Graduate education in urban design is interdisciplinary in scope. It involves professional training in both design and planning and mastery of skills and knowledge from both fields. The work of an urban designer spans environments of many different scales: from designing small urban places, to regional large-scale projects. Urban design, however, does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it both impacts and is impacted by the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts in which it takes place. In addition, the scope of urban design can encompass processes shaped by public funds, policy, and works; and also projects privately funded. Thus, the urban designer must be intellectually dexterous: good in both analysis and synthesis; conversant in both urban theory and design practice; a life-long student of psychological, sociocultural, aesthetic, functional, and economic aspects of the built form.

The idea of this course in the Master of Planning Program is to teach students the fundamentals of design appreciation and production in the context of urban planning. The purpose is for the students to develop informed, conversant design skills—critical observation and thinking abilities to analyze current design patterns, and creative abilities to imagine and represent alternative design possibilities for improving the quality of urban space. These are essential competencies for a professional urban planner. This course is aimed at introducing some of these basic design skills in a variety of spatial conditions, based on case study analyses and fieldwork research and design of cases in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. We will pay particular attention to the design of Grand Ave. and its metropolitan plan.

OBJECTIVES

This course will be organized as a combination of discussions of readings/videos, group workshops, field research, group presentations, and guest participation. It has two sets of objectives—conceptual and operational.

At the conceptual level, the students are expected to:

a) develop the ability to critically observe and appreciate the physical form of diverse urban landscapes, noting the sociocultural, historical, and sensuous dimensions of built environments, and the enduring tension between the imperatives of public domain and that of private development and market economy;

b) engage in critical evaluation of historic, current, and emerging trends in urban and suburban design typologies; and
c) synthesize the information and evaluation of studied landscapes and produce design proposals for improvements.

At the operational level, the students are expected to acquire several professional skills, including:

a) competence in graphic and visual techniques of observation, analysis, representation, and design of urban space and form. This encompass languages, methods, instruments, and tools of physical urban planning and design including drawing, mapping, layout design, photography, video, computer programs, and the like;

c) competence in communication skills, especially visual and oral presentation of complex urban landscapes and design ideas; and
d) abilities for collective problem-solving, team work, and collaborative design.
METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

The class will meet every Wednesday from 2:00 to 5:30 p.m. About 1 hour will be devoted to discussions of reading assignments, guest presentations, and/or videos; and 1 hour to group presentations. After a 10-15-minute break, the remainder time (about 1 hour 15 minutes) will be devoted to hands-on studio work, computer work, and/or desk critiques. In the computer workshop, we will introduce the basics of Form Z and PhotoShop, and assist students in integrating these skills into their design skits.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are bi-weekly group assignments for this class, explained below (under group skits). There are also weekly individual assignments for this class, 10 in total, related to the preparation of approximately 300-400-word, graphically illustrated by hand, critical essays about design based on the week’s readings. Out of the 13 weeks in which critical essays are due, each student can select 10 weeks to turn in her critical essays—i.e., each student may opt to skip 3 weeks of her choice during the semester for turning essays in.

In addition, students are expected to:
- participate in discussions related to reading materials, lectures, and/or videos in all sessions.
- prepare in advance one or two questions/comments related to the readings of the week to spark class discussion.
- take turns to provide a five-minute summary of readings for the class.
- consult with the professor about their projects and report on their progress: I expect to see each student at least twice during office hours—one individually and one in group.
- perform field work for every project located in LA.
- work in groups effectively and respectfully.
- practice hand-drawing, computer-modeling, and photo-imaging, and apply these techniques to the skit projects.

Ideally, each working group should have access to at least one digital video/camera, one laptop computer, and funds for transportation expenses (gas, transit tickets, parking, etc.); digital expenses (copies, color copies, plotter printouts, tapes, batteries, film, film development, memory sticks or CDs, etc.); and graphic materials (boards, color crayons, markers, paper, pencils, etc.).

Attendance is mandatory and there will be no make up work for absences.

Grade Breakdown

1. Skits (5/group) 10%/each= 50%
2. Midterm presentation 10%
3. Final presentation 15%
4. Critical essays 10%
5. Participation and group work attitude 5%
6. Form Z/Photoshop work 10%
TOTAL: 100%

A percentage of the group project grades is assigned on an individual basis based on peer and instructor assessments.

GROUP SKITS

There are bi-weekly group assignments for this class, 5 in total. Most skits are directly linked to particular spatial typologies and field opportunities encountered in the region of Los Angeles. We will call them skits (“a short serious dramatic piece; esp: one done by amateurs”, Franklin
The skits will be performed in GROUPS 1 & 2nd will involve visual documentation, design analysis, and design proposal(s) of a selected site in the region of Los Angeles. Each group will prepare a PowerPoint (or board presentation of 3 to 4 boards) in response to each skit with the following content in graphic form:

- Intro slides (or 1 or 2 boards) with the information of the site: plans, sections, facades, perspectives, free-hand drawings, photographs or whatever media convey your observations of the physical, sociocultural, historical, and sensuous dimensions of the environments, and of the group’s field work.
- Slides (or 1 or 2 boards) engaging in critical evaluation of existing design and development in the site; and
- Slides (or 1 or 2 boards) presenting specific design proposals for improvements. Students should practice and apply free-hand drawing, computer modeling, and photo-imaging techniques to the skit projects.

**Office Hours:** Weekly office hours will be held on Wednesdays from 10:00 to 12:00 am at RGL 226. Please email me at irazabal@usc.edu in advance to ask for a 15-minute appointment. Available time slots will be assigned on a “first-come, first-serve” basis. If you absolutely cannot make it during office hours, we can arrange for an alternative time by email. For other inquiries, also send email.

The TA is Vivek Munipalle. You may contact him at munipall@usc.edu.

**TEXTS**

**Requested**

**Recommended** (among many others)

**Disability Services and Programs Statement:** Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Wednesday, August 24
Introduction/ Course syllabus, assignments, and requirements.

Week 2. Wednesday, August 31
Guest speaker: Johanna Blakely, The Norman Learn Center at USC.
Read all the material on Grand Avenue development at www.grandintervention.org (a complete repository of information on the Grand Avenue development) and whatever else on the topic.
Presentation of Huntington Park Project.
Video #1: The social life of small urban spaces.
Critical essay 1 due.

Week 3. Wednesday, September 7
Video #2: The social life of small urban spaces.
Contextual issues in urban design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 1.6, 8.1, 8.5, and 5.9.
Critical essay 2 due.
**Skit 1 due, GROUPS 1 & 2:** Presentation of design analysis of and proposal for a major, renown public public space in LA: Pershing Square, WaterCourt Plaza, Broadway Ave., 3rd St. Promenade, or other LA park/plaza/boulevard.

Week 4. Wednesday, September 14
Case studies in urban design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 2.12, 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4.
Critical essay 3 due.
**Skit 1 due, GROUPS 3 & 4:** Presentation of design analysis of and proposal for a major, renown public public space in LA: Pershing Square, WaterCourt Plaza, Broadway Ave., 3rd St. Promenade, or other LA park/plaza/boulevard.

Week 5. Wednesday, September 21
Representation, visualization, and visioning in urban design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 5.2.
Critical essay 4 due.
**Skit 2 due, GROUPS 1 & 2:** Design analysis and proposal for a public space around a public landmark on Grand Ave.: The LA Civic center, Disney Music Hall, LA’s Cathedral, LA’s Musuem of Contemporary Art, or other.

Week 6. Wednesday, September 28
Urban plazas and streets. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 5.7, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8.
Critical essay 5 due.
**Skit 2 due, GROUPS 3 & 4:** Design analysis and proposal for a public space around a public landmark on Grand Ave.: The LA Civic center, Disney Music Hall, LA’s Cathedral, LA’s Musuem of Contemporary Art, or other.

Week 7. Wednesday, October 5
Basic elements of urban space and life. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 2.9, 2.10, 3.1, and 3.9.
Critical essay 6 due.
**MIDTERM Assignment due, GROUPS 1 & 2:** Board presentation summarizing and reflecting on the two projects analyzed; or selecting one project to refocus on more deeply.

Week 8. Wednesday, October 12
Community outdoor spaces. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 6.2, 6.9, and 6.10.
Critical essay 7 due.
MIDTERM Assignment due, GROUPS 3 & 4: Board presentation summarizing and reflecting on the two projects analyzed; or selecting one project to refocus on more deeply.

Week 9. Wednesday, October 19
New Urbanism and Transit-Oriented Development. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 1.5, 5.8, 5.11, and 3.10.
Critical essay 8 due.
Skit 3 due, GROUPS 1 & 2: Presentation of design analysis of and proposal for a major, renown public space (node: park or plaza) outside LA: NY’s Rockefeller Center, Paris’ Champs-Elysées, Rome’s Piazza Navona, Mexico’s Zócalo, etc.
MIDTERM Assignment due, GROUPS 3 & 4: Form Z/Photoshop exercise.

Week 10. Wednesday, October 26
Classic texts in urban design I. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5.
Critical essay 9 due.
Skit 3 due, GROUPS 3 & 4: Presentation of design analysis of and proposal for a major, renown public space (node: park or plaza) outside LA: NY’s Rockefeller Center, Paris’ Champs-Elysées, Rome’s Piazza Navona, Mexico’s Zócalo, etc.
MIDTERM Assignment due, GROUPS 1 & 2: Form Z/Photoshop exercise.

Week 11. Wednesday, November 2
Classic texts in urban design II. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, and 3.6.
Critical essay 10 due.
Skit 4 due, GROUPS 1 & 2: First approximation to the critical spatial analysis and design of the new downtown civic park at Grand Avenue.

Week 12. Wednesday, November 9
Theories and practices of urban design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 3.3, 3.8, 4.5, and 5.10.
Critical essay 11 due.
Skit 4 due, GROUPS 3 & 4: First approximation to the critical spatial analysis and design of the new downtown civic park at Grand Avenue.

Week 13. Wednesday, November 16
Sustainable urban design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, and 7.4.
Critical essay 12 due.
Skit 5 due, GROUPS 1 & 2: Second approximation to the critical spatial analysis and design of the new downtown civic park at Grand Avenue.

Week 14. Wednesday, November 23—Day before Thanksgiving, mandatory attendance.
Community engagement in design. Discuss Watson et al., Chapters 7.6, 4.10, and 4.11.
FINAL Critical essay 13 due.
Skit 5 due, GROUPS 3 & 4: Second approximation to the critical spatial analysis and design of the new downtown civic park at Grand Avenue.

Week 15. Wednesday, November 30
FORM Z/Photopshop Lab.
Please bring materials to work on your projects in the computer lab. Attendance mandatory.

Week 16. Friday, December 9, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Final Group Presentations due, GROUPS 1 & 2 and B: Group board presentations of design analysis of and proposals for the new downtown civic park at Grand Avenue plus individual Form Z/PhotoShop board presentations.
Deadline for submissions to the design competition of the Grand Avenue Park.
Disability Services and Programs

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open early 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

"Students, faculty, and administrative officials at the University of Southern California, as members of the academic community fulfill a purpose and a responsibility.

The University must, therefore, provide an optimal learning environment, and all members of the University community have a responsibility to provide and maintain an atmosphere of free inquiry and expression. The relationship of the individual to this community involves these principles: Each member has an obligation to respect:

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF OTHERS
2. THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS BASED UPON THE NATURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
3. THE RIGHTS OF THE INSTITUTION

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The following statements and examples explain specific acts of academic dishonesty.

1. Examination Behavior: Any use of external assistance during an exam is considered academically dishonest unless expressly permitted.
   a. Communicating in any way with another student during the examination.
   b. Copying material from another student's exam.
   c. Using unauthorized notes, calculators or other devices.

2. Fabrication: Any intentional falsification or invention of data or citation in an academic exercise will be considered a violation of academic integrity.
   a. Inventing or altering data for a laboratory experiment or field project.
   b. Resubmitting returned and corrected academic work under the pretense of grader evaluation error, when, in fact, the work has been altered from its original state.

3. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the theft and subsequent passing off of another's ideas or words as one's own. If the words or ideas of another are used, acknowledgement of the original source must be made through recognized referencing practice.
   a. Direct Quotation: Any use of a direct quotation should be acknowledged by footnote citation and by either quotation marks or appropriate indentation and spacing.
   b. Paraphrase: If another's ideas are borrowed in whole or in part and are merely recast in the student's own words, proper acknowledgement must, nonetheless, be made. A footnote or proper internal citation must follow the paraphrase material.

4. Other Types of Academic Dishonesty:
   a. Submitting a paper written by another;
   b. Using a paper or essay in more than one class without the instructor's express permission;
   c. Obtaining an advance exam copy without the knowledge or consent of the instructor;
   d. Changing academic records outside of normal procedures;
   e. Using another person to complete homework assignment or take-home exam without the knowledge and consent of the instructor.

The above information is taken directly from the SCampus and the Academic Affairs Unit of the Student Senate in conjunction with the Academic Standards Committee.
### APPENDIX A: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY SANCTION GUIDELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIOLATION</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED SANCTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copying answers from other students on exam.</td>
<td>F for course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One person allowing another to cheat from his/her exam or assignment.</td>
<td>F for course for both persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessing or using extra material during exam (crib sheets, notes, books, etc.)</td>
<td>F for course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to write after exam has ended.</td>
<td>F or zero on exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking exam from room and later claiming that the instructor lost it.</td>
<td>F for course and recommendation for further disciplinary action (possible suspension).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing answers after exam has been returned.</td>
<td>F for course and recommendation for disciplinary action (possible suspension).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraudulent possession of exam prior administration.</td>
<td>F for course and recommendation for suspension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining a copy of an exam or answer key prior to administration.</td>
<td>Suspension or expulsion from the University; F for course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having someone else take an exam for oneself.</td>
<td>Suspension or expulsion from the University for both students; F for course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism.</td>
<td>F for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of purchased term papers or papers done by others.</td>
<td>F for the course and recommendation for further disciplinary action. (possible suspension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of the same term papers to more than one instructor where no previous approval has been given.</td>
<td>F for both course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment.</td>
<td>F for the course for both students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falsification of information in admission application (including supporting documentation).</td>
<td>Revocation of university admission without opportunity to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentary falsification (e.g., petitions and supporting materials medical documentation).</td>
<td>Suspension or expulsion from the university; F for course when related to a specific course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism in a graduate thesis or dissertation.</td>
<td>Expulsion from the university when discovered prior to graduation; revocation of degree when discovered subsequent to graduation.</td>
</tr>
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Please refer to *Trojan Integrity: A Faculty Desk Reference*, for more information on assessing sanctions. You may also consult with members of the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards at any point in the process, (213) 740-6666.

Note: The Student Conduct Code provides that graduate students who are found responsible for academic integrity violations may be sanctioned more severely than Appendix A suggests.