

Fall 2017

School of Architecture
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

ARCH 558

Fundamentals of Place-Making

Units: 2

Instructor: Vinayak Bharne (bharne@usc.edu; 323-252-7145)

Location: TBD

Schedule: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment

This course is aimed to **expose graduate students in the Heritage Conservation discipline to the foundational ideas and basic skills of urban design and place-making.**

Specifically this course will overview some of the most dominant theories of urban design as well as their immersive relationship with various graphic means of representing a designed landscape and/or place.

Using the USC campus as study area, this course will teach students to read the built environment as a physical setting of identifiable elements each having specific dimensions and characteristics, and their combination into complex larger wholes.

Finally, this course will engage students in design exercises involving strategic thinking on what to preserve, what to change and what to introduce new and why.

The specific goals of this course are as follows:

- (1) Create awareness on various contemporary **positions and lenses for reading the built environment.**
- (2) Develop a basic understanding of the **physical components of the urban landscape and their dimensional characteristics** – from the scale of the region to that of a street.
- (3) Develop a basic understanding of **how to represent in two and three-dimensions**, the basic physical components of an urban landscape – from trees to building typologies – and how to depict them.
- (4) Engage in basic **place-making exercises** that analyze conditions towards proposing transformation and change.

COURSE STRUCTURE & TEACHING METHOD

The course will be structured around **weekly 30 minute powerpoint lectures** and **15 minute reading discussions** on various theories and positions, followed by **1 hour in-class exercises** on their related representation ideas.

There will be a **midterm, interim, and final review** for this course (details presented later in this syllabus).

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

At the beginning of the class, **the instructor will provide selected readings via Blackboard for the semester.**

GRADING

The grade breakdown will be as follows:

Mid Term Exam	30%
Interim Project review	20%
Final project	40%
Attendance and Class participation	10%

CLASS CALENDAR

Week 1: Course Overview & Expectations. Selection of Study Areas (from USC Campus)

Communicating Urbanism – Precedents & Practices

This introductory lecture will overview what effective urban design communication is all about, how various projects and audiences demand different presentation techniques, and what some of the exemplary ideas and cases are in this regard.

Week 2: The Anatomy of the City

This lecture will overview the various scales of city design – from the region to the street and their respective anatomies. It will also present an overview of the various basic dimensional conventions of the elements of the public realm. For instance a parking lot is around 60 feet in width; a tree is around 35 feet in diameter; a retail sidewalk is at least 12 feet wide etc.

Discussion on Reading – *Three Urbanisms & the Public Realm* by Doug Kelbaugh

In-class exercise – *Doing a freehand base drawing of your study area to a particular scale*

Week 3: Building Typology

This lecture will overview the taxonomy of basic building types, encouraging students to understand urban transformation beyond conventional abstract land-use depictions. It will elaborate on the dimensional conventions of these building types – from a typical single family house, to a mixed-use building with residential above street retail.

Discussion on Reading – *Explaining Residential Density* by John G. Ellis

In-class exercise – *Enhancing the drawing of your study area with landscape elements and details*

Week 4: The Nolli Plan & the Figure Field - Urban Morphology in Two Dimensions

The plan of Rome done by Giovanbattista Nolli circa 1748 – now famous as the 'Nolli Plan' – was a watershed moment in the history of city design communication. It created simultaneously a precise formal survey of the city, as well as a clear depiction of the intricate relationship between the public and private realm. It went on to chart the Figure Field method of depicting and analyzing the urban landscape as a formal web of solids and voids. This lecture will elaborate on the what, why and how of the Nolli Plan and the Figure Field.

Discussion on Reading – *Roman Interventions* by Michael Graves

In class exercise – *Drawing a Nolli Plan and Figure Field of your study area*

Week 5: From Ryakuchu Ryakugai to Gordon Cullen - The City as Pictorial Impression

Ryakuchu Ryakugai were sixteenth century mappings of Kyoto, the then capital of Japan, that unlike the morphological precision of the Nolli plan, were impressionist, pictorial depictions of place, people, events and rituals. In circa 1960, British artist and urbanist Gordon Cullen published his landmark book "Townscape," that also sought to capture British towns through sketches and depictions of public life. Though different in their technique and intent, both are unified in their prioritization of urban experience and life over form. This lecture will analyze the understanding of the city as a fluid rather than a static construct.

Discussion on Reading – *Townscape* by Gordon Cullen (Introduction, pp. 6-19)

In class exercise – *Drawing a sequential set of freehand sketches through your study area*

Week 6: Mid Term Assignment Submission & Presentation

Week 7: Kevin Lynch and the City as a Cognitive Map

In the mid-sixties, American sociologist Kevin Lynch wrote “The Image of the City,” an account of a research project carried out in three American cities. The project resulted in the evolution of the concept of legibility, based on five elements which, Lynch contends, people use unconsciously to organize their 'mental maps' of an urban area. The concepts of legibility have proved invaluable as an analytic and design tool. This lecture will discuss the ideas of the Image of the City that helped give rise to a new science of human perception and behavior in the city.

Discussion on Reading – *The Image of the City by Kevin Lynch (The City Image and its Elements, pp. 98-102)*

In class exercise – *Drawing a mental map of your study area*

Week 8: The Oregon Experiment – City Design as Multiple Scenarios

In the mid-seventies, American urbanist Christopher Alexander wrote “The Oregon Experiment”, outlining the six fundamental principles that guided his planning process for the University of Oregon campus. These principles are organic order, piecemeal growth (or continuous adaptation), patterns, diagnosis, participation, and coordination. These ideas challenged the notion of the frozen master plan, and went on to form the foundations of other books such as “A Pattern Language”, and “A Timeless Way of Building.” This lecture will use the Oregon Experiment to explain the difference between visioning versus strategic planning, and examine the virtues of incremental growth and urban catalysis.

Discussion on Reading – *The Timeless Way of Building by Christopher Alexander (Chapter 24: The Process of Repair, pp. 475-493)*

In class exercise – *Drawing a series of infill scenarios for your study area*

Week 9: Learning From Las Vegas – Mapping a City on its Own Terms

The 1972 book “Learning From Las Vegas” by American architect Robert Venturi et al created a healthy controversy on its appearance in 1972, calling for a greater reception to the tastes and values of "common" people and their expectations of cities – as seen through the lens of Las Vegas. More relevant to this course are its mappings of Las Vegas that sought to capture the sensations and personas of this city on its own terms through less formal and more semantic means. Formal precision was overlaid by analysis of signage, lighting and activity, encouraging one to understand the contemporary city as a case by case phenomenon rather than a generic physical construct.

Discussion on Reading – *Learning From Las Vegas by Robert Venturi et al (Part I, pp. 3-20)*

In class exercise – *Drawing a signage/navigation drawing of your study area*

Week 10: New Urbanism and its Representations

This establishment of the New Urbanism movement represents the crystallization of two generations of challenging the ideologies of the Modern movement, as well as revival of the traditional understanding of cities as shaped, figural and pedestrian-scaled artifacts. More relevant to this course are New Urbanism's concurrent revival of numerous traditional means of representing cities. This lecture will overview the fundamental ideas of the Charter of the New Urbanism (in comparison with its predecessor, the CIAM Charter,) and elaborate their representational propensities – from Regulating and Illustrative Plans to Form-Based Code and Perspective Renderings.

Discussion on Reading – *The CIAM Charter (pp. 6-10); Charter of the New Urbanism (full document – 4 pages)*

In-class exercise – *Drawing a New Urbanist Illustrative Plan of your study area showing one of your scenarios*

****Interim Project review submission due**

Week 11: Beyond Three-Dimensional Representation - Mapping the City in Flux

New media tools have expanded the mapping of the city beyond three dimensions into the fourth dimension of TIME. Time-lapse photography, and video images allow the city to be seen in real time rather than a constructed depiction. What are the merits and limitations of these techniques? Where are they most applicable? How does one create effective presentations with them?

Discussion on Reading – *Beyond Form: The City as Flux by Aseem Inam*
The Kinetic City as Ephemeral Urbanism by Rahul Mehrotra

In-class exercise – *Mapping people and activity in your study area*

Week 12: In-Class Visioning Exercise I

Discussion on Reading – *Whatever Happened to Urbanism by Rem Koolhaas*

In class exercise - All groups and proposals for various study areas will be brought together to examine their combined possibility and promise. We will together identify overlaps and conflicts and create a menu of edits and changes to be studied further.

Week 13: Thanksgiving Break; No Class

Week 14: In-Class Visioning Exercise II

No Lecture & Reading

In class exercise – *The combined study areas will be refined with edits and changes towards a bigger vision for the USC campus.*

Week 15: Pre-Final Review

No Lecture & Reading

In class exercise – *The draft master plan will be critiqued internally for a final time. Student teams will be assigned specific areas of the plan to detail and draw using common drawing techniques.*

FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE DURING ASSIGNED FINAL PERIOD. FINAL REVIEW WITH EXTERNAL JURY

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Midterm assignment

This will be a group assignment.

This assignment will focus on refining the first 4 in-class exercises in the form of refined presentation drawings. Each group will detail and polish the drawings of the 4 exercises with sufficient detail and further on-site observation. Students will present these drawings as Powerpoint slides and defend their observations and representations in front of an invited jury.

This assignment will be due Week 6

Interim Project Review

This will be an individual student submission

Each student will present a representation of their own choosing to represent their strongest work of the assignments so far. Students will receive critique and feedback on this submission specific to their own talents and skills.

Final assignment

This will also be a group assignment.

Each team will refine their specific study area proposal as an integral part of a larger master plan for the USC campus. Each team will demonstrate to the jury the changes they made to their previous versions after they were combined with the other study areas. Each team will also show how these decisions were made to ensure better synergy with the work of the other study areas.

The specific requirement of drawings per team is as follows:

1. A drawing of existing conditions of your study area with a scale
2. A colored site plan of your proposal to the same scale as # 1
3. 4 clarification diagrams showing various aspects of your proposal – for eg. Parking, Access, Open Space, Pedestrian Paths, Preserved Buildings etc.
4. A 3-d representation of your proposal – for eg. Massing Model, Freehand Sketch, Computer Rendering, Photo Montage etc.
5. A 500-word narrative on the main ideas of your proposal

The assignment will be presented as series of posters. Size to be determined in class.

This assignment will be presented during the final examination period and physically due that day as well.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION FORMAT & PROCEDURE

Midterm, Interim, and Final assignments each must be submitted as a SINGLE pdf file (no multiple sheets) 11 x 17 size landscape. There is no limit to page numbers.

They should be submitted via Blackboard. The Instructor discuss the submission procedure in the second week of class.

All assignments must be submitted latest by midnight on the noted date of submission. Late submissions will be penalized by 1 grade letter for every 24 hours of being late.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES (to be detailed with Publisher names, publication dates and page numbers)

Alexander Christopher, *The Timeless Way of Building*

Charter of the New Urbanism

CIAM Charter

Cullen Gordon, *The Concise Townscape*

Ellis John G., "Explaining Residential Density", *Places* 16:2

Graves Michael, "Roman Interventions", *Roma Interotta*, AD Profiles 20, pp.

Inam Aseem, "Beyond Form: The City as Flux", *Designing Urban Transformation*, Routledge, 2015, London

Kelbaugh Doug, "Three Urbanisms & the Public Realm", *Proceedings, 3rd International Space Syntax Symposium Atlanta*, 2001

Koolhaas Rem, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism"

Lynch Kevin, *The Image of the City*

Mehrotra Rahul, "The Kinetic City as Ephemeral Urbanism," *Ephemeral Urbanism: Cities in Constant Flux*

Venturi Robert et al, *Learning From Las Vegas*

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.