

New York University  
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

## Introduction to Urban Design

### URPL-GP.1620, Fall Semester 2012

This course will concentrate on design, research, interpretation and analysis of urban spaces in New York City region, the United States and abroad. The introductory nature of the course necessitates overview of a broad range of topics rather than in depth exploration of each topic. However, all course materials and work will revolve around the central focus -- the forces that shape urban form. By the end of the course, each student will develop an awareness of the built environment and the critical elements required for successful place making.

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#### Section 1

**Instructor: Eric Galipo, AICP LEED AP BD+C**

Thursdays, 6:45-8:25pm  
25 West 4th Street, Room C4

#### Contact Information:

**email:** [eric.galipo@nyu.edu](mailto:eric.galipo@nyu.edu) or [egg217@nyu.edu](mailto:egg217@nyu.edu)

**Work Phone:** 212.677.6030 x220

**Office Hours:** Contact to arrange

#### Section 2

**Instructor: Steven Stainbrook, AICP**

Thursdays, 6:45-8:25pm  
25 West 4th Street, Room C9

**email:** [ssainbrook@h3hc.com](mailto:ssainbrook@h3hc.com)

**Work Phone:** 212.677.6030 x246

**Mobile:** 917.291.0776

**Office Hours:** Contact to Arrange

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#### Format:

The format of this course will be a mix of instructor presentations, discussions based on assigned readings, student presentations, field trips, and studio design work. Lecture will not be a recitation of required reading, but a time to connect this background information to current design approaches, professional practice, and the discipline of urban design. The goal is that each student should begin including spatial analysis as an integral part of the overall planning and policy process.

#### Urban Design Lab:

Immediately after class, both sections will participate in Urban Design Lab sessions. Sessions will be held in TISCH LC19 from 8:35 to 9:35PM or as advised. Attendance at and participation in lab sections is required and will be factored into your final grade for the course.

The Urban Design Labs will focus on skills that will aid you in completing the projects and assignments that are required for the course. The purpose of the Urban Design Labs is not to produce experts in any specific software

package, but to acquaint you with their basic use and functions and explain how certain computer programs may be of use in completing the assignments. Ultimately, the responsibility for learning the skills introduced in the labs rests on the student.

**Sketchbooks:**

All students are required to keep field notes in a sketchbook and will be encouraged to develop their own ability to sketch freehand. Notes, sketches, paste-on graphics, and photographs may be kept in the sketchbook. You are encouraged to record ideas for your ongoing course projects and reflect on class discussions as you begin to use New York City as your daily laboratory. Sketchbooks will be collected and reviewed by your professor. Full credit will be given for this review provided you make a legitimate attempt to actively use your sketchbook.

**Class Participation:**

Every student is expected to materially participate in advancing class discussions. Participation may affect your final grade by up to one-half a letter grade (in either direction!). A lively exchange will make a more fulfilling experience for all.

**Attendance:**

Attendance at all classes is mandatory and every student should make every effort to arrive to class *on time*. Frequent absence and/or lateness to class or lab sessions will be reflected in your final grade. In the case of emergencies, please speak with your professor to make appropriate arrangements.

**Urban Design Projects and Assignments:**

Three Urban Design Projects must be completed by each student over the course of the semester. The projects will be based on realistic professional assignments and will focus on design issues such as scale, program context, infrastructure and environmental factors. For certain projects, students will be required to work in teams, with each group presenting their work for the entire class or a panel of guest critics selected by your professors. Presentations should be graphic in nature and include images, diagrams, illustrative drawings, and/or models. A project brief will be distributed before each assignment that will contain specific information and instructions about each project.

**Project 1: Urban Public Space Redesign****Project 2: Infill Development and Redesign****Project 3: Large Scale Mixed-use Development (Seward Park)**

In some cases you will be required to submit electronic copies of your assignments through Blackboard, which will be programmed to stop accepting assignments at a specified time. Under no circumstances will assignments or projects be accepted late for full credit unless prior arrangements have been made with your professor. Assignments that are not turned in on time are subject to a half-letter grade penalty for every day they are past due. Leave enough time before a deadline to upload your work through Blackboard, as computer issues and lack of internet access are *not* acceptable excuses for failing to turn an assignment in on time.

## Required Books and Materials

### Books:

- Bacon, Edmund, N. (1969/ rev. 1976). *Design of Cities*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Boston: MIT Press. 1960/rev. 1196

### Art Supplies

- Sketchbook (9"x12" min.)
- Sharpie Fine Point Marker - black
- Pilot Razor Point Pen - black, red, blue
- White tracing paper - roll
- Engineering Scale (**not** an architectural scale)
- Prismacolor pencils (set of 12 colors)

Art supplies may be purchased at any location, but Pearl Paint, Utrecht Art, A.I. Friedman, or The Art Store will carry all of the required items.

### Recommended Software

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to produce maps, diagrams and drawing of your design proposals. The following software packages will assist you in accomplishing those tasks. There are versions of these programs available in NYU computer labs, but they may not be the most current version and you will have to plan accordingly to accomplish the tasks on time. Lack of access to a computer lab and/or software conflicts is each student's (or group's) responsibility and are *not* acceptable excuses for late projects.

- (Google/Trimble) SketchUp 8.0 Pro
  - An educational license of SketchUp is available for purchase (50\$). The license is good for one year, and can be applied towards the purchase of a fully licensed version. Go to: <http://www.sketchup.com/industries/edu/students.html> for details
- Adobe Creative Suite 6 Design Standard
  - Educational pricing is available through the NYU Bookstore and is a significant discount from a regular commercial license

The three projects will also require the following additional material to be purchased:

- Foamcore board (30"x40") white or black
- Laserjet printing services for presentation boards - we will provide you with the name and location of a printing service house where you can get these done.

**Grading**

Grades are determined according the Wagner guidelines and scale. Please refer to the Academic Policies page on the school's website for details and the School's policy on academic integrity.

- Project 1 - 15% of Final Grade
- Project 2 - 25% of Final Grade
- Project 3 - 45% of Final Grade
- Sketchbook and Participation - 15% of Final Grade

**Guest Lectures**

We have invited several guest lecturers to present to the class. As soon as they are confirmed, we will notify both class sections.

*Note: All assignments, schedules and lecture topics are subject to change at the instructors discretion.*

- **Class 1 (09.13.2012)**
  - Lecture Topic(s):
    - Starting a Design Study: Existing Conditions, Site Visits and Observations
    - The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, W.H. Whyte (video)
  - Assignments:
    - Read:
      - Lynch, Kevin - Image of the City - Chapter III: The City Image and Its Elements
      - Harvard Design School - Urban Design Now, A Discussion
        - Available on Blackboard
    - Project 1: Assignment 1: Observation and Analysis Diagrams (Due: 9.13.2012)
  
- **Week 2 (09.13.2012)**
  - Due:
    - Project 1, Assignment 1
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    - Turning Observations Into Ideas: Vision and Concept
  - Assignments:
    - Project 1: Assignment 2: Vision Statement and Concept Diagram(s) (Due: 9.20.2012)
    - Read:
      - Lynch, Kevin - Image of the City - Chapter IV: The City Image and Its Elements
      - Do & Gross - Thinking With Diagrams in Architectural Design
  
- **Week 3 (09.20.2012)**
  - Due:
    - Assignment 2: Vision Statement and Concept Diagram(s)
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    - Making a Proposal: Implementing a Concept
  - Assignments:
    - Project 1: Assignment 3: Design Proposal (Due: 9.27.2012)
    - Read: At Your Pleasure
  
- **Week 4 (09.27.2012)**
  - Due:
    - **Project 1 Final Design Proposal with in-class presentations**
  
- **Week 5 (10.04.2012)**
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    - Zoning and Land Use
  - Assignments:
    - Project 2 Assigned - Infill Development and Redesign (La Marquette)
  
- **Week 6 (10.11.2012)**
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    - City Form 1

- **Week 7 (10.18.2012)**
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    - City Form 2

- **Week 8 (10.25.2012)**
  - Lecture Topics(s):
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  - Assignments:
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- **Week 9 (11.01.2012)**
  - Due:
    - Project 2 Final Presentations

- **Week 10 (11.08.2012)**
  - Lecture Topics(s):
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  - Assignments:
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- **Week 11 (11.15.2012)**
  - Due:
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  - Lecture Topics(s):
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  - Assignments:
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- **THANKSGIVING (11.22.2012)**

- **Week 12 (11.29.2012)**
  - Due:
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  - Lecture Topics(s):
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  - Assignments:
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- **Week 12 (12.06.2012)**
  - Due:
    -
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    -

- Assignments:
  -
- **Week 13 (12.13.2012)**
  - Due:
    -
  - Lecture Topics(s):
    -
  - Assignments:
    -
- **Week 14 (12.20.2012)**
  - Due:
    - Project 3: Final Presentations

## Project 1: Urban Public Space Redesign

### Assignment 1 : Observations and Analysis Diagrams

**Due: 9.13.2012 @ 6:45pm**

In this first assignment you and a partner will visit a New York City public space, make site observations and analyze the *existing* design of an urban space. Working together, this assignment will give each of you the opportunity to observe how people use urban space and determine the design elements that make urban places successful.

You will be randomly assigned a partner from class and each group will be assigned a public space from the list below by your professor. Trading of partners or public spaces is *not* permitted.

Attached to this document is a suggested layout for the final projects, showing dimensions for each of the elements that must be included in your final presentation. Remember that you must work as a team, and both members must contribute equally to the production of the final project.

Name	Location	Neighborhood
Montefiore Park	Triangle between 137th St./Broadway/Hamilton Pl.	Hamilton Heights
Bartel Pritchard Square	Prospect Park West/15th St.	Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn
Ralph Bunche Park	1st Ave b/w 42nd and 43rd Streets	Midtown/Upper East Side
79th Street Boat Basin	End of 79th St. @ Hudson River	Upper West Side
Court Square Park	Jackson Ave and 45th Street	Long Island City, Queens
East River Roundabout	60th Street above FDR Drive/York Ave.	Upper East Side
Columbus Park	North of Brooklyn Borough Hall @ Montague St.	Downtown/Brooklyn Hts.
Pearl Street Triangle	Water St. and Pearl St.	DUMBO, Brooklyn
Soldiers and Sailors Monument	86th St./Riverside Drive	Upper West Side
Metropolitan Museum Entrance Steps	5th Ave/82nd Street	Upper East Side

### Part 1: Site Visit and Observations

**Before you visit your site**, you will need the following items:

1. Aerial Image (Google Maps or Bing Maps both work well)
2. Tax Parcel Map (<http://mycity.mas.org/index.html>)
3. Sketchbook
4. At least two colors of pens and/or pencils (fine point - since you may make lots of observations, you don't want to use a large point implement).
5. Camera / Hi-resolution Smartphone (i.e. iPhone 4)

Make sure both maps show enough of the context surrounding your public space that you can make observations about adjacent areas as well. Affix the notes to pages in your sketchbook, gather your materials and go to your site. Each team member should visit the site *at least* once. If you visit the site together, then make sure you're both willing to go back another time and observe how the space is used at a different time or on a different day of the week.

It is sometimes helpful to make a good 'base map' that has all the important features that you know you will need to draw over and over again (i.e. curbs, streets, buildings, etc...) and then place trace paper over the base map each time you need to create a new map or diagram.

While you are at the space, make notes and observations that relate to the following topics.

- What **times** did you visit?
- What did you observe in the space?
  - Who is using the space?
  - What areas did they gravitate to?
  - What were they doing?
- How did you personally feel in the space?
  - What attracted you visually?
  - What colors/textures predominate?
  - Describe the volume of the space - tall, wide, empty, full, etc...
  - What are the surrounding views like? Buildings, streets, horizon, water, none?
  - What is the mood of people in the space?
  - What senses are stimulated? Sight? Sound? Touch? Taste?
  - Are there variations in temperature? Air Movement? Sun/Shade?
- What are the major physical features of the space? Mark these on your maps, or you may find it helpful to draw small sketch maps for each type of observation:
  - Landscape elements, if any (trees, tree pits, planters, walls, steps, benches, trashcans, etc...)
  - Hardscape Elements (Sidewalk Paving material(s), hard/soft, wet/dry) - use patterns to indicate different types
  - Topography (flat areas/sloped areas/raised platforms)
  - Views (long range/short range, general/specific)
  - Circulation Patterns (pedestrian, vehicular, service, bus, taxi)
  - Sun/Shade (show ling of shadow at different visiting times)
  - Street furniture (phone booths, kiosks, fountain, fences, lampposts)
  - Special Qualities (areas or spats that have special qualities for you - these areas could be spots with views, sunny areas, busy zones, quiet zones)

## **Part 2: Observation and Analysis Diagram(s)**

Now that you have visited your site and have compared notes with your partner, you must use your notes and observations to create existing conditions map and an analysis diagram. Each one must be 11"x17", drawn to an appropriate scale, and will be used as part of your final presentation. You may use any method available to you to do your drawings (i.e. by hand or by computer), but the resulting diagrams *must* be drawn to scale.

### Existing Conditions Diagram:

Working with your teammate, prepare a diagram that encapsulates the observations you took at the space. You must make critical decisions about what information is contained in the diagram. The existing conditions diagram should deal primarily with the physical elements within the space (i.e. paving types,

furniture, landscape, etc.). The diagram must be drawn to an appropriate scale, include a north arrow, and you should make a legend of symbols used (see layouts for size(s) of legend).

### Analysis Diagram

Working with your teammate, prepare a diagram that encapsulates your analysis of the use patterns and sensory influences that you think should be taken into consideration when re-designing the space (i.e. pedestrian and traffic flows, views, shade vs. shadow, conflicts, etc...). Use symbolic representations such as lines, arrows, and other shapes to show the major forces that shape how the space is (or should) be used.

### **Part 3: In-Class Presentations**

Up to three groups will randomly be selected to present their existing conditions and analysis diagrams to the class. Be prepared to make a two minute presentation describing what you observed while on your site visit and the patterns and problems that you identified for your site. Use both your existing conditions diagram and your analysis diagram to make your presentation. Both group members must speak and be prepared for a discussion with the professor and your classmates.

## **Project 1: Urban Public Space Redesign**

### **Assignment 2 : Vision Statements and Concept Diagrams**

**Due: 9.20.2012 @ 6:45pm**

In the second assignment you and your partner will use the information you've gathered through your site visits to develop a vision and a conceptual framework for re-designing your space.

#### **Part 1: Vision Statement**

Working with your partner you must carefully examine the existing conditions of your site, and decide what your intention for re-designing the space is. For example, if you observed that your site was underutilized a corresponding vision statement item may be "Increase use of space by increasing opportunities for programmed activities".

Vision statements may be a bulleted list, but should outline to the user how you hope the space will be used and how you hope to accomplish that.

#### **Part 2: Concept Diagram**

Working with your partner, create a concept diagram for your plan. The concept diagram base does not need to be a specific scale, but should be the correct dimensions according to the layout guidelines given. Use symbols such as lines, stars, arrows, bubbles, and shapes to depict relationships and interactions between your various program elements (i.e. open space, nodes, paths, edges, etc...). The concept diagram spells out how you attempt to accomplish your vision but does not have to be drawn to scale and rarely shows much more than schematic details.

#### **Part 3: In-Class Presentations**

Up to three groups will randomly be selected to present their vision statements and concept diagrams to the class. Be prepared to make a two minute presentation describing the problems of your site, what your vision for the site is, and use your concept diagram to explain how you intend to accomplish your vision. Both group members must speak and be prepared for a discussion with the professor and your classmates.

## **Project 1: Urban Public Space Redesign**

### **Assignment 3 : Design Proposals**

**Due: 9.27.2012 @ 6:45pm**

In the final part of your assignment, you and your partner will use the information you've gathered through your site visits, your vision statement and concept diagram to develop a site plan with specific recommendations for redesigning your site for the purpose of achieving your vision.

Your proposed site plan should be twice the scale of your existing conditions and analysis diagrams (refer to the layout guideline provided with Assignment 1.) This site plan should include a high level of detail about how your plan will be accomplished physically. If you intend to construct new access points, walls, planted areas, paths, program zones, elevators, buildings, etc... they should all be indicated on your proposed site plan.

### **Part 3: In-Class Presentations**

All groups will be required to make a two minute presentation of their work using two 30" x 40" boards with all required elements included. It should include titles, captions and appropriate text (where applicable) to support your presentation.

Each team member must speak for part of the presentation and should be prepared to respond to questions from the professor and your classmates.

Each team must touch on the following topics during your presentation:

1. Existing Conditions – Tell us what's there
2. Analysis – What problems exist? What needs to be solved?
3. Vision- What sort of place do you want this to be ?
4. Concept – How are you going to make that vision happen?
5. Recommendations – What does it look like?

### **GRADING CRITERIA**

1. Well organized boards that read clearly
2. Appropriate use of line values and symbols to depict conditions, types, and categories.
3. Neat and precise presentation of proposed site uses, changes and design elements.
4. Clear relationships between observed problems, vision and proposed recommendations.