

## ARCH 622 - Winter Term 2011

ARCH 622: Urban Revitalization and Design

Winter 2011: ARC 2026

Date/Time: Mondays - 1:00-3:50 pm

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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 design and revitalization
- Interpret and explain challenges and opportunities faced by cities
- Understand what factors set cities apart from either larger metropolitan areas or rural communities
- Identify and assess the importance of major social, political, physical (design) and economic forces that shape cities; and
- Have greater awareness and appreciation of the structure of cities and their respective urban fabric.

## **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.

**30%** Group Assignment 1: Case Studies and Design Review (Due: February 14, 2011)

**30%** Group Assignment 2: Proposed Design Interventions: (Due: March 14, 2011)

**30%** Individual Assignment 3: Creative Journal (April 4, 2011)

**10%** Participation

## **A. Group Assignments**

### **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 urban revitalization/design interventions for the three core areas of Cambridge Ontario (Galt City Centre, Preston Towne Centre, and Hespeler Village).

### **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.

### ***Assignment One: (Case Studies and Design Review Process - 30%)*** **Due: February 14, 2011**

Students are to conduct detailed research and analysis of Cambridge, 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 – 30%)*** **Due: March 14, 2011**

Understanding the challenges faced in cities and the design criteria proposed from Assignment #1, students will design revitalization interventions of main street areas within the city core areas of Preston, Hespeler, and Galt.

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: The Creative Term Project (30%): An Urban Visual Journal*** **Due: April 4, 2011**

This project is a creative opportunity to describe interaction and reaction to our urban environment. Each student will produce an urban visual journal and use it as an alternative form of expressing ideas – insert photographs, colour, images, concept maps, link ideas with words to pictures. You should keep materials that pertain to your personal growth/reactions to the course as well as to cities that you have visited/lived such as photographs, objects, information (media outlets), and ideas. The visual journal is similar to, yet different from, a sketchbook. It is kept as a type of

journal, the content showing visual thinking in a variety of forms: drawings, sketches, collages, photographs, graphics and personally meaningful symbols. Words invariably become an important part of the visual journal, as they describe and support depictions, become graphic devices and aid reflection on personal themes and metaphors.

## **SCHEDULE:**

**January 10, 2011**

### **Historical Review of Urban Revitalization and Urban Design Precedents**

This session will explore the signature movements and monuments in urban design and city making from the Renaissance to early 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism. From this examination, we will begin to not only understand how these concepts not only became precedents for current land-use policies and urban design practice but have remained examples of living history as well. We will also 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 both the success and failed attempts to revitalize cities.

#### *Readings:*

"Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns". Frederick Law Olmstead

"The Garden City Idea and Modern Planning". Lewis Mumford

"The Neighbourhood Unit". Clarence Perry

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

**January 17, 2011**

### **Design Charette**

You will participate in a design charette hosted by Brook McIlroy /PACE Architects for Main Street of Galt City Centre. This exercise will help inform some parameters and design options/interventions that you can consider for both Assignment #1 and #2.

**January 24, 2011**

### **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?"*

**January 31, 2011**

### **Urban Design and Revitalization Interventions**

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. Interventions will focus primarily to the downtown where the bulk of urban revitalization has occurred.

We will also 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 (put on library reserve):*

- 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. 1999. "Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States". *Journal of the American Planning Association* 61:2.  
 Jabareen, Yosef. 2006. "Sustainable Urban Forms Their Typologies, Models, and Concepts". *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (26), pp. 38-52

**February 7, 2011**

**Normative Theories for Good City Form**

This session will look at criticisms of modern planning and design from the late 1950s to present. It will illustrate the normative design theories voiced throughout this time with respect to the values, actions, and beliefs that help us inform our decision-making to how cities "ought to be" designed.

*Readings:*

- "The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact". Jane Jacobs  
 "Toward a Urban Design Manifesto". Allan B. Jacobs and Donald Appleyard

**February 14, 2011**

**Place Theories in Urban Design**

Looking at the concept of place, we can begin to understand and appreciate why it is important in contemporary urban design practice and teaching. Place is viewed as physical space that is associated with social and personal meaning.

*Readings:*

- "Prospect for Places". Edward Relph  
 "The Phenomenon of Place". Christian Norberg-Schultz  
 "The Problem of Place in America". Ray Oldenburg

**\*\*\*Group Presentation and Assignment #1 (Case Study and Urban Design Review) is due today\*\*\***

**February 21, 2011**

**Reading Week (no class)**

**February 28, 2011**

**Dimensions of Place-Making**

We will explore the approaches to place-making and what are the prescriptions in providing meaningful strategies for creating quality in urban design as they relate to legibility, image-ability, orientation, and experimental movement understanding the built environment. We will also explore post-modern trends in urban design and city-making and its unintended consequence.

*Readings:*

- "The Image of the Environment" and "The City Image and Its Elements". Kevin Lynch  
 "Critical Regionalism: An Architecture of Place". Douglas S. Kelbaugh  
 "Place Memory and Urban Preservation". Dolores Hayden  
 "Themes of Postmodern Urbanism". Nan Ellin

### **March 7, 2011**

#### **Contemporary Challenges and Responses**

We will look at concerns of urban sprawl, higher density development, growth management, sustainability, and compact design as a result of pollution, resource depletion and auto-dependent urbanism. New urbanism, everyday urbanism, smart growth, and other trends in neo-traditional urban design will be reviewed. A documentary film, called "Requiem for Detroit" (2010) will illustrate the challenges that one post-industrial city is experiencing with respect to the rise and fall of automobile production.

##### *Readings:*

"What is Sprawl?" Oliver Gillham

"Charter of the New Urbanism". Congress of New Urbanism

"Compact, Decentralised or What? The Sustainable City Debate". Hildebrand Frey

##### **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?

### **March 14, 2011**

#### **Elements of the Public Realm**

Physical elements of urban public realm and approaches to their design will be discussed in this session. We will look not only of the design elements of various places, but understand ways of making places and spaces more sociable, active, and enjoyable places in the city.

##### *Readings:*

"The Life of Plazas", "Sitting Space", and "Sun, Wind, Trees, and Water". William Whyte

"Three Types of Outdoor Activities and "Life Between Buildings. Jan Gehl

"Getting Around". David Sucher

**\*\*\*Group Presentations and Assignment 2: Urban Design Intervention Proposals is due\*\*\***

### **March 21, 2011**

#### **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.

### **March 28, 2011**

#### **Practice and Process**

Urban Design intensions require knowledge, skill, and savvy. Healthy pragmatism remains true to inspirational visions that Architects must capture, tame, and develop. What do Architect need to know with respect to professional activity, responsibility, and skills/tools if interested in pursuing a career in urban design.

##### *Readings:*

"A Catholic Approach to Organizing What Urban Designer Should Know". Anne Vernex Moudon

"Urban Design as a Discipline and as a Profession". Jon Lang

"The Communication Process" Matthew Carmona, et al.

"Design Guidelines in American Cities: Conclusions". John Punter

### **April 4, 2011**

#### **Course Overview/ Class Presentation (Last Day of Lectures)**

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

**\*\*\*Assignment #3 – Creative Journal is Due Today\*\*\***

## **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.