Cities are places formed by cultural forces which enable people to dwell. Design is one of those cultural forces which give shape to settlement on the land. When design operates in conjunction with social, political and economic forces, it gives rise to coherent settlement forms which are both memorable and supportive of human enterprise.

This is a course in urban design which adopts a humanistic view of the city. The artifact of the city, both historic and contemporary, is studied from the viewpoint of the people and groups who dwell there. What psychological and social mechanisms do they utilize to perceive, use, navigate, remember and experience the city? The premise is that through understanding these mechanisms, planners and designers can develop more humanistically meaningful urban realms.

The course begins by analyzing the city as a physical artifact. The role of natural forces is studied; topography, water, climate and vegetation. This is followed by a study of open spaces and buildings as typological elements which give spatial form to urban places. Design is the artful composition of these elements to create meaningful visual and spatial order through the use of form, hierarchy and geometry.

Cities are built environments experienced and used by individuals and groups of people. Individuals experience the city through sensory perception, motion and memory. Groups use cities as functional entities for living, working, learning, recreating and socializing. The urban realm provides activity settings and social settings beyond the scale of individual buildings, collective settings for the conduct of life. All of this occurs through the dynamics of time; past, present and future.

Successful city design occurs when physical forms and humanistic needs coalesce, when the physical artifact creates positive human responses, when the setting enables life to prosper. This has occurred in some superb European cities such as Rome, Paris, Berlin, London, and Copenhagen and some notable American cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, San Francisco and Savannah.

This course will be conducted as a combination lecture/seminar with extensive slide shows and weekly discussions. Student work will include a book review, an urban analysis project, and a design sketch problem.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

I. To gain an understanding of the formative elements which constitute the physical urban realm.

II. To gain an understanding of the means by which individuals (including yourself) experience and comprehend the urban physical world.

III. To understand how people dwell in the urban world and use urban public space.

IV. To learn about the mechanisms available to shape and control urban design and development.

V. To explore the historic and contemporary role of the center city within the burgeoning urban region.

VI. To gain exposure to the prevalent theories of urban design by reading the classic texts in urban design literature.

VII. To gain an appreciation of the way that social, political and economic forces influence the form of the urban realm.

VIII. To provide a multitude of successful examples of urban design so as to develop a repertoire of knowledge.

The basic intent of this course is to give students the knowledge, values and means for understanding the physical urban realm, its constituent elements and design composition.

KNOWLEDGE: case studies, slide shows, videos

VALUES: book reviews, discussions, debates

MEANS: urban place analysis and design sketch problem
# DESIGN OF CITIES

## COURSE SYLABUS

Viewing of videos is required. They are on reserve at Clemons Library. At least one reading should be done for each class session. The books are on reserve in the Fine Arts Library.

### Jan. 18

**INTRODUCTION**  
Course concept, content and requirements

**URBAN FORM**  
Formal models and characteristics  
Philadelphia case study

**Readings:**  
- Lynch, *Good City Form* (Appendix D, 373-389)  
  (Chap. 16 277-291)  
- Hall, *Planning Europe’s Capital Cities* (Chap. 2)  
- Bacon, *Design of Cities*, (Ed. 1 – pp.242-269  
  Ed. 2 - pp. 264-307)

**Video:**  
*Understanding Cities (Rome and Paris)*

### Jan. 25

**NATURE**  
Organic models; natural forces

**ECOLOGY**  
City as ecosystem; sustainable urban design

**Readings:**  
- Lynch, *Good City Form* (Chap. 4, 73-98)  
- Kostof, *The City Shaped* (Chap. 1, Organic Patterns)  

**Discussion:**  
Future of sustainable urban design

### Feb. 1

**URBAN SPACES**  
Typology and evolution; squares and parks

**URBAN STREETS**  
Typology and parameters

**Readings:**  
- Koetter & Rowe, *Collage City* (50-85)  
- Kostof, *The City Assembled* (Ch. 3, Public Places)  
  (Ch. 4, The Street)  
- Jacobs, *Great Streets* (Part 4 269-316)

**Debate:**  
*Urban Design and Terrorism*
February 8

**URBAN BUILDINGS**

Figure and ground; object and infill

**ENSEMBLES**

Exemplary case studies

**Readings:**
- Rasmussen, *Towns and Buildings* (117-132, 39-54)
- Sitte, *Art of Building Cities* (skim entire book)
- Bednar, *The New Atrium* (Chap. 1, 3-32)
- Goldberger, *Skyscraper* (Chap. 2 and 8)
- Hegemann & Peets, *Civic Art* (peruse entire book)

**Discussion:**
- *Strategies for Downtown* (Carl Abbott)
- *Why Paris Works*

February 15

**MOVEMENT**

Sequences, orientation, mental maps

**TRANSIT**

Trains, subways and cars

**Readings:**
- Sennett, *Flesh and Stone* (Chap. 10)
- Cullen, *Townscape* (17-96)
- Stea and Downs, *Image of Environment* (8-26, 63-78)

**Video:**
- *Divided Highways*

**Discussion:**
- *Mental maps*
  - *Future of the car culture – Tysons Subway*

**BOOK REVIEWS ARE DUE AT THIS CLASS**

February 22

**IMAGEABILITY**

Path, edge, node, district, landmark

**NEIGHBORHOODS**

Theory, form, social order

**Readings:**
- Lynch, *Image of the City* (46-91)
- Lynch, *Good City Form* (Ch. 13, 239-250)
- Banerjee & Baer, *Beyond the Neighborhood Unit*, Ch. 1, 2, 7

**Discussion:**
- *Personal and future neighborhoods*

March 1

**URBAN HOUSING**

Household types, lifestyles, housing design
NEW URBANISM  Traditional neighborhood design

Readings:  Lynch, Good City Form (409-417)
Jacobs, Death and Life of Great American Cities, Part I
Calthorpe, The Next American Metropolis (13-38)
Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, Suburban Nation (183-214)

Debate:  Future urban living

March 5-9  SPRING BREAK

March 15  URBAN TIME  History, growth, change, cycles

PRESERVATION  City as repository of cultural history

Readings:  Lynch, What Time is this Place? (29-64)
Koetter & Rowe, Collage City (118-149)
Huxtable, The Unreal America (12-36, 30-71)
Bacon, Design of Cities (Ed. 1 – 202-207
Ed. 2 – 201-227)

Debate:  What should we save?

March 22  PEDESTRIANIZATION  Public behavior and socialization

PUBLIC SPACE  Exterior versus interior

Readings:  Mitchell, e-topia (Chap. 5 and 6)
Bednar, Interior Pedestrian Places (Chap. 1)
Gehl, Life Between Buildings (Chap. 4)
Whyte, City (103-141)

Video:  Social Life of Small Urban Spaces

Discussion:  Public activity in the digital age

March 29  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS  - Urban Place Project
April 5  CASE STUDY  Washington, D. C.

L’Enfant, McMillan and Legacy plans
Evolution of the open spaces
Democratic ideals and public space

Readings:  Reps, *Monumental Washington*, (Chap. 5)
Passonneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries*  
(skim book, focus on maps)
NCPC, *Extending the Legacy*
Bednar, *L’Enfant’s Legacy*, (Chap. 1 and 2)

Discussion:  *Democracy and public places*

April 12  URBAN DESIGN PLANS  San Francisco and Charlottesville

Readings:  San Francisco Urban Design Plan
*Urban Design Plan*, Carr/Lynch, 1989
Bednar, “The Modern Era of Urban Design in
Charlottesville,” *Colonnade*, Vol. VIII

April 19  CIVIC RENEWAL  Berlin

FUTURE OF THE CITY  New York

Reading:  Lynch, *Good City Form* (Part II, 243-271)
Kostof, *The City Assembled* (Ch. 5)
Rowe, *Civic Realism*, (Chapter 2, 42-79)

Discussion:  *The future well designed city*

April 26  PRESENTATIONS:  Design Sketch Problem
STUDENT WORK

Each student will be required to complete three assignments to be submitted in written form: **Book Review, Urban Place Analysis and Design Sketch Problem.** The instructor will review these submissions and provide written evaluations. Each of them will be 25% of the course requirement and final grade. **Active participation** in the class is also a requisite and the remaining 25% of the course grade. This includes presentation of a required reading, required videos, required readings and participation in the debates and discussions held in class. Much of the material presented is in the form of slide lectures that can only be obtained through **mandatory class attendance.**

BOOK REVIEW

Each student will write a critical review of a book from the following list. Other books from the Bibliography that put forth a point of view, as opposed to formal content, can also be reviewed with the instructor’s approval. The 1000 word review should not summarize the book but rather offer an appraisal of its value to an urban designer. How do the concepts and content of this book improve our ability to design humanistic cities? A brief discussion of the book’s relationship to similar books would be a useful introduction.

Each student will be asked to make a critical commentary on the chosen book during a given class. What issues does the book address regarding urban design theory or knowledge?

- **Death and Life of Great American Cities**, Jane Jacobs (1961)
- **Design of Cities**, Edmund Bacon (1968)
- **Collage City**, Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter (1978)
- **Image of the City**, Kevin Lynch (1960)
- **City: Discovering the Center**, William Whyte (1988)
- **The Next Metropolis**, Peter Calthorpe (1993)
The City Assembled, Spiro Kostof (1992)

Suburban Nation, Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck (2000)

Downtown, Robert M. Fogelson (2001)


Building Suburbia, Dolores Hayden (2003)


The Edifice Complex, Deyan Sudjic (2005)

The Great Society Subway, Zachary M. Schrag (2006)