

**School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP)  
University of British Columbia  
DRAFT COURSE OUTLINE – June 26, 2017**

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| <b>Course Number</b>    | <b>PLAN 517</b>                           |
| <b>Course Credit(s)</b> | <b>3.0</b>                                |
| <b>Course Title</b>     | <b>Theory and Methods of Urban Design</b> |
| <b>Term</b>             | <b>2018-2019 – Winter Term 1</b>          |
| <b>Days/Times</b>       | <b>Wednesday – 9:00am to 12:00pm</b>      |

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>Instructor</b>   | Erick Villagomez |
| <b>Office</b>       | N/A              |
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| <b>Office Hours</b> | N/A              |

**Short Course Description**

Welcome to PLAN 517 - a course focusing on the fundamentals of urban design theory and methods, and its application to neighbourhood design. This is a required course for Urban Design students and a foundation for anyone interested in gaining basic urban design literacy. It meets the distributional requirement for the Urban Design and Transportation area within SCARP's Masters level degree program.

PLAN 517 is an entry point into the urban design field, from which students can build deeper understanding, with additional coursework and focused research. It is open to all SCARP students and they will be given priority during registration. Students from other graduate programs - Architecture and Landscape Architecture, in particular - are encouraged to register early for the waiting list section, however. No prior design or drawing experience is required.

**Course Format**

The class will be every Wednesday for 3 hours. The course will roughly include two parallel streams of activity; ideas and design actions. In the first session (approximately one hour) the class will include workshops, presentations and/or interactive discussions about readings in urban design. The second session (approximately one hour and forty five minutes) will centre on analyzing precedents and/or designing a piece of the urban fabric. Site visits will be integrated throughout.

Students will additionally be required to make presentations demonstrating an understanding and critical engagement of course readings. Critiques of precedents and other students' designs will also play an important role.

The course will follow a traditional design studio format. Brief lectures, site visits, course administration, workshops, quick exercises, and discussion of issues related to the projects will be integrated across the 13 week period. Various methods and techniques will be demonstrated and explained as needed throughout the course. Although we will certainly touch on issues such as critical observation, mapping, graphic representation techniques and site reconnaissance within the

class time, students will be expected to venture into these areas of study more comprehensively outside of class times.

Students will set up individual workspaces in the studio where they will be able to work on projects. As mentioned, much of the course time each session will be used for team work and one-on-one instructional dialogue with the course instructor, when required. A successful studio experience demands that students physically work in the studio outside of scheduled class time to enable collaborative work, allow for cross-fertilization of thinking and learning, and provide an outlet for constant feedback and input from peers.

Students will periodically present their work to the class and potentially other guest critics at various points of completion during the course for feedback.

### **Course Overview, Content and Objectives**

This course has a number of learning objectives nested within the urban design specialization sequence at SCARP. It offers students a number of tools for developing their creativity and design capacities, interpreting/evaluating design work, and representing their own design visions. It also offers conceptual tools for guiding urban design projects.

The course also offers students an environment for developing their spatial awareness and spatial thinking as well as introducing historical trends and theoretical constructs that will enable you to engage in basic urban design discourse. An emphasis on peer presentations and peer critiques provides students with opportunities to hone public presentation skills, public speaking, and public discussion on urban design, all of which are essential elements in the practice and implementation of urban design.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, you will be able to achieve the following:

- Read 3-dimensional form at different urban scales;
- Articulate the component pieces of urban form;
- Articulate the characteristics of urban form that cities aspire to achieve;
- Interpret the general parameters of zoning and related urban development policy instruments;
- Articulate major trends of urban design theory over the last 4 decades;
- Interpret built form as a convergence of design requirements and competing interests;
- Differentiate between successful and marginal public space;
- Identify spatial relationships across buildings and open spaces;
- Apply the design characteristics of vibrant and economically viable urban centres;
- Conduct critiques of urban design projects;
- Employ a heightened awareness of urban form at different scales;
- Know yourself relative to the field of urban design;
- Apply your memory and experience of cities as a design reference;
- Produce basic orthographic drawing;
- Produce basic graphic design;
- Read and interpret detailed drawings;
- Produce basic 3-dimensional design at a neighbourhood scale;

- Develop conceptual approaches to urban design proposals; and
- Create diagrams that represent design ideas

### **Additional Course Requirements**

You may need to purchase additional materials or supplies such as sticky-back adhesive, photo copying, markers, printing, sketchbooks, etc. You can expect to spend approximately \$15-25 on tools and materials and another \$20-\$50 on colour printing, if required. We may also be participating in field trips, as a part of the course. Details will be given on an as needed basis.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend every class. Missing a session without contacting the instructor prior, will result in an automatic 2% reduction in your overall grade. During studio, you are expected to participate in discussions and reviews of each other's work, and to conduct yourselves in a courteous and professional manner. You are expected to be constructively critical yet respectful and supportive in your engagement of each other's work. You are also expected to be attentive to whoever is speaking whether we are in studio or in the community.

### **Evaluation Criteria and Grading**

Evaluation is ongoing, based on evidence of understanding of course material, design process, judgment and ability demonstrated in your work. There are no exams for this course. All evaluations are based on assignments. A thorough breakdown is described below.

Work is informally evaluated with every desk crit, tack-up and review, and formally evaluated against specific criteria at the conclusion of every assignment and again at the end of the term. (see project evaluation outline). The course, itself, is graded on a numeric (percentage) basis, with 60% being a minimum passing grade.

While this is not a competitive learning environment in terms of grades, it legitimately ought to be competitive in terms of challenge to the quality of ideas and abilities. You will not be evaluated against one another. In fact quite the opposite — you will be encouraged to work with, and learn from, one another. In essence, you, yourself, will be your only competitor with your peers as your only aids.

Certain coursework will be conducted in teams chosen over the course of the semester. Teams will be created to balance skills and experience. Students will be evaluated on their successful completion of the following tentative course requirements:

#### 1. PARTICIPATION (15%)

The course requires extensive collaboration and even when students produce individual work it builds on and draws from the efforts of other students in the class. Attending every class and fully participating in all discussions and exercises is essential for the success of the studio learning environment. There is no separate participation grade but students whose participation is below or above standard expectation for graduate courses will be either penalized or rewarded for up to 15% of the assignment grade.

#### 2. TAKING MEASURE (10%)

An assignment that will get students more aware of the metrics and dimensions of the built world around us.

3. DRAWING MEASURE (10%)

An assignment focused on understanding measure as it relates to the design of a physical space.

4. FRAGMENTS ANALYSIS (30%)

An assignment focused on the critical analysis of a fragment of the local urban fabric. These precedents are intended to inform one's own work - and that of the class.

5. DESIGN\_1.0 (15%)

This short-but-intense design exercise will be held in the spirit of a "charette" - facilitating the development of design ideas quickly and spontaneously, without too much deliberation. This will give us a good start for final project and help develop confidence in ones initial thoughts.

6. READINGS/WORD & WORKS (20%)

Readings will form a foundation for analysis and design exercises, as they will describe the lens through which one understands and evaluates a particular environment.

7. METHODS/MANNERS & SKETCH NOTEBOOKS (5%)

Deciphering cities requires filtering and interpreting vast amounts of information - sensory and otherwise - and understanding their implications as it relates to design. As a result, one must develop strong observation, abstraction, and analytical skills in order to do this effectively. Drawing and visual note-taking *throughout the term* - within "Sketch Notebooks" - will facilitate the latter. Evaluation will be based on drawing content and not technical skill or 'prettiness' - in short, drawing used to aid thought.

These assignments are discrete parts of a cumulative whole project. The assigned (approximate) grading weight approximates the time and effort allocated to them in the term schedule. A detailed marking rubric will accompany each assignment. In general, students are expected to achieve the following objectives in all of their coursework:

Creativity / Reflection

Exploration of different ideas and categories of ideas in your work and successful integration of different ideas and complementary fields of inquiry to present problems and solutions in insightful ways.

Critical / Analytical Thinking

Evidence of thoughtful inquiry or thorough analytical thinking for design, writing and presentation assignments.

Industriousness / Effort

How much effort and efficient production did you dedicate to the assignment relative to your skill level?

Professionalism

Attention to detail, completeness, thorough editing and error free work and attractiveness of presentation

Given the project-based approach for studios and how many different and interrelated aspects converge within this rich environment, evaluations are slightly more involved than typical courses. Evaluation is ongoing, based on evidence of your working process, judgment and ability demonstrated in your work. It is also done in response to specific assignment criteria.

In order to facilitate the process and give you well-rounded feedback, the evaluations throughout the term will be organized under broader themes. Work is informally evaluated during every class and formally evaluated against specific criteria at the conclusion of every assignment in accordance with the following:

#### *Thinking/Working Processes*

Habits of thought and work as they relate to the development of your work. This includes but is not limited to research methods, the ability to rethink initial assumptions towards improving your work, and the use of tools for design investigation (sketching, model making, diagramming, etc.).

#### *Project Content*

The conceptual development of your project and the clarity/consistency with which intentions are manifested in your proposal(s) formally, and otherwise. Demonstrating an ability to think across various scales - connecting proposals to larger contextual issues - is particularly significant. This includes but is not limited to the evolution of program and how specific design strategies/materials are used in light of one's intentions.

#### *Final Products*

Includes all the materials included in final presentations and how they are executed. This includes but is not limited to the diversity of modes of representation (models, drawing types, diagramming, etc.), graphic layout (presentation structure and image sequence, use of colour to highlight issues significant to your design, etc.), and verbal presentation (clarity, succinctness, tone, etc.).

#### *Methods and Manners of Study*

Refers to one's overall character and conduct within the studio environment. This includes but is not limited to class conduct, participation in discussions and critiques, class contributions (leadership, respect for peers, etc.), and the ability to filter and respond to feedback (peer, instructor, guest critics) intelligently through design work.

It is important to note that one's ability to take "*intelligent risks*" (vs. careless risks) will be evaluated as a part of each theme. Risk is an inherent part of the design process - we take risks (of embarrassment, etc.) presenting our ideas to others, for example - and fearing risk impedes design development, especially that which stops students from revisiting and rethinking initial assumptions or directions that have proven to be unfruitful.

## Required Readings and Videos

Required readings will be given out on a weekly and/or bi-weekly basis. All students within the class are expected to read all the content assigned and partake in weekly discussions based on the content of each piece.

## Recommended Readings

Relevant literature titles will be distributed in class, as needed. As mentioned above, specific readings will also be given to the class on a weekly and/or bi-weekly basis. However, there are a few references that you will find particularly helpful throughout the term.

### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Christopher Alexander, *A PATTERN LANGUAGE*
- Francis Ching, *ARCHITECTURE: FORM, SPACE AND ORDER*
- Jan Gehl and Brigitte Svarre, *HOW TO STUDY PUBLIC LIFE*
- Allan Jacobs, *LOOKING AT CITIES*
- Eric j. Jenkins, *DRAWN TO DESIGN: ANALYSING ARCHITECTURE THROUGH FREEHAND DRAWING*
- Edward White, *SITE ANALYSIS*
- Gordon Cullen, *THE CONCISE TOWNSCAPE*
- Kevin Lynch, *IMAGE OF THE CITY*
- Donald L. Elliott, *A BETTER WAY TO ZONE*

### OTHER BOOKS

- Christopher Alexander, *THE NATURE OF ORDER*
- Donald Appleyard, *LIVABLE STREETS*
- Edmund Bacon, *DESIGN OF CITIES*
- Harland Bartholomew & Associates Vancouver (B.C.). Town Planning Commission./, *A PLAN FOR THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, INCLUDING POINT GREY AND SOUTH VANCOUVER AND A GENERAL PLAN OF THE REGION, 1929.*
- Lance Berelowitz. *DREAM CITY: VANCOUVER AND THE GLOBAL IMAGINATION*
- Peter Bosselman. *REPRESENTATIONS OF PLACE and URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS.*
- John Clague and Bob Turner. *VANCOUVER CITY ON THE EDGE: LIVING WITH A DYNAMIC GEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE*
- Norman Crowe and Paul Laseau, *VISUAL NOTES FOR ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS*
- Design Centre for Sustainability, *SUSTAINABILITY BY DESIGN: A VISION FOR A REGION OF 4 MILLION*
- Grady Clay, *CLOSE UP: HOW TO READ THE AMERICAN CITY*
- Howard Davis, *THE CULTURE OF BUILDING*
- Konstantino Doxiadis, *EKISTICS: THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS*
- Lorraine Farrelly, *DRAWING FOR URBAN DESIGN*
- Jan Gehl, *LIFE BETWEEN BUILDINGS and CITIES FOR PEOPLE*
- N.J. Habraken, *STRUCTURE OF THE ORDINARY*
- Diana Hacker *A CANADIAN WRITER'S REFERENCE*
- Derek Heyes, *HISTORICAL ATLAS OF VANCOUVER*
- Jane Jacobs, *THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES*
- Allan Jacobs, *GREAT STREETS*

- Paul Laseau, *VISUAL NOTES FOR ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS*
- Paul Laseau, *GRAPHIC THINKING FOR ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS*
- Bryan Lawson, *HOW DESIGNERS THINK*
- Paul Lukez, *SUBURBAN TRANSFORMATIONS*
- Kevin Lynch, *CITY SENSE AND CITY DESIGN*
- Bruce Macdonald, *VANCOUVER: A VISUAL HISTORY*
- George Perec, *SPECIES OF SPACES AND OTHER PIECES*
- Nikos A. Salingaros, *PRINCIPLES OF URBAN STRUCTURE*
- Gerrit Schwalbach, *BASICS URBAN ANALYSIS* and *URBAN BUILDING BLOCKS*
- John Stilgoe, *OUTSIDE LIES MAGIC*
- Emily Talen, *CITY RULES: HOW REGULATIONS AFFECT URBAN FORM*
- Edward Tufte, all his books on information design
- Robert Venturi, Steven Isenour and Denise Scott Brown, *LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS*

### **Course Schedule**

A tentative schedule will be released in August.

### **Special Needs**

If students have any special needs, please approach the instructor.

### **Academic Integrity**

1 Assistance with the creation of a course syllabus is available through the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, [www.ctlt.ubc.ca](http://www.ctlt.ubc.ca) Resources related to the development of assessable learning outcomes can be accessed through <http://ctlt.ubc.ca/resources/webliography/course-designdevelopment/> The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at <http://calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>.