COURSE DESCRIPTION

This subject introduces graduate students to theories about how cities are formed and the practice of urban design and development, using US and international examples. The subject is organized into two parts:

Part 1 analyses the Forces, which act to shape and to change cities. Starting with Boston as a reference, we will examine key forces affecting contemporary urban development such: market economics, social forces, industrial production, the natural environment, public development, private development, and incentives to encourage good design. Finally, we will consider how cities define a vision for their future and how these are articulated in plans and proposals. Lectures will be supplemented by guest presentations, case studies and field trips.

Part 2 surveys key Models of physical form and social intervention that have been deployed to resolve competing forces acting on the city. The models reflect discrete languages of city making. We will discuss the evolution of each model, practical consequences, and potentials for resolving emerging urban problems and opportunities. The models include: Tradition, Art, Efficiency, Ecology, Security, Emotion and Intelligence. The application of the models will be illustrated in historic and contemporary project cases from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the US.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Work for 4.252j/11.301j will include readings, class participation, and two papers related to the two units of the course. Students will also be required to keep a journal reflecting on the readings. Student grades will be determined as follows:
Research papers and journal assignment: 70%
Presentations and participation in classes, discussion sessions, and field trips: 30%

Students are expected to have completed all required readings in advance of each class. Readings provide a context for class lectures and to expose students to the ideas of key urban design theorists on the topics presented. To encourage student participation, each class will begin with a short student presentation relating to that day’s readings and lecture topic. Each student will be expected to lead at least one of these class presentations over the course of the semester. Readings are available on Stellar at: http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/11/fa19/11.301/

Stellar is MIT’s web-based platform that contains all relevant information for the course. You need MIT web certificates installed on your computer. Please see the Instructor or TA if you have any problems.

It goes without saying that students are expected to attend each class. There are several class events that outside of the regular Tuesday/Thursday meeting times noted in the syllabus, all are highly recommended.

ASSIGNMENTS

We will distribute information on assignments as the semester progresses (see course schedule below), and recitation sessions will be held to provide assistance to students in undertaking the work. Assignments include:

**Assignment 1 Urban Change**, asks you to trace the evolution of one place in Boston through time, and to predict its future.

**Assignment 2 Urban Plans**, challenges you to evaluate an urban design intervention of your choice anywhere in the world to answer the question: Was this a good plan?

**Journal** will document your own thoughts, comments, and challenges on the readings, discussions and class material. Journal entries should be in conversation with multiple topics and readings. Although each entry may be of any medium (annotated sketches and drawings, paper, blog, etc.), they should represent substantial thought and synthesis of the subject matter. A minimum of two entries, each of at least 1,000 words, is expected. Alternative media ideas are welcome, but should be discussed with the teaching team in advance.

In addition to their use in the journals, students are expected to do the readings prior to class. The readings are often assembled to provide thematic debate, offer contemporary and traditional perspective within a topic, or serve as a foundation for in-class exercises and discussions. Therefore, it is important students come prepared.
MIT NOTES

Disabilities If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform in class, please see the instructor early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

Academic Integrity Plagiarism and cheating are not acceptable. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension. Please see the instructor if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE

1 Thursday, Sept. 5 INTRODUCTION
Can cities be designed? Course structure and objectives.

PART 1: FORCES THAT SHAPE CITIES

2 Tuesday, Sept. 10 THE FORCES THAT MADE BOSTON
How does a city grow? The city viewed as a process of cultural and physical evolution. How underlying forces are given form through design.

Assignment 1 Distributed: Urban Change

3 Thursday, Sept. 12 VIEWPOINTS ON THE CITY
How are cities understood? City themes and city culture. Ways of representing cities. The idea of imaging a city from the viewpoint of its inhabitants: Kevin Lynch. Regeneration of Lowell, MA.

4 Saturday, Sept. 14 WALKING TOUR OF BOSTON
Class field trip 9:45 am - 2:30 pm
Meet at the Prudential Center Observatory lobby (ground floor). We will conclude the tour in the North End where you can have lunch.

5 Tuesday, Sept. 17 ECONOMIC FORCES + URBAN FORM
The City viewed as a business. Land use, land value and urban development. Understanding how uses are located: the bid rent curve; cities as central places. Functional patterns of market and form. From the walkable city to edge city.
6 Thursday, Sept. 19   **SOCIAL FORCES + URBAN FORM**
The city from the viewpoint of communities and their residents.
Interrelationships of neighborhoods, class association and form. Public housing, Hope VI, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Boston.

Identify Place for Assignment 1.

7 Tuesday, Sept. 24   **STATE FORCES + URBAN FORM**
The city viewed by those in power. Eminent domain, public development and its purview: infrastructure, redevelopment, and housing. How is public development financed and carried out? City design as a political endeavor from Paris and New York.

8 Thursday, Sept. 26   **CITY-MAKING I: PLANNING THE FORMAL CITY**
Land allocation, use, and regulation of private development. Zoning and incentives to influence what the market provides. Evolution of land use control to shape the "good" city and protect scarce resources. New York City.

9 Tuesday, Oct. 1   **CITY MAKING II: NON-PLANNING THE INFORMAL CITY**
Guest: Dr. Jota Samper, University of Colorado-Boulder
Informal settlements make up one third of the world’s urban population. What is this form of urbanization? How can design affect security and regeneration of these neighborhoods? Medellin and Rio de Janeiro.

10 Wednesday, Oct. 2   **RECITATION SESSION – Required**
Assignment 1 Preparation. Research methods and topic development. How do you document urban change over time – and into the future? What resources are available? Using graphics to support your argument. References and citations. Time TBA.

11 Thursday, Oct. 4   **CITY-MAKING III: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**
The entrepreneurial viewpoint. Joining public and private interests. Revitalizing downtowns and neighborhoods with new incentives, formulas for development, and types of projects. Vancouver

Tuesday, Oct. 9   Holiday – no class.
FIELD VISIT: BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Host: Prataap Patrose
Meet at BPDA offices, top floor Boston City Hall, 9:30 -10:30AM.

CASE STUDY: PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC BENEFITS
Guest: Jim Doolin, former Director of Real Estate, Massport
The city is made largely by individual private development and projects, working within a framework of zoning and other regulations. Are these regulations sufficient to protect the public interest? What additional public benefits can the city expect developers to provide? Examples of projects and controversies in Boston.

CITY MAKING IV: THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
Design as a tool of analysis, synthesis and decision-making. The importance of urban visions and who makes them. The development process: how is good design achieved?

Journal 1 due in class.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF ASSIGNMENT 1 – First Half.

Assignment 1 due in class.

RECITATION SESSION – Required.
Discussion will focus on the journal and assignment 1. Questions to consider: Can you design places without designing buildings? Which tools of urban design have shaped the place you are examining for the first assignment? Time TBA. Pizza provided.

PART 2: MODELS OF CITY-MAKING / CITY-FORMING

VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY URBANISM
Urban design as a cultural language. Recurring themes: public and private; machine and nature; density and dispersion; local culture and global; the rich and the poor. Recurring elements: neighborhoods, production spaces, markets, streets, public places, transport spaces, and symbols. Class discussion on form, human behavior, and value systems.

Assignment 2 Distributed: A Good Plan

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF ASSIGNMENT 1 – Second Half.
19 Thursday, Oct. 31  CASE STUDY: MAKING A 21st CENTURY PUBLIC REALM
Guest: Barnaby Evans, artist/producer, Waterfire (TBC)

20 Saturday, Nov. 2  “WATERFIRE” AND WALKING TOUR OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.
Optional Field Trip
Leave Boston 2:30 pm, return 9 pm.

21 Tuesday, Nov. 5  TRADITION
The grid and the line. The confluence of culture, geography, and form:
Colonial towns in New England and Georgia and their legacy. Neo-
traditionalism: Poundbury, and British new town design. New Urbanism:
Seaside, Florida.

22 Thursday, Nov. 7  THE DEFENSIBLE CITY
How do notions of power and security shape urban form? How does
planning and urban design serve to include some and exclude others?
How do the uses and design of public space shape, enforce, and/or
challenge societal power relationships?

23 Tuesday, Nov. 12  THE CITY AS A WORK OF ART
Symbolic places and form. From Baroque Rome to the Chicago and the
Worlds Columbian Exposition. City Beautiful and its continuing impact.
Contemporary art of creative place-making: Georgy Kepes, Otto Piene
and CAVS at MIT.

24 Thursday, Nov. 14  THE EFFICIENT CITY
The city as a mechanism for production. The utopian industrial city.
From Pullman to the 1939 New York World's Fair. Impacts on urban
development policy: public housing, highways, and urban renewal.

25 Tuesday, Nov. 19  THE CITY IN NATURE
What is the relationship between cities and nature and how has the
understanding of this relationship changed? How does this
understanding influence the way cities are planned and built? How do
uses of “nature” in cities express particular social norms and political
ideologies?

Thanksgiving Holiday – No class.
26 Tuesday, Nov. 26  CASE STUDY: GREEN DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT  
Guest: Bill Browning, CEO Terrapin Bright Green (TBC)

27 Wednesday, Nov. 27  RECITATION SESSION – Required. Journal 2  
Discussion will focus on the readings and assignment 2. Please submit a journal entry reflecting on the readings in the second half of the course to Stellar by 9am. Questions to consider: What planning strategies/tools could be employed to reshape the city or suburbs? What strategies/tools of change are in the Plan you are studying?

28 Thursday, Nov. 28  EXPERIENCE CITY  
Experience development as a force in urban design. Narrative places. The engagement of information and media in urban form. Las Vegas to Singapore to Dubai.

29 Tuesday, Dec. 3  INTELLIGENT AND PRODUCTIVE CITIES  
Putting a “nervous system” into the city, and its effects on human behavior, activities and form. Smart urban systems that are sensed, continuously analyzed, and can incrementally respond over time. Stochastic as opposed to visionary urban design. Implications for theory and future practice.

30 Thursday, Dec. 5  STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF ASSIGNMENT 2  
Assignment 2 Due.

31 Tuesday, Dec. 10  THE GOOD CITY  
Reconciling ideals and the real. Discussion of languages of urban design and development and their applicability in practice. Whose values should the city reflect? Debating whether a truly “good city” possible to design? In-class exercise and debate.