press. ***Do not read in detail – try to understand approach.***
- Gianfranco Caniggia and Gian Luigi Maffei. (2001 (1979) "The Crisis in the Production and Teaching of Building" in *Architectural Composition and Building Typology: Interpreting Basic Building.* English Language Edition. Florence: Alinea Editrice.

Debate on Italian Approach (all in one file):

- Cataldi, G., G. L. Maffei, et al. (1997). "The Italian School of Process Typology." *Urban Morphology* 1: 49-63.
- Malfroy, S. (1997). "Caniggia and the Concept of Space." *Urban Morphology* 1: 50-52.
- Levy, A. (1997). "The Typo-Morphological Approach of G. Caniggia and His School of Thought." *Urban Morphology* 1: 52-56.
- Cataldi, G. (1997). "Reply to Ley." *Urban Morphology* 1: 57-58
- Kropf, K. S. (1997). "In Defense of Both Cataldi and Levy." *Urban Morphology* 1: 58-60

Additional readings

- Corsini, Maria Grazia (1997) "Residential building types in Italy before 1930: the significance of local typological processes" *Urban Morphology* 1: 34-48. (on blackboard)
- Conzen, M. R. G., & Conzen, M. P. (2004). *Thinking about urban form: Papers on urban morphology, 1932-1998*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Conzen, M. R. G. (1960). *Alnwick, Northumberland: A study in town-plan analysis*. London: George Philip.

Class 4 – Oct. 3

Typo-morphology Studies II: North American and Suburban Form

Local Area Field Trip (weather permitting) – Typo-morphology on the street

Readings:

- Baird, G. (1978). "Theory/Vacant Lots in Toronto." *Design Quarterly* **108**: 16-39.
- Siksna, A. (1997). "The Effects of Block Size and Form in North American and Australian City Centres." *Urban Morphology* **1**: 19-33.
- Scheer, B. C. and M. Retkow (1998). "Edge City Morphology: A Comparison of Commercial Centers." *Journal of the American Planning Association* **64**(3): 298-310.
- Southworth, M. and P. M. Owens (1993). "The Evolving Metropolis: Studies of Community, Neighborhood, and Street Form at the Urban Edge." *Journal of the American Planning Association* **59**(3): 271-287.

Oct. 10 – THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

CLASS 5 – Oct. 17

Image Studies

Readings:

- Lynch, Kevin (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
NA 9108 L9 – Multiple copies available in Arch, Robarts, Innis and others
- Banerjee, Tridib and William C. Baer (1984). *Beyond the Neighborhood Unit: Residential Environments and Public Policy*. New York and London, Plenum Press.
Chapter 4: Residential Area and Neighborhood: Images and Values

CLASS 6 – Oct. 24

Instructor is Away.

Film: *The Social Life of Small Urban Places*

CLASS 7 – Oct. 31

Assignment 1 Due at beginning of class.

Environment-Behaviour Studies

EB Readings:

- Appleyard, Donald (1981). *Livable Streets*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press. Chapter 1: “Three Streets in San Francisco”
- Bosselmann, Peter and Elizabeth Macdonald (1999). “Livable Streets Revisited.” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65(2).
- Rapoport, Amos (1987). *Pedestrian Street Use: Culture and Perception. Public Streets for Public Use*. Anne Vernez Moudon. New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Hess, P (2008) *Fronts and Backs: The Use of Streets, Yards, and Alleys in Toronto-Area New Urbanist Neighborhoods*. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 28(2)

Resources for Research Exercise :

Recommended:

- Zeisel, John (1981) *Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research*. Belmont California, Wadsworth, inc.
 - Chapter 7. “Observing Physical Traces”
 - Chapter 8. “Observing Environmental Behavior.”

Other E-B resources:

Journals:

Environment and Behavior – In Robarts and FALD and OISE also, available on-line 1995 – .

Journal of Environmental Psychology – In Robarts stacks- BF 353 J68; available on line 1995 –

Web sites:

Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA): www.edra.org

Project for Public Spaces (PPS): www.pps.org

Texts:

Bechtel, Robert B., Robert W. Marans, and William Michelson (eds.), (1987). *Methods in Environmental and Behavioral Research*. New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold.

CLASS 8 – Nov. 7

Research Project Proposals Due

Proposal Presentations.

Environmental Psychology

Readings

- Porteous, J. Douglas (1996). *Environmental Aesthetics: Ideas, Politics, and Planning*. New York, Routledge.
Chapter 3. “Experimentalists”
- Appleton, Jay (1988). “Prospects and Refuges Revisited.” In *Environmental Aesthetics: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 27-44.

CLASS 9 – Nov. 14

Picturesque Studies

Local Area Field Trip (weather permitting) – The Picturesque at UofT

Readings:

- Cullen, Gordon (1961). *The Concise Townscape*. New York, Van Nostrand
Read introduction.
Skim Casebook section.
In “General Studies” section read “Squares for All Taste,” “The Life of a Line,” “Legs and Wheels,” “Prairie Planning,” and two or three other sections of your own choosing.
NA 9030 C8 1971b (3 copies in Arch, 1 copy in Robarts)
- Jacobs, A. B. (1993). *Great Streets*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
Read Introduction and three sections on streets of your choosing.
NA 9053 S7 J23 1993 (1 Copy Arch short term loan, 1 Copy Robarts, 1 instructor copy)
- Isaacs, Raymond (2000) “The Urban Picturesque: An Aesthetic Experience of Urban Pedestrian Places” *Journal of Urban Design* 5(2), p145-180

CLASS 10 – Nov. 21

Place Studies

Readings:

- Seamon, David (1987). “Phenomenology and Environment – Behavior Research.” *Advances in Environment, Behavior, and Design, Vol. 1*. Evvin H. Zube, Gary T. Moore, Eds. New York, Plenum Press.
- Relph, Edward. (1985) “Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-World: The Phenomenological Origins of Geography.” *Dwelling, Place, Environment* David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer Eds. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Dovey, Kimberly. (1985) “The Quest for Authenticity and the Replication of Environmental Meaning.” *Dwelling, Place, Environment* David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer Eds. New York, Columbia University Press.

- Relph, Edward (1993). "Modernity and the Reclamation of Place." *Dwelling Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*. David Seamon, Ed. Albany, State University of New York Press.

CLASS 11 – Nov. 28

Landscape Studies, Material Culture Studies

Readings:

- Jackson, J.B. (1980). *The Necessity for Ruins*. Amherst, University of Mass. Press
 Learning about Landscapes
 The Domestication of the Garage
- Groth, Paul and Todd Bressi, eds. (1997). *Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study. Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
 Chapt. 1: Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study (Paul Groth)
 Chapt 9. Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space (Delores Hayden)
- Schlereth, Thomas, ed. (1985) *Material Culture: A research guide*. Lawrence, Kansas, University of Kansas Press
 Chapt 2: Learning from Looking: Geographic and Other Writing about the American Landscape (Peirce Lewis)
 Chapt 3: The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture (Dell Upton)

CLASS 12 – Dec. 5

Space Morphology

Readings:

- Hillier, B. and J. Hanson (1984). *The Social Logic of Space*. Cambridge, Cambridgeshire and New York: Cambridge University Press.
 Chapter 1: "The Problem of Space", 26 - 71
- Bafna, Sonit (2003). "Space Syntax: A brief introduction to its logic and analytical techniques" *Environment and Behavior*, 35(1): 17-29.
- Penn, Alan (2003) "Space Syntax and Spatial Cognition: Or why the axial line?" *Environment and Behavior*, 35(1): 30-65.

CLASS-13 – Dec. 12

Project Presentations

Project Reports Due - Dec. 19 by 5:00 pm.