CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY
PDD 608 Urban Design Seminar

Instructors: Charles Harker, and Gauri Torgalkar

FALL 2008

TIME
Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION
Urban Design Center of NE Ohio
820 Prospect Avenue

Syllabus
PDD 608 URBAN DESIGN SEMINAR

Contact Information:

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Office hours by appointment.

Professor Harker is at Kent State on most days. Please make an attempt to meet with him following class to answer questions. Professor Torgalkar is at the CU DC. She will take most of the office hours responsibility because of her proximity to the campus. She is available by appointment.

Objectives:

This seminar is about understanding and evaluating the quality of urban places. The course has three main objectives:

1. To deepen students’ understanding of public space and public life through readings and discussions in urban design theory and through observation and analysis of urban conditions in the City of Cleveland.
2. To develop students’ knowledge and understanding of the practical tools of urban design.
3. To provide an introduction to graphic communication techniques, and to help students expand and refine their skills in spatial analysis through drawing and diagramming urban conditions.

Requirements

The seminar consists of:

- lecture/discussion on urban design fundamentals,
- student-led discussion of assigned readings,
- in-depth tours of urban settings, and
- graphics workshops, focusing on hand-drawing techniques
- computer-based drawing that is oriented toward the required design solutions of the final project.

NOTE Active, engaged participation in class discussions and tours is essential. Students are also required to maintain a sketch book over the course of the semester and to complete an individual research project focusing on an urban location of their choice. (See pages 6-7).

Grading

- Walking Tour Reports/Assignments: 30%
- Sketchbook: 20%
- Individual project: 40%
- Class participation and attendance: 10%

FTP site:

The Urban Design Center maintains an FTP site that we can use to share information throughout the course. Readings and source materials will be posted to the FTP site and students are encouraged to use the site to share ideas, photographs, etc. To use the FTP site, go to:

ftp://131.123.146.100
User name: udcfriend
Password: 03ftp1
There is a folder on the site labeled “CSU PDD 608” which will be for our use during the semester.
WEEK 1
Introduction to Urban Design
Gauri Torgalkar and Charles Harker

9:00-10:30  Introduction and class logistics
         Field Report/Sketchbook fundamentals
         Requirements for individual projects
         Resources of the Urban Design Center that will be available to students

10:30-12:30  Video: “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” William H. Whyte

LUNCH—then meet at the fountain in Tower City

1:00-5:00  WALKING TOUR 1: From Public Square to the Flats—Tower City and the “Center of the Center,” The New in the Old, Public Square- and the “Urban Room,” The loss of a Wall, The Civic Center, The Edge of the WD-Issues of Building Scale, “Is this place Boring?,” Opportunities for Place Making, Housing & Retail, Transition to the Flats, Eyesore to Entertainment District, The River and The Rail, “It’s OK to have Fun!” The Origin of Cleveland, A Place of Bridges, Public or Private Spaces.

Discussion includes urban design scales: Building, Block, Neighborhood, District, Region

Readings for Week 2:

WEEK 2
Understanding and Documenting Urban Places
Gauri Torgalkar and Charles Harker

9:00-12:00Graphics Workshop: Hand sketching and diagramming techniques (GT)

12:00-Meeting to plan for the field trip

12:15-1:30Drive to Streetsboro—Fast food lunch in transit and Meet at the Bob Evans restaurant on the corner of I-480 and Rte 303.

1:30-5:00Windshield tour: Streetsboro—where is the center?, Main Street as Highway, Decisions made or not made, Strip City. Hudson—Main Street, Village Square, Small town, The Academy, New Urbanism as Development Strategy. Peninsula—Unique community, The National Park, The Cuyahoga River, A Community for the Arts, Tourists vs Residents, The Prediction of Change

Readings for Week 3:
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WEEK 3
Understanding and Documenting Urban Places, part 2
Charles Harker and Gauri Torgalkar

9:00-10:00 Student led discussion of the readings
10:15-12:30 Lecture by Charles Harker “The Orchestration of Space”
  The vocabulary of Kevin Lynch “The Image of the City”
  EXERCISES--Urban Form and the work of Camillo Sitte
12:30-1:30 LUNCH
1:30-5:00 Graphics Workshop: Freehand Perspectives and Computer techniques (GT)

Readings for Week 4:


Bill Lennertz, ‘The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change,’ pp. 109-112.

‘The Urban Design Process: 3 Phases,’ pp. 57-129.

‘How to Build an Urban Village,’ pp. 7-23.


WEEK 4
Urban Design Tools and Practice
Steve Rugare, Charles Harker and Gauri Torgalkar

9:00-10:00 Student-led discussion of readings for week 3 and 4
10:30-12:30 Guest Speaker  Professor Steven Rugare “The Shrinking Cities Syndrome”

12:30-1:30 LUNCH
1:30-5:00 Google Sketchup techniques with Gauri Torgalkar
Readings for Week 5:


WEEK 5
Urban Design Tools and Linkages: The pedestrian in the urban Fabric
Steve Rugare, Charles Harker and Gauri Torgalkar
Linkage: The Pedestrian within the Urban Fabric

9:00-12:30 Graphics Workshop (GT): Photoshop and Sketchup-Focus on Individual Projects

GT Signup sheets for individual meetings with CH and GT for Week 6 session

12:30-1:30 LUNCH

MEET 1:30 At the Free Stamp by City Hall

1:00-5:00 TOUR 3: LINKAGES: From the Waterfront to Jacob’s Field—The Ninth Street Corridor, the Waterfront linkage, Multiple Barriers, The Inner Harbor, The Convention Center, Burnham’s Mall, Managing Urban Blight, Utilization by Consumption, Mall A, A Tale of Two Additions, The Cleveland Arcades, Problems of service, Jacob’s Field and Quicken Arena, and Urban Blight Revisited—A New Sports Districk--National Image for Cleveland.

Readings for Week 6:

   - Frances Halsband. ‘Campuses in Place,’ pp. 4-11.
   - Carol T. Christ. ‘Living in Public,’ pp.22-25

Additional Reading:


(More to follow)
WEEK 6
Gauri Torgalkar and Charles Harker
Preparation for the Final Project

9:00-12:00  **Integration of Graphics and Written report (GT and CH)**
Planning of the Final Presentation—sign up for presentation times, review of requirements

**Signup sheets for individual meetings with students with CH and GT**

LUNCH

1:00-5:00  **CH/TG Scheduled meetings with individual students to review their presentations and reports**

WEEK 7

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 1**
SKETCHBOOKS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PRESENTATION

**PRESENTATION FORMAT**

*Final Research Paper (see project description) and Slide Presentation (Powerpoint)*

9:00-12:00  Student Presentations (6 students)
12:00-1:00  LUNCH
1:00-6:00  Student Presentations (6 students)

WEEK 8

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 2**
SKETCHBOOKS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINAL CLASS SESSION
SKETCHBOOKS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PRESENTATION

**PRESENTATION FORMAT**

*Final Research Paper (see project description) and Slide Presentation (Powerpoint)*

9:00-12:00  Student Presentations (6 students)
12:00-1:00  LUNCH
1:00-6:00  Student Presentations 6 or remaining students)
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Students will analyze and document an urban neighborhood or setting of their own choice over the course of the semester. The objectives of this project are to

- sharpen your powers of observation by taking a close look at a place that matters to you,
- introduce you to a wide range of primary and secondary source material for urban analysis, and
- develop / refine your skills in written, graphic, and oral analysis and communication.

Meaningful urban design comes from a deep understanding of place and context. Your assignment for your individual project is to provide a complete and compelling picture of a good urban place. Please note that “good” does not mean “perfect” and you are encouraged to select a site that you value, even if it has some negative attributes. In fact, those that are already “perfect” probably require only minor changes, and the difficulty in making meaningful change may be limited.

Recommended Timetable for Individual Projects: Urban Design Analysis

| SITE SELECTION | Week 2-3 |
| ANALYSIS       | Week 3-4-5 |
| REVIEW         | Week 6    |
| DUE            | Week 7    |

NOTE  Adherence to the above timetable helps to insure that you are will be able to meet the final deadline for presentations, and for the scheduled times during session that are set aside for group or individual in class workshops or discussion of your term project.

Walking Tours: A series of walking tours will take place in throughout the course. Students will be required to submit a Field Report on each tour. The tour will provide insight into the kinds of observation that will be required for this paper. The field reports will provide a sequence of opportunities to make field observations and then to write about them in technical report form. The final paper will be similar in overall format and intent. Examples of past papers will be provided and discussed in class.

Site selection: Your site can be a public square or green space, a residential block, a commercial node, a mixed use district, etc. A list of suggestions follows, but feel free to choose a place that is not on the list. The only requirement is that your chosen location must be easily accessible to you. You will need to spend considerable time actively observing your focus area, so choose a place you can get to and feel comfortable visiting. Locations within the City of Cleveland or Cuyahoga County are strongly encouraged, since it will be easier to get base data and other information if your site is close to home. Please consider these factors carefully as you choose your site.

Site observation: This project is an exercise in observation, so clear your mind of pre-conceptions. Do not let knowledge you have about the area from your own experience, other classes, or academic research get in the way of careful, objective observation. In your initial site visits, you should thoroughly document what you actually see. Record your observations with notes, photographs, sketches, and diagrams. Plan to spend at least 1-1/2 hours on your initial visit, with repeat visits as needed. The following considerations might be relevant:

Buildings
- What kinds of buildings are there? (residential, commercial, retail, industrial, etc.)
- How are the buildings currently used?
- Are the buildings well maintained?
- When were the buildings constructed? (an estimate is fine)
Why were they built and have the uses changed?

How are they painted or decorated? Look at doors, windows, signage, landscaping, etc.

Is there evidence of remodeling, rehabilitation, or other reinvestment?

Are there attractive or unattractive features? (rooftop antennas, graffiti, billboards, murals, etc.)

Setting

Are streets wide or narrow; is the street network complex or straightforward?

How do buildings relate to the streets?

How does parking work?

Are there sidewalks, bike racks, benches, waste receptacles, or public art?

How well is the infrastructure maintained?

What about environmental quality? Are there trees and green space? What is the air quality like? Is there evidence of noise pollution or light pollution? What about trash?

The Social Context

How many people are there? Does the place feel crowded, active, secluded, abandoned?

What kinds of people are there? (age, gender, race, ethnicity, family composition)

Is the population homogeneous or diverse?

Are there lifestyle clues in peoples’ clothing and appearance?

What are people doing?

Do you feel safe in this place? Does any aspect of the place make you feel uneasy? *(Note: please keep your personal safety in mind at all times. Refrain from selecting an overtly unsafe place for this assignment, and use the “buddy system” whenever possible)*

Keep in mind that some of these criteria may be irrelevant to your site. But try to be as detailed as you can and avoid generalizations. Are there other characteristics of your site that are worth noting? What else have you noticed about the physical environment or activity in this place? Plan to visit your site at different times of day and different days of the week to get the most complete picture of the place.

The video “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” and related class discussion is intended to address these issues.

Secondary Source Material: After you have spent time carefully observing your site, collect any other relevant data such as current or previous plans for the area, historic records, photographs or postcards, aerial photographs, current or historic base maps, zoning and land use information, oral histories, census data, etc. The UDC has ample resources available to help you with this task, especially if your site is in Cleveland or Cuyahoga County. Use this information to enhance your understanding of your site. Specifically, try to identify:

- History: Ethnic groups that originally settled in the area, and ways that ethnic composition may have changed over time
- Land Use: Ways that land uses and building functions have changed over time
- Historic events: actions that may have shaped or re-shaped the area
- Urban Form: Ways in which your specific area fits into the larger physical structure of the city
- Current Intervention: On-going or future efforts at preservation, revitalization, or redevelopment

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• Urban Forces: Issues facing the area, such as crime, migration, disinvestment, poverty, etc. What are the implications of these issues for the physical form of the place?

Case Study: Research similar projects from other neighborhoods, regional and/or national cites that might provide insight to potential solutions for your site. Include images and discuss the relevance of these for your site.

Design Recommendations: Based on what you have observed and discovered about your site, the final part of this project is to make recommendations about how it might be improved. This aspect of the project should include before and after photographs or drawings of the area, photographs depicting successful design interventions from other places, and a written description of your recommendations.

Final Products:

Compile your observations, research, and analysis into a clear, comprehensive report. The products of this project will include:

• A 10-15 minute Power Point Presentation of the highlights of your report, presented in class during the session of Week 7. The presentation should run approximately 10 minutes with a five minute allowance for comments and discussion by faculty, jurors and classmates.

• An Illustrated Final Report that documents your chosen focus area, to be submitted on Week 7—the last day of class. Photographs of the site. Hand or computer graphics that document your recommended interventions are required. Remember to include hand sketching you have learned in class to record your observations if possible.

• The Sketchbook will be turned in to Professor Torgalka at the same time as the final report and verbal presentation. As a working tool, the sketchbook should include assigned drawing exercises, as well as field notes and observations from the site visits, site analysis (CAT & MOuSE) and other related notes.

SUGGESTED SITE LOCATIONS

The following are suggested sites.

You may choose from among those listed below, or choose another site that you find interesting. Please make sure that you have reviewed the site selection and received approval of the site prior to working on your urban analysis. It is recommended that you choose a site that is readily accessible to you, so that multiple visits are easily accomplished in the site investigation period.

Little Italy  University Circle  Clifton Boulevard
Crocker Park  Shaker Square  Warzawa (Slavic Village)
Mill Creek  Beacon Place  West 25th & Lorain Avenue
Playhouse Square  Miles Park  Coventry Village
Cedar/Fairmount  North Coast Harbor  Tremont / Lincoln Park
Eco Village  Downtown Lakewood  Berea Road
Midtown Corridor  Gateway District  Downtown Chagrin Falls
The Flats  Franklin Avenue  Streetsboro and I-271
Euclid Corridor  CSU North Campus  Hudson/Peninsula
### SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS
#### Fall 2008

All classes are scheduled for alternate Saturdays from 9am to 5pm as noted below:

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