11.001 Fall 2018
MIT School of Architecture and Planning

11.001J/4.250J: Introduction to Urban Design and Development

Units: 3-0-9
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Instructors: Suzy Harris-Brandts, Office: 10-495M (rear of mezzanine in 10-485) sehb@mit.edu; and Chaewon Ahn, Office: 9-569, Chaewon_@mit.edu
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11a.m.-12:30 p.m. in 2-105
Final Exam: TBA

This is a class about how cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas change. It is an introductory subject for undergraduates that examines both the evolving structure of the American metropolis and the ways that it can be designed and developed. We will survey the ideas of a wide range of people who have addressed urban problems and acted to alter cities, suburbs, and regions through urban design and development in both the United States and elsewhere. We will analyze the values implicit in each of their proposals, stressing the connections between ideas and design. We will examine the elements that make up cities and consider why particular places look the way they do. We will look at designs for new towns and examine the ways that existing cities have spread and been redeveloped. Topics range from grand ideas proposed by single individuals to smaller more incremental processes carried out through collaboration by a variety of contending parties. You will see how cities and suburbs have been changed in the past and how you and others may help change them in the future.

Lectures and discussions will be supplemented by videos and weblinks, by field study, and by visits from guest speakers who will present cases involving recent projects that illustrate the scope and methods of urban design practice and theory.

Work for the class will include extensive reading, two short written exercises, a longer final paper, and two exams (one in-class and the other a Final). Approximately 30% of your grade will be based on the quality of your final paper; 10% on the first short exercise, 20% on the group project (2nd assignment), 15% on each of the two exams, and 10% on class participation. All readings are available on the class Learning Modules site. It is essential that all reading be completed in advance of each class.

Timing of Written Assignments and Exams
Assignment #1: due Wednesday, September 12
In-class midterm, short answer/essay format, Wednesday, October 17.
Assignment #2 due Wednesday, November 14
Final Paper due (electronically) by Friday, December 7 (but extension to December 10 would be OK, with permission)
Final exam, short answer/ essay format; date in exam period TBA, location TBA
The first two must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day that they are due, since we will begin discussing them on that day. One full letter grade will be deducted per day that a paper is overdue. For example, a B paper that is one day late will receive a C. There are no extensions.

Sixty percent of your grade is based on papers assigned in the class. You will be graded on the quality of your argument/position, completeness of the assignment, grammar, structure, and the sophistication of your writing. Good writing clarifies thoughts and advances your ideas. It is a skill that will serve you well throughout life, no matter what your interests or career.

The WCC at MIT (Writing and Communication Center) offers free one-on-one professional advice from communication experts (MIT lecturers who have advanced degrees and who are all are published scholars and writers). The WCC works with undergraduate and graduate students, with post-docs, faculty and staff. The WCC helps you strategize about all types of academic and professional writing as well as about all aspects of oral presentations (including practicing classroom presentations & conference talks as well as designing slides). No matter what department or discipline you are in, we help you think your way more deeply into your topic, help you see new implications in your data, research, and ideas. The WCC also helps with all English as Second Language issues, from writing and grammar to pronunciation and conversation practice. The WCC is located in Kendall Square on the corner of Main and Hayward Streets (E39-115, 55 Hayward Street, in the same building that houses Cosi and across the street from Au Bon Pain). To register with our online scheduler and to make appointments, go to https://mit.mywconline.com/. To access the WCC’s many pages of advice about writing and oral presentations, go to http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/. The Center’s core hours are Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; evening hours vary by semester—check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours.

Disabilities
If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform in class, please see me early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you. For MIT’s policy on accommodations for disabilities, please follow this link: http://mit.edu/uaap/sds/students/

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are both academic crimes. 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 from the Institute. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will be reported to the provost in line with recognized Institute procedures. I also strongly suggest that you read MIT’s guidelines for academic integrity before submitting your first paper assignment: http://integrity.mit.edu/
PART I: CHANGING CITIES:  
TRANSLATING VALUES INTO DESIGN

September 5:  INTRODUCTION:

Questions of the Day: What is Urban Design? What is Urban Development? How are they connected?

Required Readings:

Exercise 1 handed out: due in class on September 12

September 10: WAYS OF SEEING THE CITY:

Questions of the Day: What are the visible signs of change in cities? How can we measure the form of cities? How do the underlying values of the observer influence what is observed?

Required reading:


September 12: THE FORCES THAT MADE BOSTON

Question of the Day: What does the history of Boston’s development tell us about the issues facing the city today?

Required Reading:

Mayor’s Office, Boston: Review Website for Office of New Urban Mechanics
https://www.boston.gov/departments/new-urban-mechanics

Optional Reading:

**Exercise 1 Due in Class/DISCUSSION OF EXERCISE 1**

September 17: **THE DESIGN OF AMERICAN CITIES**

Questions of the Day: *What is the difference between agrarian settlements and industrial cities? What happened to cities as America industrialized? How did the wish to improve (or control) labor conditions contribute to the rise of housing reform and urban design?*

Required Readings:


Optional reading:

September 19: **ZONING: DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PLANNING**

Question of the Day: *Can we design cities without designing buildings?*

Required Readings:

See also: “Zoning: What can you build and where?”
http://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/


September 22: **WALKING TOUR OF BOSTON (Optional but highly encouraged)**

Meet at Skywalk Observatory Kiosk, in the Prudential Arcade in the Prudential Center at 10:30 a.m. (Map: www.prudentialcenter.com/map). Walk will end up at Quincy Market by lunchtime.

September 24: **INCENTIVE ZONING**

Question of the Day: *What is the relationship between development incentives and quality public space?*

Required Readings:


In-class Video: “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces”

**Exercise 2 Assigned: due November 14**

**Part II: Elements of Urbanism: What Makes A City Look the Way it Does?**

September 26: **ELEMENTS OF URBANISM 1: SKYSCRAPERS**

Questions of the Day: *Why skyscrapers? How is density related to building heights? Where should a city be tall and why?*

Required Readings:


Optional Reading:

October 1: ELEMENTS OF URBANISM 2: STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Question of the Day: *What role do streets and sidewalks play in urban form?*

Required Readings:


Additional Readings TBA

October 3: ELEMENTS OF URBANISM 3: PARKS, PLAZAS, and OPEN SPACES

Questions of the Day: *How do open spaces contribute to our sense of urban form? Why do cities have parks and plazas?*

Required Readings:


Scott McQuire, “Performing Public Space” in *The Media City: Media, Architecture, and Urban Space* (Sage, 2008), 130-158.

October 8: No Class, Columbus Day

October 10 ELEMENTS OF URBANISM 4: DENSITY AND SPRAWL

Questions of the Day: *What does density mean? Sprawl? Are they opposites? How and why is density an important concept for thinking about cities?*

Required Readings:


Oliver Gillham, “What is Sprawl?” from *The Limitless City: A Primer on the Urban Sprawl Debate* (pp. 3-23).


October 15: ELEMENTS OF URBANISM 5: Data and Sensors
Guest: Prof. Sarah Williams

Question of the Day: *How can we use big data to bring about urban policy change?*

Required Readings:
• Code for America Website: [https://www.codeforamerica.org/](https://www.codeforamerica.org/)
• Civic Data Design Lab: [http://civicdatadesignlab.mit.edu/](http://civicdatadesignlab.mit.edu/)

October 17:  **Exam #1, in class**  
Note: We will schedule a review session in advance

**PART III: CHANGING CITIES BY DESIGNING NEW ONES**

October 22:  **THREE URBAN UTOPIAS:**  
1. Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City  
2. Le Corbusier’s Radiant City  
3. Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City

Questions of the Day: *What assumptions does each thinker make about how people should live in cities? What beliefs does each hold about the relationship between city design and social change? What aspects of these “utopias” have actually come to pass?*

Required Readings:  


October 24:  **NEW TOWNS IN THE UNITED STATES & ABROAD**

Question of the Day: *What motivates planners to design new towns?*

Required readings:  


October 29: **DESIGNED CAPITALS**

**Question of the Day:** *What motivates the creation of new capitals?*


October 31: **NEW CITIES, NEW BRANDING:** Las Vegas, Pudong, Dubai

**Questions of the Day:** *How are cities marketed? Is it all empty hype or is it possible to create new value for historic places?*

**Required Readings:**

**Optional Reading:**

**PART IV: CHANGING CITIES BY EXTENDING THEM:**
DESIGNING SUBURBS AND REGIONS

November 5: **THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF SUBURBS**

Questions of the Day: *Why do we have suburbs? How and why do the designs of new suburbs differ from the designs of older ones?*

Required Readings:


November 7: **RETHINKING AMERICAN SUBURBS**

Questions of the Day: *How do “urbanism” and “suburbanism” differ as “ways of life”? What are the social consequences of sprawl?*

Required Readings:


In-class Video: Andres Duany “Suburban Sprawl or Livable Neighborhoods” (excerpt)

November 12: Veterans Day Holiday: No Class

November 14: **NEO-TRADITIONALISM, NEW URBANISM AND FORM-BASED CODES**
Question of the Day: What is the appeal of small town life, and can this be designed?


Exercise 2 Due in Class.

DISCUSSION OF EXERCISE 2 Begins

Final Paper Assigned (Topic due November 19; paper due December 7, with possible extension to December 10, by written request)

PART V: CHANGING CITIES BY REDESIGNING THEIR CENTERS

November 19: URBAN RENEWAL AND ITS CRITICS:

Questions of the Day: When does a “neighborhood” become a “slum”? How does one achieve a balance between "renewal" and "preservation”?

Required Readings:


“Robert Moses and the Modern City” website, [http://www.learn.columbia.edu/ Moses/](http://www.learn.columbia.edu/ moses/)

Optional Reading:

In-class Videos: Urban Renewal

**Topic of Final Paper Due**

November 21: **THE TUMULT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Question of the Day:** *What does urban design have to do with the problems of American public housing?*

**Required readings:**


November 26: **“SLUMS” AND URBAN DESIGN: URBAN INFORMALITY, PLANNING, AND SECURITY**

**Question of the Day:** *What can urban design and planning do to address the challenges faced by a billion people living in the world’s “slums”?

**Required readings:**

Mike Davis, “The Urban Climacteric,” in Planet of Slums: (Verso, 2006). 1-20

Recommended Readings:


PART VI: IMPLEMENTING CHANGE: URBAN DESIGN FUTURES

November 28: URBAN DESIGN FUTURES 1: Ecological Urbanism

Question of the Day: How can cities best benefit from the natural environment without further harming it?

Guest Speaker: Prof. Anne Whiston Spiri


December 3: URBAN DESIGN FUTURES 2: Big Data Urbanism

Question of the Day: TBA

Guest Speaker: Prof. Carlo Ratti

Review: SENSEable City Lab Website: http://senseable.mit.edu

Additional Readings TBA:
December 5 TBC: URBAN DESIGN FUTURES 3: Smart Cities

Question of the Day: How have advances in telecommunications technology changed the way we use and conceive cities?

Guest Speaker: Prof. Dennis Frenchman
Required readings:
Dennis Frenchman, Michael Joroff, and Alison Albericci, “Smart Cities as Engines of Sustainable Growth,” Working paper prepared for the World Bank Institute, June 2011


Additional Reading TBA

Final paper due by Friday, December 7 (but can be extended until December 10 by request)

December 10: URBAN DESIGN FUTURES 4: PRIVATIZATION

Question of the Day: Is ‘Public Space’ Being ‘Privatized’?

Required Readings:


December 12: **URBAN DESIGN FUTURES 5: BEYOND NEW URBANISM**

**Question of the Day:** *Are there good alternatives to New Urbanism?*

**Required readings:**


- **Landscape Urbanism**

- **Sustainable Urbanism**

- **Tactical Urbanism**

- **Celebrating Congestion/Critical Urbanism**

**December TBA: FINAL EXAM in TBA**
(There will be a review session prior to this date)