

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY  
MAXINE GOODMAN LEVIN COLLEGE OF URBAN AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES

Spring, 2005

UST 420 - URBAN DESIGN SEMINAR

MEETING TIME: Saturdays beginning March 26, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

MEETING ROOM: Sweet Seminar Room (UR 241)

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Virginia Benson

OFFICE LOCATION AND HOURS: UR 221, Monday and Tuesday, 10:30-noon or by appointment

OFFICE PHONE: (216) 687-2164

OFFICE EMAIL: Virginia@wolf.csuohio.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce basic concepts of urban design that have historic precedents in European and American cities through a review of urban design literature;
2. To demonstrate how those concepts apply to contemporary American cities, with emphasis on cities of the Great Lakes region such as Cleveland;
3. To relate urban design to public policies in the areas of physical planning and development including such issues as zoning, historic preservation standards, transportation policies and particularly urban design guidelines for specific districts of the American city.
4. To demonstrate, through class projects, how to evaluate the effectiveness of urban design in meeting the needs of the public while maintaining economic feasibility.

METHODS

In order to achieve the above objectives, the class will have lectures by the principal instructor, readings in the urban design field, films that present visual analysis of urban design and site visits with evaluations of development projects including collection of data for a final reports and class discussions in which students present their findings. The course is called a seminar because students are expected to gather information and share it with the rest of their colleagues. The student is responsible for all information imparted in class including lectures by the instructor, visiting speakers or on film.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There will be a take-home midterm exam which will cover material assigned in the class, including that on film, course lectures and textbook material. In addition, there will be one term paper submitted by students in the Urban Design Seminar. The term paper is a report on the results of the field surveys of waterfront developments.

## GRADING

Grades will be based upon the results of the midterm exam (30%), participation in class discussion (10%), final term paper (40%), and final presentation (20%).

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\*\*This course is expected to fulfill the University writing requirement and, therefore, satisfactory writing skills on the take-home exam and the term paper must be demonstrated to pass the course.  
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## COURSE OUTLINE

Week One - March 26 (meet at 9:00 am)

Syllabus, Assignments.

Introduction to the field of urban design.

Films on Understanding Cities by Edmund Bacon: Rome, Paris, London

Lunch Break

Presentation of the William Whyte film "Social Life of Small Urban Spaces" upon which the waterfront development paper assignment is based. Following the films, the paper assigned will be discussed. All field trips will be planned at this time in an attempt to accommodate student's schedules.

Week Two - April 2 (meet at 9:00 am)

Lecture on Introduction to Urban Design. Discussion of text reading. Further elaboration of team assignments and term paper.

Lunch Break

Slide lecture on New Urbanism (Seaside and Celebration, Florida).

Discussion of Urban Values in Breen and Rigby.

Reading Assignment tba

Week Three - April 9 (meet at 9:00 am)

Lecture on American Waterfront Developments in general: public uses, economic aspects and environmental concerns.

A slide presentation and description of the development of American and Canadian waterfronts as well as Cleveland's two waterfronts (Flats and lakefront).

Lunch Break at North Coast Harbor (students may brown bag or buy lunch)

Field trip 1 to North Coast Harbor on Cleveland Lakefront. Teams will assess the NCH using criteria for public spaces.

Reading Assignment tba

Week Four - April 16 (meet at 9:00 am)

Take-home Midterm Exam will be provided at this time. Please follow instructions carefully and hand it in at the beginning of the next class. All essays must be typed.

Further discussion of text assignments. Students are encouraged to ask questions.

Debrief trip to North Coast Harbor, team assignments.

Lunch Break in the Flats (Students can brown bag or buy lunch)

Field Trip II assessing the Flats (East and West Banks)

No reading assignment this week.

Week Five - April 23 (meet at 9:00 am)

Hand in take-home exam. This will be a research day to allow for further gathering of data for term paper assignment. The professor will be available to discuss assignments. Those who wish to add another waterfront venue to their analysis are free to do so. Such added material is not required. Additional venues that students may consider are: local Cleveland area sites such as the Ohio Canal Corridor (from Cleveland to Akron), Cuyahoga Falls downtown waterfront or sites outside the Cleveland area (Pittsburgh or Toledo) The University and the course instructor will not be responsible for such travel. YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN.

Week Six - April 30 (meet at 9:00 am)

Debrief the research assignments. Review take-home midterm exams. Slide lecture on historic preservation. Draft papers may be handed in at this time. They must be typed and will be returned by Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> so they can be polished up for final presentation.

Lunch Break

Walking tour of Historic Gateway Neighborhood and Historic Warehouse District.

Week Seven - May 7 (meet at 9:00 am sharp)

Presentations of waterfront studies (with slides) to the class. Discussion following presentation. Please hand in all final term papers at this time. They must be typed and must be in final form.

Lunch Break

Presentations of waterfront studies (with slides) to the class. Discussion following.

Attendance at all presentations is REQUIRED. Unexcused absences will negatively impact the grade for the course.

Final papers must be handed in at this time.

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## READINGS

The text for this course is Suburban Nation by Andres Duany, Elisabeth Platyry-Zyberk and Jeff Speck (New York: North Point Press, 2000). For those who wish to pursue the study of urban design and to enhance material offered in class sessions, the following books are also recommended:

Bacon, Edmund. The Design of Cities (New York: Viking Press, 1967). This book covers the material found in the film series if students wish to review it.

Barnett, Jonathan. Urban Design As Public Policy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974). This is Barnett's initial study that introduces urban design. Both this book and the following are out of print but available in local libraries.

\_\_\_\_\_. Introduction to Urban Design (New York: Harper and Row, 1982). Focus is on three design trends: citizen participation, historic preservation and environmental issues.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Elusive City: The Five Centuries of Design, Ambition and Miscalculation. (New York: Harper & Row, 1986.) Barnett provides an overview of urban design history and its failure to meet expectations of designers.

Boyer, Christine. Dreaming The Rational City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986). A thorough and sensitive review of the history of city planning and design.

Carmona, Matthew et. Al. Public Places-Urban Spaces. New York: Architectural Press, 2003. A thorough discussion of urban design issues.

Cutler and Cutler. Recycling Cities for People: The Urban Design Process (Boston, Mass.: CBI Publishing Co., Inc., 1982) Contains material on a variety of scholars of urban design and includes methods of integrating design with the real estate development process.

Downs, Roger and David Stea. Image and Environment (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1970) Though now somewhat dated, this book was an excellent introduction to the field of environmental perception.

Garreau, Joel. Edge City: Life on the New Frontier. (New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1991) A suburban perspective that focuses on the growth of highway-spawned centers which the author predicts will supplant classical central-place city structures. An excellent admonition about the unexpected consequences of public policy decisions in the design of cities.

Gosling, David and Barry Maitland. Concepts of Urban Design (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).

Howard, Ebenezer. Garden Cities of Tomorrow (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965) A nineteenth-century classic that, though a very small book, has had a tremendous impact on physical planning and urban design in the utopian genre.

Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York, 1961) An excellent re-visit to basic attractions of cities that have survived in spite of the urban crisis.

Kuntsler, James. The Geography of Nowhere. A journalistic and humorous look at the failings of modern American urban design.

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Lynch, Kevin. Image of the City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960) Another very small but powerful treatise on "reading" the city. Lynchian "language" of urban design is so unquestioned and pervasive that one must be literate in his terminology to understand the field at all.

Mumford, Lewis. From the Ground Up (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1956) A third very small paperback, focusing mainly on New York City, from an author who is prolific in the history and critique of urban design.

Whyte, William H. Social Life of Small Urban Spaces (Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation, 1980) This book elaborates on the film of the same name and serves as a good resource for the "evaluation of waterfront design" paper. Whyte assesses the bonus provision of plaza spaces in New York City and sets up criteria for evaluating their success as public spaces.

\_\_\_\_\_, William H. City: Rediscovering the Center (New York: Doubleday, 1988) An extensive elaboration on the topic of social life of small urban spaces. Whyte also looks at recent trends in suburbanization of corporations, the rise of "semi-cities" and the case for gentrification of the central city.

## Paper Assignment

This paper will summarize the analysis of two waterfront developments (with possible applications to Cleveland) according to criteria described by William Whyte in his film and book entitled Social Life of Small Urban Spaces. Although the paper will focus on each student's choice of a particular aspect of Whyte's criteria, it is expected that the whole development will be placed into a political, economic and social context by discussion of characteristics of the individual city. Students may work together to gather material for their papers but each student will submit his or her own paper.

The term paper will be at least 10 pages, typed, double-spaced. The first draft must be submitted, corrected and handed back to the student to be resubmitted in final form.

Students are expected to present the results of their research, together with slides illustrating design elements, to the class on the final day.