SPRING 2016 Issued 1/12/16
USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

PPD 425: **Designing Livable Communities**
4 Units

Instructor: Elizabeth Falletta (falletta@price.usc.edu)
Schedule: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00 – 1:50 pm / 4:00 – 5:50 pm
Location: VPD 110 / VPD 112
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00 – 4:00 pm or By Appointment, RGL 240
Cell Phone: (323) 683-6355

---

1. Course Description

Myriad forces shape the look, feel and experience of our cities and communities. Changing demographics, economic markets, social values, lifestyles, lending practices, policy interests, etc., all visibly impact our urban environment and shape the way life can be lived in any given place. As long-lived assets, our cities provide the context for both permanence and change. They form complex, multivalent, ever-changing wholes whose design is constantly being adjusted in both small and large ways. Sometimes communities are created wholesale allowing architects, planners and developers to redress the perceived mistakes of the past. More often, however, these professionals, and the citizens they are designing for, are remodeling existing places, in both active and reactive ways. Either way, an understanding of the impact of physical form and space on livability and community is paramount.

This course will explore theories and concepts of livable communities and good city form. Case studies of historical and current best practices, field visits and collaborative design projects will all be used to help students gain experience required to begin to "read" urban form and understand its impact on daily life. Multiple viewpoints will be presented throughout to encourage the development of students' critical thinking skills. All class activities will explicitly explore both the intended and unintended consequences of design decisions at the scale of urban development.

Course activities will be organized around three central questions about the relationship between design, livability, community, sustainability and health:

- What characterizes a livable community? How might these qualities have evolved from the past and potentially change in the future?
- What responsibilities do the builders of community have towards the realization of livability and community identity? Who is in charge of translating community values into community form?
- What are the physical tools and strategies designers can use to engender livable communities? Why do similar strategies work differently in different contexts?

2. Course Objectives & Learner Outcomes

- To introduce students to the fundamental issues and current topics of debate impacting the livability of our communities.

- To provide a forum in which students can cultivate the critical thinking skills necessary to develop their own opinions and values regarding the quality and future of city and community development.

- To provide an opportunity for students to develop the written, verbal and graphic analysis skills required to both propose and critique urban design ideas.

- To learn to see, document and inflect the physical design of the built environment.

3. Attendance & Classroom Conduct

- Attendance at all class meetings is expected. Please communicate with the instructor via email regarding any excused or unexcused absences BEFORE the missed class if possible. Arrival over 10 minutes late to class will be considered an absence. Likewise if you leave while class is in session for more than 10 minutes.

- Please communicate any scheduled absences for religious observance or other activities to the instructor at the BEGINNING of the semester or as soon as possible after the need for the absence is known.

- FOUR or more absences, EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED, will put your grade in the course at risk. A student who does not attend class regularly will fail notwithstanding the delivery of written assignments.

- On time arrival to class is important. Class will begin promptly with a review of the schedule, overview of the day's activities and a time for questions. VERY IMPORTANT information about assignments, due dates and expectations is given during the first 5 minutes of class and it will not be repeated if you arrive late.

- All cell phones, iPads, iPods and similar devices must be silenced and stowed during class. Anyone found to be emailing, text messaging, accepting phone calls or otherwise not paying attention via technology in class will have their device confiscated and their conduct reported to their Academic Advisor.

- This course intends to explicitly explore different viewpoints regarding the planning and design of our cities and communities. Students should at all times be polite and respectful regarding the opinions expressed by others. Please do not talk over colleagues who are already speaking (especially your instructor).

- Substantial class time is given to the preparation of required coursework. Students not using this time wisely will be asked to leave and marked absent for the class session.

- This course, like most design courses, requires ITERATIVE WORK. Students should budget time to work on the design of their course projects EVERY WEEK, incorporating feedback from the prior class period. Students whose projects do not evolve and change will not succeed in the course.

- Should anything occur that could compromise your ability to attend to the requirements of the course, communicate with the instructor early and often regarding your situation. This is the best way to preserve your ability to do well in the class.

4. Coursework

- Format

  Lectures by the instructor or guest speakers will be given every Tuesday. Studio sessions or field trips will be held every Thursday, giving students the opportunity to directly engage with that week's lecture topic. Active engagement during studio sessions is vital for success.

- Readings & General Class Preparation

  Students should come to class prepared to participate fully in the work at hand. Please do not hesitate to ask questions during class lectures if you do not understand the material, or to make other relevant observations. As you prepare readings, please make note of:

  - Concepts that seem important but are not clear to you.
  - Questions that address the primary point of the reading and the course.
  - Ideas that you feel deserve a different perspective or conclusion than that the author has given.
  - Applications of the content of the reading to the work of the class.

- Course Project

  Students will propose a design project that will improve the livability, sustainability and health of the USC community using the topics of the course as a lens. Specific assignments will guide the students through an analysis of place, identification of a relevant design project and the design process. Assignments will be collected and graded at the end of each course module: design, community design, livable design and sustainable design. Assignments will be revised to incorporate feedback and collected as part of a final project.

  Cite all sources and DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! If you have any doubt, please consult the USC Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm.

- In-Class Assignments

  In-class assignments given during studio sessions are intended to allow students to gain some direct experience with the skills, concepts and models presented throughout the course. By creating opportunities to "think in situations" rather than think in the abstract, students will cultivate an understanding not just of concepts themselves but also of the consequences of their application.

- Design Daily

  Students will be asked to present a local community design issue to the class once during the semester in groups of three. Most class sessions will begin with ten-minute student presentations that summarize the issue, explain competing perspectives and explore potential outcomes relative to the content of the course. Students should select issues from local media sources.

- Field Trips

  The class will participate in three field trips, visiting various developments around Los Angeles to assess their design quality, livability and capacity to create community. These will occur on Thursdays and should not exceed allotted class time. Attendance is mandatory. Please contact the instructor should you not be able to attend. The experience of these locations will form the basis of the final exam. Each site will be associated with a short assignment and students should attend the field trips prepared to document these places via photographs, diagrams and sketches.

- Final Project

  The final project will involve the collection, revision and re-presentation of all the assignments conducted both inside and outside of class. Making improvements based on feedback from fellow students, the instructor and invited guest critics is crucial for success on this component of the course.

- Final Examination

  For the final exam students will be required to analyze, evaluate, compare and contrast the design, livability and community qualities of the three field trip locations using the skills and concepts learned throughout the course. If you cannot attend the field trips during class time it will be necessary that you visit these locations on your own outside of class.

- Syllabus Revision

  The instructor will regularly assess progress and solicit student feedback regarding the course. If necessary the syllabus will be revised to make it more suitable.

5. Textbook & Materials

- Readings for the course will be drawn from:

  Barton, Hugh, Grant, Marcus Grant, Richard Guise. Shaping Neighbourhoods, A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010.

  Dobbins, Michael. Urban Design and People. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

  Gehl, Jan. Cities for People. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010.

  *** Required chapters and sections will be uploaded to blackboard.*

- Required Materials:

  - Engineering Scale
  - Sketchbook (any size or type)
  - 11 x 17 Pad of Vellum with Grid (can be shared with other students in the course)
  - Digital Camera

  *** Use of InDesign, Photoshop and Sketch Up is encouraged but not required. Tutorials can be found at www.lynda.com.*

6. Grading

- Grading will break down as follows:

5%	Participation (active contribution to class discussions, pin ups and reviews)
5%	Design Daily
40%	Course Assignments 1 – 4 (10% each)
15%	Field Trip Assignments 1 – 3 (5% each)
20%	Final Project Document
15%	Final Exam
100%	

- The University standard for undergraduate-level grades will apply (source: USC Catalogue):

  A Work of excellent quality
  B Work of good quality
  C Work of fair quality
  D Work of minimum passing quality
  F Failure to adequately complete all course work

  ** To receive an "A" grade, students must complete all work on time and submit work of superior quality. Work must address all aspects of the required assignments, be guided by a strong design idea and demonstrate critical thinking. Students must revise prior work for the final project based on feedback from instructor and classmates. Students must consistently contribute to class discussions and makes critical observations.

  LATE WORK will be accepted up to one week past the due date and half a letter grade will be deducted as penalty. **Work over a week late will not be accepted.**

  EMAILED ASSIGNMENTS will not be accepted.

  THREE THINGS YOU **MUST** REMEMBER:
  - Trade Offs NOT Unlimited Budgets!
  - Context Context Context Context Context CONTEXT!
  - Design INTENTION Matters! Operate in the space between the known and the unknown.

7. **Design Advice –** Rules to live by in the design studio.

- Start early! Drawings and models will take longer than you think. But also set time limits for yourself. Getting the work out there is more important than creating a perfect drawing.

- ITERATION is an essential part of the design process. Practice the "Rule of Threes." Try to find at least three ways to do something. The third will, more often than not, be the best approach.

- When presenting a design scheme, always talk about "This project . . . " never "My project. . . ." This practice will distance your self from the project and ensure that criticism is not taken personally.

- When critiquing the work of others, always lead with the positive. Once positive aspects have been identified, move onto elements that you feel could be improved. Suggesting alternative strategies or other design approaches to try is helpful.

- Pay close attention to the design feedback given to ALL student projects and evaluate it through the lens of your own project. TAKE NOTES. Advice given to other students will undoubtedly also apply to you.

- There are no, or at least very few, right answers in design. However, some things are definitely better than other things. Remember, "good design" turns constraints into opportunities.

- Bring yourself to bear on the work. All good design projects use the prompt or program as a catalyst. Use your own goals, interests and questions to actively shape your design project.

8. Academic Responsibilities

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standardshttps://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems
A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.htmlprovides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

9. **Course Schedule** (subject to change as the course progresses)

Lectures will be presented on Tuesdays. Field Trips, Reading Discussions and In-Class Assignments will be conducted on Thursdays. All assignments and projects will be due on Thursdays.

INTRODUCTION	1	January 12/**LECTURE**	Course Introduction, Pershing Square Renew Competition
		January 14/**STUDIO**	Pershing Square Site Visit, Site Observation Exercise
	2	January 19/**LECTURE**	Design Matters, Graphic Representation, Pershing Square Discussion
		January 21/**STUDIO**	CLASS CANCELLED
DESIGN	3	January 26/**LECTURE**	What is a DESIGN IDEA?
		January 28/**STUDIO**	Initial Design Assignment Introduced, Design Charrette
	4	February 2/**LECTURE**	Design: Fundamental Concepts and Tools
		February 4/**STUDIO**	Pin Up Assignment for Feedback, Reading Discussion
		February 4 or 5/**SITE VISIT**	February 4th, 2:30 – 3:30pm (Tentative) February 5th, 4:00 – 5:00pm (Tentative)
	5	February 9/**LECTURE**	Urban Design and Landscape Architecture
		February 11/**STUDIO**	**Initial Design Project DUE**
COMMUNITY DESIGN	6	February 16/**LECTURE**	Community Design: Players, Programs & Precedents
		February 18/**STUDIO**	Community Design Assignment Introduced, Design Charrette
	7	February 23/**LECTURE**	Community Design: Fundamental Concepts and Tools
		February 25/**STUDIO**	Pin Up Assignment for Feedback, Reading Discussion
	8	March 1/**LECTURE**	Community Design: Case Study Chesapeake Rodeo Apartments vs. Baldwin Hills Village
		March 3/**FIELD TRIP**	Baldwin Hills Village (The Village Green) **Revised Community Design Assignment DUE**
LIVABLE DESIGN	9	March 8/**LECTURE**	Livable Design: Evolving Values, Lifestyles and Metrics Livable Design Assignment Introduced, Design Charrette
		March 10/**STUDIO**	CLASS CANCELLED
SPRING BREAK			
	10	March 22/**LECTURE**	Livable Design: Fundamental Concepts and Tools

		March 24/**STUDIO**	Pin Up Assignment for Feedback, Reading Discussion
	11	March 29/**LECTURE**	Livable Design: Case Study Downtown Los Angeles Design Guidelines & Other Initiatives
		March 31/**FIELD TRIP**	Downtown Historic Core/Spring Street **Revised Livable Design Assignment DUE**
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN	12	April 5/**LECTURE**	Sustainable Design & Health: Evolving Perspectives
		April 7/**STUDIO**	Sustainable Design Assignment Introduced, Design Charrette
	13	April 12/**LECTUR**E	Sustainable Design & Health: Fundamental Tools and Concepts
		April 14/**STUDIO**	Pin Up Assignment for Feedback, Reading Discussion
	14	April 19/**LECTURE**	Sustainable Design Case Study Active Santa Monica and The Wellbeing Project
		April 21/**FIELD TRIP**	Tongva Park
CONCLUSION	15	April 26/**STUDIO**	Design Project Presentations with Guest Critics **Design Project DUE**
		April 28/**STUDIO**	Design Project Presentations with Guest Critics
FINAL EXAM		May 5/**EXAM** (4pm Class)	4:30 – 6:30pm, Final Project DUE
		May 11/**EXAM** (Noon Class)	2:00 – 4:00pm, Final Project DUE

10. Course Bibliography

Reference Texts:

Banerjee, Tridib; Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia, Editors. Companion to Urban Design. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.

Hopper, Leonard J.. Landscape Architectural Graphic Standards, Student Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.

Ramsey, Charles G., Harold R. Sleeper, Bruce Bassler. Architectural Graphic Standards, Student Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.

Steiner, Frederick R., Kent Butler. Planning and Urban Design Standards, Student Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.

Recommended Texts:

Alexander, Christopher. A Pattern Language, Towns, Building, Construction (Center for Environmental Structures Series). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Childs, Mark C.. Urban Composition, Developing Community through Design. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012.

Farr, Douglas. Sustainable Urbanism, Urban Design with Nature. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.

Ewing, Reid, Otto Clemente. Measuring Urban Design, Metrics for Livable Places. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2013.

Hester, Randolph T.. Design for Ecological Democracy. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006.

Jacobs, Allan B. Great Streets. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

Kiib, Hans. Performative Urban Design. Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University Press, 2010.

Kostoff, Spiro. The City Shaped, Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History. Boston, MA: Bulfinch Press, 1991.

Lynch, Kevin. Good City Form. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984.

Lynch, Kevin, Gary Hack. Site Planning, Second Edition. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984.

Toker, Umut. Making Community Design Work, A Guide for Planners. Chicago, IL: Planners Press, 2012.