

ARCH 684 (001) Fall Term 2010

ARCH 684 (001): Urban Revitalization and Design
Fall 2010: ARC 2026

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In Canada and the USA, there are limited available resources and research to respond appropriately to significant physical and urban change. There are new priorities established by governments at all levels to limit sprawl, intensify urban development and improve environmental performance of cities. Initiatives in urban form and environmental performance are inextricably linked to enhanced urban design and cultural planning. A reassessment of efforts is critically needed to improve aesthetic quality, architecture, and design diversity in urban areas.

Although the Province of Ontario has implemented its Places to Grow strategy, little is known about how this will affect the design and planning of cities. There is a need for Architects to explore physical and aesthetic impacts that will occur as growth-limiting strategies begin to influence or come into conflict with the forces of development. Urban sprawl is commonplace because of low-density planning and decentralized development that occupies former natural and agricultural areas. It results in the fragmentation of existing natural areas, and concentration of pollutants, especially in former industrial lands (i.e. brownfield and greyfield sites), and downtown decline. These consequences require design interventions of physical (i.e. built), environments to help restore the visual environment. The quality of the urban environment needs to be improved if these initiatives are combined with enforcement of true greenbelts, urban art trails, greening principles, design, and landscape-scale planning.

This course will discuss issues/challenges faced by cities (from downtown revitalization to suburbanization). Research has shown that their physical environments will fare better if such cities are designed, planned, and modeled in collaboration with professional (i.e. architects and urban designers) and community. Students will investigate how design projects improve the quality of life of cities (i.e. creative city concept). Together, we will focus on identifying opportunities for innovative collaborations and tangible improvements to the design of urban environments. The school is especially interested in strengthening collaboration among universities, community residents, planning and design practitioners, and policy-makers to seize their own destiny to design, model, and plan. Accordingly, we will investigate thematic (e.g. urban revitalization, design/aesthetics, environmental/greening, public spaces, and suburbia) and policy-oriented areas (e.g. urban design guidelines, new urbanism, intensification, and land-use development patterns) that relate to cities. This course is also interested in integrating students' thesis work/research into class discussion, readings, and projects of this course. It is a seminar-based course and student participant is key to its success.

TEXT:

There is no required textbook. Supplementary readings will be provided for each session. These readings will be available either electronically or on reserve at the Musagetes Library.

TEACHING PHILISOPHY:

The readings and their subsequent discussions form the foundation of the course. Substantial student preparation is imperative due to the nature of the course. Student questions and interaction with the instructors form the basis for teaching this course are strongly encouraged. It is this combination of questions and subsequent discussions that bring significant richness and vitality to the course. It is expected that students will seek further academic inquiry beyond the classroom. This includes completing class readings, researching at the library, working in groups, and consulting with the instructors.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this course is to provide students with a foundation to the processes that shape cities and influence urban revitalization/design. Emphasis is placed on raising questions about cities with respect to the social, cultural, economic, political, and physical (design) dimensions. This course will familiarize students with historical and contemporary urban issues. It aims to help students think through and identify urban issues through research, design, writing, and presentation.

After completing this course, students will:

- Understand the concepts and principles of urban revitalization
- Be able to interpret and explain challenges and opportunities faced by cities
- Understand what factors set cities apart from either larger metropolitan areas or rural communities
- Have greater awareness of the structure of cities
- Be able to identify and assess the importance of major social, political, and economic forces that shape cities

EVALUATION:

As part of the project, students will work in teams to undertake a case study/community profile of a particular mid-size city. They will propose a design review process and design intervention(s) to help improve/deal with a particular urban development challenge(s) that they identified in their respective case study. The final component will involve an installation based on the design intervention that will be publicly displayed in business windows throughout the Galt downtown.

35% Group Assignment 1: Case Studies and Design Review (Due: October 25, 2010)

35% Group Assignment 2: Proposed Design Interventions: (Due: November 29, 2010)

30% Group Installation: Unsilent Night Installation (Due: December 21, 2010)

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 (September 13) - Documentary Film: Radiant City

In this session, we will first review the course outline with respect to seminar discussions, student projects, and overall expectations of the course. A movie will be shown to illustrate challenges faced by cities and revitalization attempts implemented to help mitigate the socioeconomic, cultural, physical, and political challenges.

Radiant City:

Something's happening on the edge of town. Sprawl is eating the planet. Across the continent the landscape is being leveled - blasted clean of distinctive features and overlaid with zombie monoculture. Politicians call it growth. Developers call it business. The Moss family calls it home. While Evan Moss zones out in commuter traffic, Ann boils over in her dream kitchen and

the kids play sinister games amidst the fresh foundations of monster houses. A chorus of cultural prophets provides insight on the spectacle. James Howard Kunstler, author of The Geography of Nowhere, rails against the brutalizing aesthetic of strip malls. Philosopher Joseph Heath fears the soul-eating suburbs but admits they offer good value for money and urban planner Beverly Sandalack dares to ask, "Why can't we walk anywhere anymore"?

Week 2 (September 20) - Historical Review of Urban Revitalization

We will discuss the history of urban renewal and revitalization in Canada and the United States. It will consider - as a focus - downtowns and the issues they have with decline. Through an examination of the last 50 years (1950 to present), trends will be discussed that influence the success and failed attempts to revitalize cities from notable architects.

Readings:

Artibise, Alan and John Meligrana. 2001. Downtown Revitalization Research Trends and Findings. Public Policy Research Centre, University of Missouri: St. Louis, MI.

Florida, Richard. 2003. Cities and the Creative Class. *City & Community* 2:1: 3-19.

Nelson, Arthur. 2004. Urban Containment and Central City Revitalization. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70 (4): 411-425.

Rappaport, Jordan. 2003. U.S. Urban Decline and Growth. *Economic Review* (Third Quarter) pp.15-44.

Weissbourd, Robert. 2003. The Changing Dynamics of Urban America. RW Ventures.

Wyly, E. K., N. J. Glickman, and M. L. Lahr. 1998. A top 10 list of things to know about American cities. *Cityscape* 3: 7-32.

Week 3 (September 27) - Urban Revitalization Strategies and Design Review Process

Strategies to urban revitalization will be discussed (as they relate historically) through the following components: multi-functionality and pedestrian-based activity, shifts in economic/demographics, intra-urban factors, adaptive reuse, and local amenities. Strategies will be focus primarily to the downtown where the bulk of urban revitalization has occurred.

Readings:

Birch, Eugenie. 2002. Having a longer view on downtown living. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 68:1, pp 5-21.

Leinberger, Christopher. 2005. Turning Around Downtown. Twelve Steps to Revitalization. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Robertson, Kent. 1997. Downtown retail revitalization: A review of the American development strategies. *Planning Perspectives* 12: 383-401.

Robertson, Kent, Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 61:2.

Week 4 (October 4) - Urban Design Interventions

This session will look at how design plays an important role in the success (and not so successful) of downtown revitalization. From main-street approaches to pedestrian-based activity, these interventions will be examined.

Readings:

Clark, Terry *et al.* 2002. Amenities drive urban growth. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24:5: 493-516.

Jabareen, Yosef R. 2006. Sustainable Urban Forms Their Typologies, Models, and Concepts. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (26), pp. 38-52

Turner, Robyne. 2002. The Politics of Design and Development in the Postmodern Downtown. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24:5, pp. 533-548.

Newman, Oscar. 1995. Defensible space - A new physical planning tool for urban revitalization. *Journal of the American Planning Association* (61) 2, pp. 149-155.

Week 5 (October 18) - Public Places/Creative Spaces

Within the urban fabric, public space is considered the “glue” that binds various connections to, through, and within buildings and their related infrastructure. These spaces/places offer opportunities of exploration, exploitation, and expression. In this session, we will explore the significance, opportunities, and challenges associated with the design and use of such public spaces.

Readings: TBA.

**Week 6 (October 25) – Role of Institutions in Downtown Revitalization
Group Assignment 1 Presentations - Case Study and Urban Design Review**

In this session, we will review of role of institutions to downtowns and their contributions (both good and bad) to the social, economic, and cultural parameters of urban centres. Specifically, we will focus on universities and have become key players and collaborators to the design and planning of downtowns.

Readings: TBA.

*****Group Assignment #1 Due*****

Week 7 (November 1) - Suburbia

In this session, we will explore the phenomenon of the suburbs and look at its growth and subsequent challenges associated with city development. We will also explore the social, physical, and cultural condition of this type of development. We will review design approaches and theories associated with suburban development. In addition, a documentary film will be also shown to illustrate the rise and fall of suburbia within larger urban areas.

Documentary: *Lost in the Suburbs*

The dream of owning a suburban home has come true for many but at what price? The Nature of Things examines the social, economic and environmental implications of sprawl - low-density development that spreads out from the edge of cities and towns and consumes farmland, forest and wetlands. It is often poorly planned, land-consumptive and automobile oriented, such as residential subdivisions, which by virtue of their dependence on cars, greatly contributes to environmental degradation. Are cities designing their own doom as they consume the valuable farmland that feeds them?

Readings:

Dunham-Jones, Ellen and June Williamson (eds). 2009. Chapter 2: Retrofitting Garden Apartments and Residential Subdivisions to Address Density and the New Demographics. *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*. John Wiley and Sons Inc.: Hoboken, N.J., pp. 15-43.

Lukez, Paul. 2007. The Development of Identity. *Suburban Transformations*. Princeton Architectural Press, New York, N.Y., pp. 10-21.

Week 8 (November 8) - The Mid-Size City

This session will discuss the structure of the mid-size city and what sets them apart from their larger urban counterparts. Dispersed urban form, sense of place, and downtown decline will form the main tenants of the discussion.

Readings:

Fulton, William. 2002. The Mid-size City: Exploring Its Unique Place in Urban Policy. A Summary of the Rochester Conversation on Mid-Size Cities. City of Rochester, New York.

Kotkin, Joel. 2003. The Rise of the Mid-Size City. *Washington Post*.

Pierre, F and T. Bunting (eds). 2006. Understanding Twenty-First Century Urban Structure: Sustainability, Unevenness and Uncertainty. *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local Through Global Perspective (3rd Edition)*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario, pp1-23.

Uchitelle, Louis. 1999. Now, Midsize Is Beautiful; Cincinnati Exemplifies the Cities Driving the U.S. Economy. *Boston Gazette*.

Week 9 (November 15) - Urban Revitalization Strategies for Mid-size Cities

This session will focus on the urban revitalization strategies within the context of cities. It will discuss the distinctive attributes that lead to successful revitalization attempts (both physical and functional).

Readings:

Ferguson, Gary. 2005. *Characteristics of successful downtowns: Shared attributes of outstanding small and mid-sized downtowns*. Ithaca Downtown Partnership, Cornell University Civic Fellows Programs.

Filion, Pierre, Heidi Hoernig, Trudi Bunting, and Gary Sands. 2004. The Successful Few: Healthy Downtowns of Small Metropolitan Regions. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, (70) 3, pp. 328-343.

Robertson, Kent. 1999. Can small-city downtowns remain viable?: A national study of development issues and strategies. *Journal of the American Planning Association*; (65) 3, pp. 270-283.

Wells, Barbara. 2003. Downtown Revitalization in Urban Neighbourhoods and Small Cities.

Week 10 (November 22) - Review of Course

A course review will be provided that will highlight main themes, strategies, and discussions from both the seminar and text.

Week 11 – (November 29) Presentations for Assignment 2: Group Design Intervention Proposals/Presentations

Guest Critics: TBA

*****Group Assignment # 2 Due*****

Week 12 – (December 6) Group Installation for Downtown

*****completed by December 21, 2010 *****

Other Resources:

Alan and Benjamin Forman. 2002. *Living on the Edge: Decentralization within cities in the 1990s*. Washington D.C. The Brookings Institution, pp.1-18.

Breen, Ann and Dick Rigsby. 2004. *Intown Living: A Different American Dream*. Westport Conn.: Praeger. (Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-40).

Frieden, Bernard and Lynne Sagalyn. 1989. *Downtown Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press (Chapter 6, pp 107-131).

Garvin, A. 2003. *The American City: What Works and What Doesn't*. Chapter 7, pp 177-195.

Grantz, R. 1998. *Cities Back from the Edge*, Chap 5, pp. 113-137.

Grogan, Paul and Tony Proscio. 2000. *Comeback Cities: A Blueprint for Urban Neighborhood Revival*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press (Chapters 2 and 3, pp 30-61).

Lagerfeld, S., (1995) "[What Main Street Can Learn from the Mall](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/95nov/malls/malls.htm)" in Atlantic On-Line.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/95nov/malls/malls.htm>.

Lennard, S and H. Lennard. 1995. *Livable Cities Observed*. Chapter 2 and 3. pp. 25-66.

THE FINE PRINT:

Avoidance of Academic Offenses

Academic Integrity:

To create and promote a culture of academic integrity, the behaviour of all members of the University of Waterloo is based on honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Graduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Appeals:

A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Note for students with disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. Once registered with OPD, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during my office hours to discuss your needs.

Group Assignments: Case Study, Design Intervention, and Installation**Overview:**

Architects today operate in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment - projects are often fraught with contradictory demands and conflicting values. As issues around the nature of the built environment increase in importance, architects must be willing and able to take on leadership roles within society. In addition to possessing strong technical skills, architects today must be strong, independent, critical thinkers, who nonetheless are comfortable acting in an increasingly collaborative industry.

This project demands a rigorous program of research and analysis, challenging students to think beyond the traditional role of the architect. They need to consider innovative solutions that may reside outside the confines of conventional architectural practice. Students will be required to consider the role of the architect and architectural practice in society from a variety of perspectives, including those of researcher, observer, collaborator, and critic. These perspectives will be applied through an urban revitalization/design intervention for a mid-size city (pop between 50,000 to 500,000).

Objectives:

This project seeks to provide students with opportunities to:

1. Develop research skills; collect, analyse and synthesise information from multiple sources.
2. Establish a clear understanding of physical, socioeconomic, and cultural context.
3. Develop and exercise critical, moral and ethical judgment; identify problems; establish priorities.
4. Propose, analyse and select from among alternative solutions.
5. Develop strategies that reflect state-of-the art sustainable and technological practices.
6. Develop team-building and time management skills; work successfully in a collaborative environment; develop leadership skills.

7. Develop design, presentation and communication skills – visual, verbal and written – consistent with the standards of graduate school and of professional practice.

Defining the Project:

Students will work as a group and conduct a detailed research investigation. They will develop a comprehensive community profile and through such investigations, students will identify opportunities and challenges affecting urban revitalization. They also will propose a design review process that will support various revitalization schemes.

Group Projects:

The course is designed to simulate the workings of a professional practice; as such, students will work collaboratively together. Students are to develop proposals based on collaborative research, analysis and synthesis of information obtained from a variety of sources.

Assignment One: (Case Studies and Design Review Process - 35%)

Due: October 25, 2010

Students are to conduct detailed research and analysis of Owen Sound, Ontario) identifying problems and opportunities and propose appropriate responses. As a point of departure, a variety of socioeconomic, physical, and cultural phenomena are to be examined. Detailed analysis of the issues impacting on the location includes, but is not limited to:

- General Context: geographic location; political jurisdictions (Official Plan, Zoning, other policy).
- Physical Data: geology and soil; water availability/watershed conditions; topography; climate; natural environment (regional/local) – flora and fauna etc.; built environment – buildings, infrastructure; local environmental impacts (air/water/soil etc.); sensory phenomena – views, noise, odour etc.
- Cultural Data; population and demographics; income and education statistics; industry and employment factors; institutional presence (or lack thereof); social service profile; nature and character of community; history of the community; meaning and image of community; community goals/initiatives/plans for the future.

Taking this information, students will also undertake a design review process whereby a number of **design criteria** will be proposed.

Assignment Two: (Proposed Design Intervention – 35%)

Due: November 29, 2010

Understanding the challenges faced in Owen Sound and the design criteria proposed from Assignment #1, students will design a revitalization intervention for the city's core area. Each intervention is to consider how it not only addresses that particular issue but also how it meets the urban revitalization considerations for mid-size cities. In each instance, students are directed to consider the role of the architect in urban revitalization. *Critics will be invited to these presentations.*

Assignment Three: (Group Installation: Unslient Night – 30%)

Due: December 21, 2010

Public Space and event planning are both integral components to urban revitalization. Students will participate in Unslient Night to demonstrate, showcase, and remind residents about the importance of public space to the urban fabric. A \$4,000 budget has been set aside to help students cover expenses of installation materials.