

**Portland State University, College of Urban and Public Affairs**

**USP 525: URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS - OVERVIEW**

**TERM:** Spring 2025

**MEETINGS:** Wednesdays, 12:00PM-2:40PM Pacific Time

**MODE:** Hybrid, see details in table below. Our classroom is [KMC 255](#). We will always have a Zoom link for flexibility - I ask that you come to class in-person whenever it is possible! Know how you learn best. Scavenger Hunt and Walking Tour have remote options.

**INSTRUCTOR:** [Hannah Silver](#)

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment via [Calendly](#). *I strongly recommend you set up a short check-in at some point during the course! Phone calls always welcome instead of Zooms.*

**EMAIL:** [hsilver@holstarc.com](mailto:hsilver@holstarc.com) or send me a Canvas message! *For email, put "USP 525" in the subject line.*

**COURSE SUMMARY:** This course covers the basic concepts and broad approaches to analyzing design issues and spatial justice in urban planning and development. Students will be introduced to the core theories and processes of urban design and learn to apply these to urban neighborhoods and public spaces. The course will also explore debates over what constitutes “good” design and the various planning tools intended to foster this design.

**TEACHING METHODS**

This course is taught through a once weekly, 160 minute meeting – Wednesdays from 12-2:40pm. *I will provide ample break/stretch time in this long course!*

The course is organized thematically with lectures, readings, discussions, exercises, and media presentations grouped around those themes. I will try to keep the class as lively, interactive, and engaging as possible, without demanding that you be stationed at your computer for hours.

Some class sessions will be “Out of Office” (OOO) meetings – we will meet up outdoors in Portland, so we can check out actual urban design! **I will always offer a remote option in the case that a walking tour is not a good fit for you.**

If you would like to provide feedback about the course anonymously at any point, please use this form! <https://forms.gle/WDVxY18oz1XbNa9w9>**Links to an external site.**

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Learn the foundational theories, concepts, and applications of urban design.
2. Address urban design best practices through the lens of equity and community ownership. Namely, I will share basics on how to:
  1. Design spaces that are healthy/restorative for people, taught through the lens of active and healthy design frameworks
  2. Design spaces that are supportive of a variety of spatial needs, through the lens of disability justice
  3. Design equitable spaces that elevate culture, taught through the lens of Indigeneity, racial justice, and inclusive design
  4. Design spaces that reflect and support the community, through the lenses of design justice and spatial justice
  5. Design spaces that reduce energy, water, and material uses and help connect people to nature, through the lenses of biophilic and sustainable design
3. Practice the basic skills of urban design analysis, using the many lenses listed above.
4. Gain an appreciation for both the process and product of the design of the built environment, including the necessary healthy collaboration strategies for working in creative environments.
5. Explore the links between urban design and planning and the need for planners to learn design.
6. Practice visual, graphic and spatial literacy - i.e. learn how to make information available to people using contemporary and accessible methods of communication, for community engagement and other methods of information sharing

## **CLASS SCHEDULE / LOCATIONS**

WEEK	DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC	TO DO AFTER CLASS:
1	April 2	ZOOM ONLY - join from your own device (not the classroom)	Design Justice	<a href="#">A1: Introduction Video* (4/9)</a> Read syllabus, check out Canvas structure and <a href="#">General Resources</a> Resources in <a href="#">Design Justice Module</a> Resources in <a href="#">Decolonial Aesthetics</a> Module
2	April 9	KMC 255	Decolonial Aesthetics	<a href="#">A2: World History Contribution* (4/16)</a> Read about <a href="#">next week's scavenger hunt</a> Resources in <a href="#">Decolonial Aesthetics</a> Module
3	April 16	OOO: PSU Urban Plaza	SCAVENGER HUNT	<a href="#">A3: Sketching Practice* (4/23)</a> Resources in <a href="#">Inclusive, Social Spaces</a> Module
4	April 23	KMC 255	Inclusive, Social Spaces	<a href="#">A4: Cognitive Map &amp; Analysis* (4/30)</a> Resources in <a href="#">Inclusive, Social Spaces</a> Module

WEEK	DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC	TO DO AFTER CLASS:
5	April 30	KMC 255	Inclusive, Social Spaces	<a href="#">A5: Observation &amp; Field Notes* (5/7)</a> Resources in <a href="#">Storytelling</a> Module
6	May 7	ZOOM ONLY	Storytelling	<a href="#">A6: Accessibility Audit Video* (5/14)</a> Find an example of graphic design you like to bring to class  Resources in <a href="#">Storytelling</a> Module  Resources in <a href="#">Nature and Memory</a> Module
7	May 14	ZOOM ONLY	Storytelling	Read about next week's <a href="#">walking tour + Holst visit</a>  Focus in on your plan for your FINAL PROJECT
8	May 21	OOO: Fair-Haired Dumbbell, 390 NE Couch St.	WALKING TOUR	<a href="#">FINAL PROJECT: Design Analysis CHECK-IN (5/28)</a> Resources in <a href="#">Nature and Memory</a> Module
9	May 28	KMC 255	Nature and Memory	Resources in <a href="#">The FUTURE</a> Module Work on FINAL PROJECT

WEEK	DATE	LOCATION	TOPIC	TO DO AFTER CLASS:
10	June 4	ZOOM	The FUTURE: How planning shapes design	<a href="#">FINAL PROJECT: Design Analysis DUE (6/11)</a> <a href="#">A7: Class Participation/Presence (throughout, your assessment due 6/11)</a>
Finals	June 11	<i>none</i>	<i>No class meeting</i>	

\* = PASS/FAIL grading system applied

## TEXTS AND READINGS

There is one OPTIONAL book for this class: [Restorative Cities by Jenny Roe + Layla McCay](#). (there is a slight discount available on this page). I have really enjoyed combing through this book, and you may, too. It is an excellent resource for inspiring final projects that highlight health equity and environmental justice in the built environment. You can also see some [highlights from the book in this course file Download highlights from the book in this course file](#)- it can be helpful to skim this if you are looking for inspiration for your final project! But you do not need to own it to succeed in the class.

A variety of readings and other resources can be found in the weekly Canvas [Modules](#). I will continue to edit/add resources, but I will make sure my updates happen at least a week in advance of the resource review due dates.

You will see resources grouped in two categories below each Week Module.

- **"Complete by Class"** resources should be reviewed before class meeting of that week - we will reflect on them together during class
  - **"ALT"** resources will be indented below the required resources - this means you can choose to review this resource instead of the required one directly above it. It's the same content but in a different format, i.e. podcast or video option.

- **Recommended** resources are for further exploration - you're always encouraged to review some of these, but you may choose to do so at a later date
- Under **Class content** you'll find the Zoom recording from class and any class activity recaps, usually within 12 hours of class

## SUPPLIES

This course involves field work, sketching, and image collection. Though you don't HAVE to have anything more than scratch paper and a writing utensil, you are encouraged to use this course to explore your artistry and graphic representation further! You may be interested in acquiring some of the following:

- Colored pencils or art markers (any kind)
- Technical pens ... try a few and find out what thickness works for you best
- Trace paper
- Sketchbook
- Adobe software (InDesign as a foundation) or alternative digital design tools - [Canva](#) is really helpful!
  - [Here's a list of other programs that may do the job.](#)

Let the class know if you've tried and recommend any of the above InDesign alternatives!

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Please see the Canvas [Assignments page](#) for a complete list of your responsibilities and points assigned to each item. Assignments will be turned in electronically via Canvas by 11:59 on Tuesdays unless otherwise noted. Many assignments are pass/fail to keep things light (indicated with an ASTERISK\* on the Assignment title). I.e. you won't be graded on how beautiful your sketching is, just that you tried your best and turned it in on time.

I often make comments on submitted writing or documents! So check your graded assignments for annotations, highlights, and notes.

The basic rubric used to grade graduate student work is as follows:

- A: Demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas, sophisticated, cogent analysis, and is clearly written and compellingly presented. Excellent work.
- A- or B+: Presents above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support the ideas and is clearly written or interestingly presented. Good work.
- B or B-: Shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to the most obvious arguments. Writing is competent and presentation is utilitarian. Adequate work.
- C+ or below: Misunderstands or misrepresents the material. Writing is poor and presentation is confusing. Inadequate work.

**Final Grades:** Your final grade is based off your percentage for the class. There are 105 available points, but I grade out of 100. Your final % grade is calculated by (# of points you have total)/100. I'll input letter grades as your final, official grade. The scheme is...

- A+ = >97% (this will be an A in your final grades on Banweb, but YOU will know you got the +)
- A = >93%
- A- = >90%
- B+ = >87%
- B = >83%
- B- = >80%
- C+ = >77%
- C = >73%
- C- = >70%

- D+ = >67%
- D = >60%
- F = <59.99%

**Late Assignments:** If you have legitimate (preferably documented) reasons for a late assignment, you may petition for an extension. Communication is important; extensions will likely only be granted if you contact me in advance of a deadline.

**Academic Integrity:** All work done for the course must be your own. The work must be original and prepared for this class. Copying the work of another and not citing it; lifting text from the Internet; or even presenting ideas that are not your own without proper attribution are all examples of plagiarism. Submitting work for this class that has been done for another class also counts as plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and could result in higher university level sanctions.

## **CLASSROOM/ZOOM ETIQUETTE**

It is impossible for me to sit still for nearly three hours of a lecture, so I will never ask you to do that. I will include stretch/bio breaks in our Zoom meetings. I support self-care.

- If you need to stretch, go to the bathroom, lactate, eat, drink, cry, take a work call, etc. – please do, while being conscientious of other students and their learning needs.
- Know when to hide your video and be on mute, and please preserve this class time as best you can in your schedule.
- Please say hello when you initially enter a digital meeting – through chat, audio, or video.
- I **really** appreciate seeing your faces as much as possible.
- AND: You are entitled to the privacy of your home space, and under no obligation to share video through Zoom.
- You are absolutely welcome to use a digital background to obscure your setting.

**Recording:** I have opted to ONLY record the announcement and lecture parts of my classes so that students have a safe space to ask questions, engage in debate, and try new things. I will do my best to pause the recording when I ask the group a question. If this will be a barrier for you, please let me know ASAP so we can find a way to create an accessible and safe educational space for everyone.



## **TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING**

Like any topic rooted in social history, many conversations in urban design include triggering histories of biases and abuses of power. People have used design processes, architecture, and management of space to alienate, isolate, segregate, or minimize the histories of marginalized people. To the best of my abilities, I will use my role as instructor to shape a learning environment that is safe and uses language and media that is responsive to the fact that some of these topics are painful to address. Take care of yourself – and let me know when I can do more to support you or other students in these conversations.

## **ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

I am deeply committed to creating a learning environment that is accessible and inclusive for all. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers for you, please let me know.

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, +1-503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Please be aware that the accessible tables or chairs in the room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not useable.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT RESOURCES**

Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our School policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct – including gender- or sex-based harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and

stalking. We expect a culture of mutual respect and professionalism in our courses and our community. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available.

Please be aware that as a faculty member, **I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination** to PSU's Title IX Coordinator. I cannot keep information confidential. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources (or visit this link):

- Women's Resource Center: Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU), 1825 SW Broadway, 439, +1-503-725-5672 or schedule on line at <https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me>
- Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave, +1-503-725-2800
- Student Legal Services: SMSU, 1825 SW Broadway, M343, +1-503-725-4556

PSU's Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinators can meet with you to discuss how to address concerns that you may have regarding a Title IX matter or any other form of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. Please note that they cannot keep the information you provide to them confidential but will keep it private and only share it with limited people that have a need to know. You may contact the Title IX Coordinators as follows:

- PSU's Title IX Coordinator: via email at [titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu) or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling +1-503-725-4413, via email at [yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu](mailto:yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu) or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Dana Walton-Macaulay by calling +1-503-725-5651, via email at [dana26@pdx.edu](mailto:dana26@pdx.edu) or in person at Smith Memorial Union, Suite, 1825 SW Broadway, Suite 433

For more information about your obligations and resources for sex/gender discrimination and sexual violence (Title IX), please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your Canvas, if you have not already done so. You may also wish to review the PSU Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-studentcode-conduct>), which makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are strictly prohibited and offenses are subject to the full realm of sanctions. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources on PSU's Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault>.

## ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES

**Cultural Resource Centers:** The Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. Our centers include the Multicultural Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pan African Commons, and Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center and the Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian Initiative. We provide students with employment, volunteer, and leadership opportunities. Along with extensive programming, our spaces offer resources such as computer labs, lounge areas, and study spaces. All are welcome! More information about the CRCs can be found at [www.pdx.edu/cultural-resource-centers](http://www.pdx.edu/cultural-resource-centers) and <https://www.facebook.com/psuculturalcenters/>, CRCs can be contacted at [cultures@pdx.edu](mailto:cultures@pdx.edu) and 503-725-5351.

**The CARE (Coordination Assessment Response Education) Team** is available to help students experiencing distress and to assist with concerns about a fellow student. More information about the CARE Team can be found at: <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/care-team>. The CARE Team also maintains a comprehensive list of resources, both campus and community, which can be found here: <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/sites/www.pdx.edu.dos/files/C.A.R.E.%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>.

**The Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC)** provides community-based health care for students, including physical health, dental services, mental health, and testing services. You can find information about what SHAC provides and how to access them at: <https://www.pdx.edu/shac/center-for-student-health-and-counseling>.

**The PSU Food Pantry** offers supplemental food items to currently enrolled PSU students. The pantry is located in SMSU 325. For more information, you can email [foodhelp@pdx.edu](mailto:foodhelp@pdx.edu). For more information on food and wellness assistance for students visit: <https://www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/>.

**Services are available for students with children**, including childcare subsidies and family events, a lending library and clothing closet, lactation spaces, and a Family Resource Room. More information can be found at: <https://www.pdx.edu/students-with-children/our-services>.

**The Office of Diversity & Multicultural Student Services** (Smith Memorial Union 425) provides structured, academic support service, advising, referrals, and advocacy for first-generation

college students, low-income and others facing special challenges.

Visit <http://www.pdx.edu/dmss/> for info.

**Student Legal Services** provides legal advice and assistance on a range of areas of law including family, landlord/tenant, and immigration. More information can be found at: <https://www.pdx.edu/sls>.

**International Student Services** provides a range of assistance to international students, including help with visas and immigration status, internships and employment, and life on campus and in Portland. They also have a Student Aid Fund for international students experiencing financial difficulties. More information is available at: <https://www.pdx.edu/international-students/>.

**The Portland State University Millar Library** offers a wide range of helpful resources, databases, and tutorials to assist with coursework and research. In particular, you might find the resources that have been collated specifically for urban studies useful (<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/urbanstudies>).

**The Writing Center** (Cramer 188) will help you with all varieties of projects, including class assignments, resumes, application essays, presentations, and creative writing. It aims to help writers at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to the final draft. You can schedule an appointment online: <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/>. Their website also contains resource pages that suggest ideas and strategies for completing writing projects.

**The Learning Center** (Millar Library 245) mission is to foster the learning process by empowering PSU students to accomplish their academic and personal goals. In addition to helping with current coursework, academic support services can assist in developing effective learning strategies. The Center also offers opportunities to volunteer as a tutor, for those that might be so inclined. See <http://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/> for more info.