FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND URBAN CHANGE

YORK UNIVERSITY

ENVS 6132: Urban Environmental Design
Fall 2022

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HNES 278

Course meetings and consultation hours

meetings: Fridays at 11.30 (HNES 141)
consultation: Fridays at 10.30

Official Course Description

This course examines the foundations and influences of design theory on the design of human habitats and the role of urban design in creating a healthy and equitable urban environment. Social, ecological, and economic considerations shaping the urban landscape are studied to provide a basis for a proactive and informed approach to its design.

Objectives

- To develop a general comprehension of urban environmental design theory

- To develop an advanced understanding of various disciplinary approaches to urban environmental design

- To develop awareness of case studies that illustrate the complexities and challenges of urban environmental design

- To familiarize students with contemporary debates and "best practices" in urban environmental design

- To develop a personal approach to urban environmental design, including the values and principles that underpin social, ecological and economic dimensions of design processes

Competencies/learning outcomes

This course responds to the two sets of learning competencies identified by the Professional Standards Board as essential to planning.

<u>functional competencies:</u>

Human Settlement and Community, Regional and Provincial Settings
> *Understand evolution of human settlements and their environmental, political- economic and social contexts, and current and future planning issues and challenges.*

Planning Theories, Principles and Practices
> *Understand theories and principles guiding different scales of community planning, including approaches and methods of policy analysis and public consultation, community-based development, and various interests of the 'public interest' vs. professional expertise.*

Environmental and Sustainable Development
> *Understand environmental management, ecological processes and sustainability development (relationships between ecological, social, economic factors) to assess development actions.*

Diversity and Inclusiveness
> *Understand and able to develop plans for diversity, inclusiveness, and difference.*

Functional Integration of Knowledge
> *Understand planning relations and decision-making processes of transportation, housing, infrastructure, economics, environment, resources and urban design; and understand how technology can support planning and policy development.*

Developing Visions and Outcomes
> *Understand and able to develop planning visions and outcomes to articulate and defend plans and policies.*

Strategic Information Gathering and Analysis
> *Able to gather information to enable critical analysis to support development of a proposal or plan (with applicable technology to support analysis).*

Decision Making and Risk Management
> *Understand various modes of decision making with consideration for technical, financial, social, political and environmental considerations for risk management.*

Emerging Trends and Issues
> *Understand emerging planning trends and issues; critically assess applicability to plans, projects and activities; support information exchange within the profession of trends and best practices.*

<u>Enabling competencies:</u>

Issues Identification
> *Able to identify, analyze and facilitate issues related to project goals, resources and stakeholders interests.*

Problem Solving and Decision Making
> *Understand effective problem-solving and complex decision making practices, underlying values and potential ethical issues.*

Research and Analysis
> *Understand methods and practices to find information and conduct analysis (cause/effect relationships) and evaluate results.*

Innovation and Creativity
> *Understand and support innovative and creative practices to facilitate decision-making.*

Political Awareness
> *Understand political motives and actions and follow political issues and trends influencing decision-making.*

Change Management

Understand stages and practices to implement change and decisions.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Understand the value diversity and difference; apply policy and practices to accommodate diversity and inclusiveness.

Written and Oral Presentation

Understand practices/tools to support effective written, oral and visual/ graphic presentations and to communicate complex matters clearly.

Information and Knowledge

Understand, integrate, translate, support various sources of information.

Use of Information Technology

Integrate multi-media material into presentations and communications.

Vision

Understand importance, methods and processes of vision development and promotion, of progress monitoring and recommendations.

Responsiveness and Influence

Anticipate future needs and developments, formulate solutions and recommendations to key stakeholders.

Ethical Standards

Understand ethical responsibilities and dilemmas for the professional planner; adhere to and monitor highest ethical standards for self/others.

Eligibility

There are no prerequisites for this course, and it is open to all MES students. However, the course will advance themes explored in MES courses such as ENVS 5121: Perspectives in Planning; 6131: Environmental Planning; 5112: Ecology in Environmental Studies; 5103: Nature and Society; and 6330: Environmental Planning Workshop.

Course Materials

Students do not need to purchase materials for ENVS 6132. All course materials are available through your York University library account (the electronic journal database) or may be retrieved through public access websites.

Evaluation: Grading and Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated according to the following:

Participation	15%	
Presentation	15%	
Analytical essay	20%	21 October
Design manifesto	15%	4 November
Portfolio	35%	2 December

This course is delivered in person. Sessions will incorporate live discussions, lectures, student presentations and a student-led discussion forum. Students are expected to attend course sessions and actively engage with course materials, themes and projects. If there is a compelling reason for absence, please inform the Course Director in writing, preferably prior to absence.

Students may contribute to an online discussion forum on eClass. This space is reserved for student-led digital conversations, and it will contribute to your participation mark. You may initiate discussions on any topic of relevance to urban environmental design and contribute to existing discussions. In doing so, please take time to consider previous posts and constructively partake in advancing overall depth and breadth of conversations.

Each student will participate in a group presentation that will be pre-recorded and uploaded by noon the day before assigned sessions. Groups of 2 or 3 students will collectively lead the seminar. Pre-recorded presentations should be uploaded as single files that can be accessed by all other course participants. Group partners should carefully coordinate ahead of time to ensure an audible recording with smooth transition between speakers. Presentations will be broadcast on the assigned presentation dat, after which the presentation groups will lead the discussion. Presentations should cover at least the following:

  - identify main themes of the readings (don't reiterate the readings)

  - provide a critical overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the readings

  - identify key extracts and quotations from the readings

  - relate themes to previous material and experiences

  - prepare at least four questions for group response

The main written submission for this course is an analytical essay of approximately 2000 words. The focus of this assignment is critical analysis of the socio-cultural dimensions of a particular mode, method or technique of urban environmental design. Topics can include historic approaches, specific ecological applications, or case studies. Core questions confronted in this essay should include "for whom, by whom?", "to what ends?", and "for whose benefit or detriment?".

Through this course, each student will develop a design manifesto as an expression of their own approach to urban environmental design. Design manifestos may take whatever form each student desires (for instance, a pamphlet, website, video, audio recording or a poster) to communicate the values and principles that are most important. This is a creative assignment that foregrounds critical interpretation of the course materials. Manifestos should emphasize design as an active verb and process, not an outcome, and convey an approach to design as a set of intentions, beliefs, values and visions.

The major assignment of this course is a portfolio, which will be presented in the final session of the course. Students may work alone or in groups of 2 or 3 for this assignment. Portfolios will focus on improvement of a site within the Greater Toronto Area. The format of the portfolio will be self-determined. Key components of this proposal may consider (but are not limited to) the following:

a) policy and planning provisions

b) regional and local environmental circumstances

c) cultural context of the site

d) ethical concerns

e) design principles

f) a range of possibilities for site improvement

g) recommended actions

Clear goals and objectives must be delineated through the proposal, and a rationale for action must be apparent. This is an interpretive and creative assignment that is rooted in careful consideration of the environmental conditions of a specific site.

Etiquette

Please think of the course as a forum for learning and practicing essential planning skills, including active listening, constructive dialogue, and respectful participation. In order to establish a vivid learning environment, students are expected to build conversations collectively (not simply take turns talking) in a manner that advances mutual understanding and respect. Disagreements are encouraged, providing they are thoughtful and enrich critical interpretation of the topic. Alternate views and experiences enhance the quality of discourse, and each student is responsible for building an inclusive and welcoming environment. Be open to difficult topics and challenging perspectives that may not seem immediately pertinent to your current interests or views.

Here are a few more guidelines for course etiquette:

- Respect the time allocation for the course.

- Turn mobile devices off and store them away from view during meeting times.

- Laptops and tablets may be used for note-taking and quick reference. However, it is rude to surf the internet, multi-task or entertain other diversions while class members are speaking. Staring into an electronic device while disengaged from course events reflects poor planning skills and will harm your final evaluation.

- Please make an effort to use clear spelling and grammar in online discussions. Spelling and grammar do not have to be perfect, but try to minimize potential misunderstandings or mistakes.

- Your postings will be part of the course records, so think before you type. Do not request personal information of others, and only post messages that you would vocalize in person.

Course timeline

9 Sep: Introduction

               natural landscapes and ecosystem services of the GTA

16 Sep: landscape ecology and cities

Jennings, V. et al. 2017. "Emerging issues in urban ecology: Implications for research, social justice, human health, and well-being" *Population and Environment* 39(1): 69-86.

Barghjelveh, S. and S.Y. Islami. 2015. "The logic of the 'ecology of place', a model of thought for urban landscape development case study: Tehran's Farahzad River-valley" *Urban Ecosystems* 18: 1165-1186.

Pickett, S.T.A. and M.L. Cadenasso. 2017. "How many principles of urban ecology are there?" *Landscape Ecology* 32(4): 699-705.

Yang, P.P-J. and B.L. Ong. 2004. "Applying ecosystem concepts to the planning of industrial areas: a case study of Singapore's Jrong Island" *Journal of Cleaner Production* 12 (8-10): 1011-1023.

Gosine, Andil and Tzazná Miranda Leal (2020) "Environmental Racism and Justice in Canada". *The Ecopolitics Podcast* (episode 4) Available at: http://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca/episode-4-environmental-racism-justice-in-canada-2/

23 Sep: urban ecologies

Forman, R. 2016. "Urban ecology principles: Are urban ecology and natural area ecology really different?" *Landscape Ecology* 31(8): 1653-1662.

McIntyre, N.E. et al. 2000. "Urban ecology as an interdisciplinary field: Differences in the use of 'urban' between the social and natural sciences" *Urban Ecosystems* 4(1): 5-24.

Niemelä, J. 1999. "Is there a need for a theory of urban ecology?" *Urban Ecosystems* 3(1): 57-65.

McGregor-Fors, I. 2011. "Misconceptions or misunderstandings? On the standardization of basic terms and definitions in urban ecology" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 100(4): 347-347.

Katti, M. with P. Garcia. 2015. "Birds in the city: Social and ecological drivers of urban biodiversity" *A Candle In The Dark* (podcast). Available at: https://valleycafesci.wordpress.com/2015/12/31/11-birds-in-the-city/

30:                City of Toronto Mud Creek and Beltline Trail at Moore Park

This week you will explore the Beltline Trail. This is a 9-kilometer long trail along a former commuter railway. You can read basic information about the trail here:

> https://www.blogto.com/city/2018/08/beltline-trail-toronto/

Please visit as much of the Beltline Trail as you are comfortable and able. You may choose to do this over several visits. Observe the surroundings, access points, signage, design features, ecological attributes, wildlife inhabitation, human usages, and mobility options, aesthetic qualities, and anything else that strikes you as noteworthy. In particular, please take the time to acquaint yourself with the recently completed channel restoration project along Mud Creek and the Beltline Trail. This is an outcome of a partnership between the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the City of Toronto. Planning documents for the project are located at:

> https://torontoregion-my.sharepoint.com/personal/nivedha_sundararajah_trca_ca/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fnivedha%5Fsundararajah%5Ftrca%5Fca%2FDocuments%2FMud%20Creek%20Reach%206%20%2D%20Notice%20of%20Construction&originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly90b3JvbnRvcmVnaW9uLW15LnNoYXJlcG9pbnQuY29tLzpmOi9nL3BlcnNvbmFsL25pdmVkaGFfc3VuZGFyYXJhamFham%FoX3RyY2FfY2EvRWczYUU3VERuTVNbkpnbkNwTTTJ2d0FCbmdfbHd5VThJU3lselhvMjZxSGRqZz9ydGltZT1qWmhndmtOVTJFZw

> https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/improvements-expansion-redevelopment/beltline-trail-at-moore-avenue-improvements/

After visiting the Beltline Trail and Mud Creek, please post responses (250 words max) on the eClass forum to the following two questions: What are the best and worst design interventions at these sites? What could be done to improve these sites?

7 Oct: novel ecologies

Kowarik, I. and M von der Lippe. 2018. "Plant population success across urban ecosystems: A framework to inform biodiversity conservation in cities" *Journal of Applied Ecology* 55(): 2354-2361.

Marris, E. 2010. "The new normal" *Conservation Magazine* available at: https://www.conservationmagazine.org/2010/06/the-new-normal/

Higgs, E. 2017. "Novel and designed ecosystems" *Restoration Ecology* 25(1): 8-13.

Silva, P. and BK BioReactor. 2016. "Look who's coming to dinner… Bacteria that eat the Gowanus sludge" *The Nature of Cities* (podcast). Available at: https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2016/05/12/look-whos-coming-to-dinner-bacteria-that-eat-the-gowanus-sludge-tnoc-podcast-episode-7/

Anguelovski, I. 2013. "New directions in urban environmental justice: Rebuilding community, addressing trauma, and remaking place" *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 33(2): 160-175.

14 Oct: reading week

21 Oct: urban environmental design theory

Larco, N. 2016. "Sustainable urban design – a (draft) framework". *Journal of Urban Design* 21(1): 1-29.

Hein, S. 2016. "Observations on the Larco framework" *Journal of Urban Design* 21(1): 41-43.

Wheeler, S.M. "Response to Nico Larco's sustainable design framework". *Journal of Urban Design* 21(1): 47-49.

Mau, B. *An Incomplete Manifesto for Growth*. Available at: http://www.manifestoproject.it/bruce-mau/

Spiegelhalter, K., T. Ruswick and P. Noto. 2018. *Environmental Justice and landscape Architecture: A Students' Guide* American Society of Landscape Architects. https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing_Pages/StudentsGuide_EnvJustice_Draft.pdf

Toronto Police Services. Undated. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.* Available at: https://www.torontopolice.on.ca/crimeprevention/environmental.pdf

Fathallah, S. and A.D.S. Lewis. 2020. "Abolish the cop inside your (designer's) head: Unravelling the links between design and policing" *Design Museum Everywhere*, available at: https://designmuseumfoundation.org/abolish-the-cop-inside-your-designers-head/

28 Oct: design processes

Munthe-Kaas, P. and B. Hoffmann. 2017. "Democratic design experiments in urban planning – navigational practices and compositionist design" *CoDesign* 13(4): 287-301.

Al-Kodmany , K. 1999. "Using visualization techniques for enhancing public participation in planning and design: Process, implementation, and evaluation" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 45(1): 37-45.

Kersten, W.C. et al. 2015. "Engaging beneficiaries of sustainable renovation – exploration of design-led participatory approaches" *Journal of Cleaner Production* 106: 690-699.

Mattila, H. 2002. "Aesthetic justice and urban planning: Who ought to have the right to design cities?" *GeoJournal* 58(2-3): 131-138.

4 Nov: design processes, continued   (design manifestos due)

Grose, M.J. 2014. "Gaps and futures in working between ecology and design for constructed ecologies" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 132(1): 89-78.

Robbins, P. and S.A. Moore. 2012. "Ecological anxiety disorder: Diagnosing the politics of the Anthropocene" *cultural geographies* 20(1): 3-19

Klein, W. et al. 2021. "Engaging the unengaged: Understanding residents' perceptions of social access to urban public space" *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 59.

Keswani, K. 2017. "The practice of tree worship and the territorial production of urban space in the Indian neighbourhood" *Journal of Urban Design* 22(3): 370-387.

Byrne, J. and J. Wolch. 2009. "Nature, race, and parks: Past research and future directions for geographic research" *Progress in Human Geography* 33(6): 743-765.

11 Nov: urban wildlife

Hinchliffe, S. et al. 2005. "Urban wild things: A cosmopolitical experiment". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23(5) 643 – 658.

Zhao, J. and X. Gong. 2022" Animals in urban green spaces in relation to mental restorative quality" *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 74

Lambertucci, S.A. et al. 2021 "Minimizing fear of wildlife in urban areas" *Science* 374(6570): 947

Niesner C.A. et al. 2021. "Wildlife affordances of urban infrastructure: A framework to understand human-wildlife space use" Frontiers in Conservation Science 25. Available at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcosc.2021.774137/full

"High water levels spelling trouble for creatures on Leslie Street Spit" *City News* 9 June 2017: https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2017/06/09/video-high-water-levels-spelling-trouble-for-creatures-on-leslie-street-spit/ (3:16 minutes)

18 Nov: portfolio planning and strategizing

25 Nov: independent portfolio work session

2 Dec: portfolio presentations

Important Course information

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

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