

Memphis Regional Design Center

Urban Design 101

Creating a More Vibrant, Equitable, and Sustainable Memphis Region through Design
Spring 2011



A New Face for an Old Broad

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 and a neighborhood planning and design workshop. 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 communities within our region!

Time & Location

Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, March 17th through May 19th.
Classes will be held at the Center City Commission, 114 N. Main Street where the MRDC has its office. There is street, garage, and lot parking nearby.

Lead Instructor	<p>Mr. Chooch Pickard, AIA, MRDC Executive Director and Chief Designer Officer, will serve as Lead Instructor for the 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 renovation of the historic Lincoln American Tower and Lowenstein Building. Chooch is Past President of AIA Memphis and serves on the MATA Board of Commissioners.</p> <p>Joining Chooch this semester for individual classes will be a combination of Memphis-based lecturers.</p>
Course Topics	<p>Mar 17 <i>Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part I</i> <i>Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Mar 24 <i>Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part II</i> <i>Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss</i></p> <p>This session will continue to explore the basic concepts of urban design introduced during week one.</p> <p>Mar 31 <i>The Contribution of Historic and Contemporary Europe to Modern Urban Design</i> <i>Laura Saija, Marie Curie Research Professor, Graduate Division of City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis</i></p> <p>Professor Saija will discuss how ancient and contemporary European place-making and city-building have contributed to excellence in urban design. Professor Saija will describe how designers creatively apply the basic principles of urban design to produce transformative public spaces in Europe. She will also discuss the role non-designers, such as city planners and elected officials, can play in creating public spaces that engender a strong sense of place.</p> <p>Apr 7 <i>Complete Streets</i> <i>Michael Oakes, PE, County Engineer, Shelby County</i></p> <p>“Complete Streets” is a term that embodies the need for our streets, boulevards and avenues to be designed for multi-modes; to effectively deal with walking, cycling and transit in addition to automobiles and trucks. This lecture highlights the problems of the present systems and discusses some safer, more neighborhood friendly alternatives and the transformative effect that such roadways can have on sustainability and livability.</p>

Apr 14 *Tools to Pursue Innovative Urban Design Initiatives*

John Dudas, Vice-President & Director of Strategic Planning, Belz Enterprises

Andy Kitsinger, Senior Vice-President of Development, Memphis Center City Commission

Josh Whitehead, Director of Planning, Memphis & Shelby County Office of Planning and Development

Verna Hawkins Lambert, City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development

Mr. Dudas will lead a panel of experts who will introduce local leaders to available organizational, financial, and land use tools that can be used to encourage the success of neighborhood, district, city-wide, and regional-scale urban design initiatives.

Apr 21 *Using Public Art to Create Memorable and Transformative Places*

John Weeden, 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.

Apr 28 *Transforming the Urban Landscape through Community Gardens and Farmers Markets*

Josephine Williams, Grow Memphis and Curtis Thomas, The Works Inc.

Josephine and Curtis will describe how local residents and leaders are transforming abandoned lots into vibrant community gardens that are improving the appearance of our city's neighborhoods, building a sense of community, and supplementing the incomes of local residents. They will also describe how the city's expanding number of farmers markets are enhancing food access and security for residents of poor and working class neighborhoods and providing exciting new public spaces for social networking

May 5 *Implementing Unified Development Code Tools to Create a More Livable Community*

Josh Whitehead and Don Jones, Memphis & Shelby County OPD

This will be a working session using the new UDC Building Envelope Standards, applying them to Memphis neighborhoods. The UDC is a form of form-based zoning that is becoming increasingly popular throughout our region and nation.

May 12 North Mississippi & Memphis Greenway Initiatives

Robert L Barber, FAICP, Director of Planning, City of Hernando, MS.

Syd Lerner, Executive Director, Greater Memphis Greenline

North Mississippi has been busy the last few years developing the foundations of a comprehensive greenways and blueways system. Mr. Barber will present an overview of their promise for enhanced livability in North Mississippi and offer a perspective on the opportunities presented for greater regional understanding and cooperation throughout the Mid South. Mr. Lerner will present the work of the Greater Memphis Greenline including the Shelby Farms Greenline and the proposed Harahan Bridge conversion.

May 19 Preservation and Main Street in the Urban Environment

Nancy Jane Baker, Memphis Landmarks Commission

Starting with a brief history of the preservation movement in America to set the context of where preservation fits within the Urban Environment. This includes the history of use of Federal Preservation Act and the creation of the programs involved with the Act such as National Register for Historic Places, Secretary of the Interior Standards, Investment Tax Credits, Section 106 and historic zoning. The Main Street Program is a nationally recognized program for the revitalization of Downtowns.

(Please note that course topics are subject to change)

Costs Enrollment costs \$200. Tuition for Urban Design 101 helps underwrite the course. A modest number of scholarships for those with limited incomes are available. Mail or bring your check to Memphis Regional Design Center, 114 N. 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 2011 course, please email Chooch Pickard at cpickard@mrdcinfo.org.

Optional Texts The Smart Growth Manual, Andres Duany & Jeff Speck with Mike Lydon, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2010

The New Civic Art: Elements of Town Planning Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Robert Alminana (et al), Princeton Architectural Press (New York) 2004

City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village Revised edition, David Sucher, Self Published: City Comforts Inc. (Seattle), 2003

The American City: What Works? What Doesn't? Second Edition, Alexander Garvin, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2002

Readings Brief readings will be periodically distributed.

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Design can set Livable Communities in motion

Image by Goody Clancy

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