

Memphis Regional Design Center

Urban Design 101

Creating a More Vibrant, Equitable, and Sustainable Memphis Region through Design
Spring 2009



Kasia Źycińska, University of Memphis, Architectural Design 5 Studio

Course Introduction

Never before have so many people lived in the villages, towns, and cities of our planet's increasingly complex and ever-expanding metropolitan regions! Our approach to the physical design of these communities will fundamentally affect their economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

MRDC's Urban Design 101 will examine the transformative impact that innovative physical planning and design of the "public realm" are having upon the quality and success of urban life. The course will introduce a cross section of our region's civic leaders – representing a mix of public, private and non-profit organizations – to the basic concepts, vocabulary, and techniques of urban design as reflected in a variety of contemporary place-making initiatives in Memphis and across the country.

Urban Design 101 has been created to introduce local leaders to emerging design concepts that are guiding our nation's most exciting neighborhood stabilization, downtown development, waterfront revitalization, new town planning, public spaces, historic revitalization, and mass transit projects.

Course Structure

Classes will feature multi-media presentations by local and national faculty, class discussions, small group exercises, as well as a limited number of Memphis-based field trips. Participants will be encouraged to connect the urban design theories, concepts, and techniques being explored in class to current design challenges and opportunities confronting our local region's communities.

Time & Location

Thursday evenings from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, March 26th through May 14th. Classes will be held at the Center City Commission, 114 S. Main Street where the MRDC has its office. There is street and garage parking nearby.

Lead Instructor Mr. Chooch Pickard, AIA, newly-appointed MRDC Executive Director and Chief Designer Officer, will serve as Lead Instructor for the second Urban Design 101 course. Chooch is a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has completed several preservation reuse projects in Downtown Memphis including Court Square Center, the historic Lincoln American Tower renovation, and Lowenstein Building. Chooch is Vice-President of AIA Memphis, serves on Memphis Heritage's Board, and is National Secretary of Alpha Rho Chi, the only national co-ed professional/social fraternity for students in Architecture and the Allied Arts.

Joining Chooch this semester for individual classes will be four Memphis-based designers and three Distinguished Guest Lecturers from outside of our region.

- Course Topics
- Mar. 26** *Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?*
Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss
This session will define urban design, offer a compelling rationale for its importance, and provide several examples of local, national, and international “best practices” of relevance to citizens of the Greater Memphis Region.
- Apr. 2** *Principles of Good Practice for Inspired Urban Design*
Michael Hagge, AIA, Professor and Director of the Department of Architecture, The University of Memphis
The class will present the central requirements of highly legible, memorable, and transformative urban places that help define and sustain vibrant villages, towns, and cities.
- Apr. 9** *Promoting Green Building and Design for Human Wellness and Community Sustainability*
Bob Scarfo, ASLA, Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Design Institute at Washington State University in Spokane
This class will examine the environmental, economic, and social costs of low-density forms of urban development and traditional forms of energy-insensitive building. It will also explore how various Smart Growth planning principles and Green Building techniques can be used to create healthier and more sustainable forms of urban living in this period of uncertain oil prices and global warming.
- Apr. 16** *Re-Imagining, Re-Claiming, and Re-Invigorating our Downtowns and Main Streets through Inspired Design*
Raymond Brown, AIA, Architect and Planner, Self Tucker Architects, Inc.
This session will examine principles of good practice for successful downtown revitalization. Cases of various “comeback cities” will be reviewed to identify strategies, policies, and programs that could strengthen Memphis’ ongoing center city renaissance and offer ideas for other communities in our region seeking to enhance their Main Streets and major commercial corridors.
- Apr. 23** *Creating and Maintaining Great Streets: Possibilities for Madison Avenue*
Chooch Pickard, AIA, Executive Director/Chief Design Officer of

Memphis Regional Design Center

This class will explore the ingredients for creating and maintaining walkable, functional, and aesthetically uplifting urban streets. Students will apply their understanding of these principles to a possible redesign of Madison Avenue.

Apr. 30 *Using Public Art to Create Memorable and Transformative Places*

John Weedon, Executive Director, UrbanArt Commission

This session will present various examples of successful place-making in which artists, landscape architects, architects, and planners worked with citizens to re-design public squares, plazas, parks, and public buildings as networks of living rooms where the civic life of a healthy democracy can be recalled, pursued, and celebrated. Participants will be encouraged to re-imagine uninspired public spaces in their communities using innovative approaches to public art-making.

May 7 *Mobilizing Local Residents, Institutional Leaders, and Elected and Appointed Officials to Transform Existing Residential Neighborhoods Through Green Building and Design*

John Nettleton, Senior Lecturer in City and Regional Planning and Director of the Cornell Urban Scholars Program, Cornell University

This class will describe the efforts of several US and European cities whose residents, business leaders, and officials have embraced a sustainable approach to neighborhood stabilization and community revitalization to: improve local environmental conditions; strengthen their communities' economic competitiveness; and contribute to municipal efforts to reduce their carbon footprint as advocated by ICLEI.

May 14 *Promoting Healthy Communities Through Inspired Design: The Role of Advanced Computer Technologies*

Brian Orland, ASLA and AIA, Professor and Head of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Penn State University

The final session will discuss the connection between the built environment and common health indicators. It will also introduce various ways in which web-based analytical and design resources can be used to assist citizen planners and professional designers in exploring alternative approaches to the future design of their communities.

Costs Enrollment costs \$200. Tuition for Urban Design 101 helps underwrite the course. A modest number of scholarships for those with limited incomes may become available. Mail or bring your check to Memphis Regional Design Center, 114 S. Main Street, Memphis, TN 38103, Attn: Urban Design 101.

Participation Community leaders representing a broad cross-section of our region's business, government, labor, non-profit, faith, retiree, and civic groups are being sought to participate in Urban Design 101. Considerable effort is being made to assemble a class that reflects the age, race, ethnicity, gender, and income diversity of our community. If you are interested in participating in the Spring 2009 course, please email Chooch Pickard at mrdcdirector@gmail.com.

Optional Texts The New Civic Art: Elements of Town Planning Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Robert Alminana (et al), Princeton Architectural Press (New York) 2004
 Available on Amazon.com new or used hardback for \$54.97 or \$47.01. Also available on Half.com from \$53.94.

City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village Revised edition, David Sucher, Self Published: City Comforts Inc. (Seattle), 2003
 Available on Amazon.com and CityComforts.com for \$23.95.

The American City: What Works? What Doesn't? Second Edition, Alexander Garvin, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2002
 Available on Amazon.com as a new or used hardback for \$39.66 or \$31.49. Also available on Half.com hardback for \$15.

Readings Brief readings will be periodically distributed.

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Design can set Livable Communities in motion

Image by Goody Clancy

MEMPHIS REGIONAL DESIGN CENTER | EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE | PROGRAMS OUTREACH PROJECTS COMMITTEE

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