Honors People and Place I

Part One of a Two-Semester Set of Honors Courses in Architecture and Urban Planning

Syllabus

URBPL 3101
Day/Time: T & Th 2:00-3:20
Room: Arch 227

General Education/Bachelor Degree Credit:
- Honors
- Humanities
- Service Learning
- Social & Behavioral Science

Major/Pre-Major Credit:
- Urban Planning:
  - URBPL 3101: People & Place I (this semester) counts in place of URBPL 3100
  - ARCH 2615: People & Place II (spring semester) counts as an elective (type A)
- Pre-Architecture: People & Place II (spring semester) counts in place of ARCH 1615

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People & Place is a two-semester introduction to architecture and urban planning, co-taught by members of the architecture and planning faculty. The courses weave together the two disciplines through the use of theories and methods based in the humanities and the social sciences. In addition to attending lectures on a variety of urban-based theories, students also work on a series of community development service-learning projects directed by practicing architects, planners, and other community professionals. The objective is to make direct field applications of theories and methods important to a variety of community based disciplines. The course is open to all students with a cumulative 3.5 GPA or better. Students are expected to register for both fall and spring semesters.

Introduction:
The disciplines of architecture and planning are inherent to the social, built, natural, and economic environments that underlie our communities and that touch us as individuals. Yet, few people in our culture are aware of their impact; fewer still could articulate general principles that govern decisions regarding the design of our cities, homes, commercial and civic structures, and public open spaces. This lack of design literacy is at the core of many of the urban dysfunctions we observe in our communities. How can architecture and planning go beyond being topics of interest to pointy headed
intellectuals who wear bow ties and funny glasses and be understood as relevant to a broader community? What do these disciplines offer to society at large?

In this first semester of People and Place, we will begin our study of architecture and planning by looking at the roles values play in our disciplines and in society and explore ways in which the two sets of values might connect. We will particularly focus on the use of narrative methods (i.e., storytelling) to establish these connections. Our explorations will be significantly informed by the community development service-learning projects, which we will begin in mid-October. For these projects, students will work together in small groups on an issue of importance to our study neighborhood (the Gateway District on the west side of downtown). Each group will have a client in the community and a professional planner, architect, landscape architect, or designer as a mentor. The projects will continue through the end of the spring semester.

**Topic Areas/Questions for This Semester:**

**Definition of Values:** What are values? What factors (cultural, societal, etc.) influence how we construct and define values? How do *you* define values?

**Identification of Group Values:** How do Americans define values at an individual level? At a community level? Are there values inherent to the disciplines of architecture and planning? What might/should they be?

**Intersection of Values:** What is the relevance of architecture and planning to society at large? Are there values that cut across individual, community, and discipline? How can these values be employed to show the relevance of architecture and planning to a broader community?

**Narrative Approach:** Narratives provide structure for understanding how the world operates. Because of their influence in defining the physical form of communities, the processes and products of planning and design are particularly underlain and influenced by stories. What are the elements of architectural and planning stories? How do non-architects/non-planners understand these stories? How can architects and planners become more effective storytellers?

**Texts:**
- Michael Larice & Elizabeth Macdonald (eds), *The Urban Design Reader* (Routledge, 2007)
- Anne Whiston Spirn, *The Language of Landscape* (Yale, 1998)
- Frederick Stein, *The Living Landscape* (2nd ed., Island Press, 2008)
- On-line readings through E-reserve at the Marriot Library and WebCT
Materials:
Sketchbook/Journal: minimum size – 50 sheets at 7” x 10” (any larger size is fine); recycled, acid free paper and a spiral binding are strongly recommended but not required.

Drawing Media: required – HB, 2B, and 4B pencils, small pencil sharpener; suggested – ink pens, charcoal, graphite stick, blending stump, colored pencils, etc.

Teaching Methods & Evaluation:
Sketchbook/Journal Reviews: Sketching is both a form of seeing and thinking, as well as a method of recording observations and ideas. Ideas often can be communicated better through a sketch than a verbal description. In order to develop basic skills in graphic communication, you will be required to use a sketchbook throughout the semester to complete specified sketch/journaling assignments. You also will be required to use your sketchbook to record your visual and verbal impressions during the community projects. Twice during the semester—just before fall break and at the end of the semester—you will be required to submit your sketchbook for review.

Grading: the degree to which you have complied with the assignment instructions (not on how well you can draw!).
Weight: 1st review-10%; 2nd review-20%.
Due dates: October 9; December 17.

Mid-Term Essay: Just before Fall Break, you will be required to write a short essay in which you will reflect on how the themes and methods contained in the course readings to date apply or are illustrated in our study neighborhood.

Length: 3-5 pages, double spaced.
Grading: content (i.e., the degree to which your essay integrates various components of course content) (2/3); style, grammar, and professional quality (1/3).
Weight: 15% of your grade.
Due date: October 9.

Service-Learning Project Presentations: After fall break, the bulk of your out-of-class time will be spent working on your community project. The projects will begin with several introductory sessions, after which you will be expected to work with team members, your group mentor, and your client to further develop the project. We will focus on examining and providing ideas for the redevelopment of the area bounded by 300 West, I-15, 200 North, and 600 South, known as the Historic Warehouse District or the Gateway District. Each team will look from a different perspective at the interface between place and people in the built environment of the district. Topics to be covered by the teams include cultural history, economic development, “green infrastructure,” historic preservation, small business development, and transportation. Each team will thoroughly research their topic issue, assess problems and opportunities, and then propose a planning/design-based solution that addresses the problems and leverages the opportunities. The projects will continue through the spring semester. You should plan
to spend 2-4 hours each week outside of class time working with your team and mentor, and your team should be prepared to present new research and ideas to your mentor at each weekly meeting.

Oral Presentation: Your team will make two oral presentations on your projects, one in early November and one at the end of the semester. The final presentation will be to the group mentors and project clients, as well as to the class.

- Grading: presentation content (i.e., how well you describe and reflect on the process and issues of your particular project) (2/3); professionalism (1/3).
- Weight: 1st presentation-10%; 2nd presentation-20%
- Presentation dates: November 11 & 13; December 9 & 11.

Written Report: Each student will also submit an individually prepared written report that summarizes the project work and connects it to the concepts contained in the course readings and discussions.

- Length: 7-10 pages, double spaced
- Grading: content (i.e., the degree to which your report demonstrates the application of course concepts in your project) (2/3); style, grammar, and professional appearance (1/3).
- Weight: 25% of your grade.
- Due date: December 17

Grade Scale: Letter grades for the semester will be earned using the following scale:
A ≥ 93.3%; A- ≥ 90.0%; B+ ≥ 86.6%; B ≥ 83.3%; B- ≥ 80.0%; C+ ≥ 76.6%; C ≥ 73.3%; C- ≥ 70.0%; D+ ≥ 66.6%; D ≥ 63.3%; D- ≥ 60.0%.

Schedule
The course schedule, including sketch and reading assignments, will be posted on the course WebCT site.

Other Important Information:
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

No student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political and/or moral conflict for the student. If you feel that you that working on the service-learning aspect of this course will create a religious, political and/or moral
conflict for you, please contact Associate Dean Peter Atherton (581-6347; atherton@arch.utah.edu), and he will explain your options.

**WebCT:** The course will employ WebCT software to provide lecture notes, share information about newsworthy events and articles, facilitate discussions outside of class, and provide instant access to grades. You are “charged with notice” for any information posted on the course WebCT site during the semester. That means we will assume you have received information posted to the site, and that you take responsibility for the consequences if you choose to not check the site regularly. If you are not already familiar with WebCT, you can learn about it at: [http://webct.utah.edu](http://webct.utah.edu).

**A late paper or missed presentation means no credit.** If you notify us of an illness or other problem prior to the official due date of the paper or time of the presentation, we will consider extending the paper deadline or offering an alternative time for the presentation.

Please arrive on time. By the same token, please wait until the official end of class to start packing up your books and other belongings. If we go over the scheduled time by a minute or two, please be courteous.

The last day to drop this class is September 3; the last day to add it is September 8; tuition is due September 8; the last day to late add is September 15; the last day to withdraw is October 24. We will keep any unreturned written assignments or sketchbooks until March 1, 2009, after which we will recycle them (down-cycle them, actually).