LARCH 2780 / CRP 4430

Humanizing Streets: Exploring Approaches to Right-Sizing Streets Across the Urban Transect

Tuesday / Thursday 5:30 – 6:50

Knowlton Rm: 269

Course instructors:

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INTRODUCTION

Streets are the framework for our urban systems – enabling commerce, moving people, and providing spaces for human interaction. Too long tilted in favor of the automobile, cities define streets based on their ability to handle traffic (“collectors,” “arterials,” “distributors”). Cold, antiseptic and uninviting spaces, they are designed with the sole purpose of moving the greatest number of vehicles at the greatest possible speed.

In the last decade this has started to change. The balance is shifting in favor of an approach to designing streets to serve multiple users – cars, pedestrians, bikes, and transit. Cities have also started to utilize street edges to integrate green infrastructure solutions. These more “complete” streets maximize the potential of the public right-of-way by recognizing the need to accommodate all types of mobility and aspects of sustainability, but how do they function in reality? What else needs to change in order to truly humanize and right-size our streets? Can or should every street accommodate these additional levels of infrastructure?

This seminar course will:

- Explore existing complete street and green streets case studies, best practices and solutions locally, nationally and internationally
- Develop new ideas for improving the urban realm and humanizing streets, while still accommodating the need for urban infrastructure
- Examine the trade-offs and benefits to implementing these changes
- Identify local problem areas across the urban transect from Downtown to suburban locations
- Explore the relationship between the public realm of the street and adjacent development forms through context-sensitive design
- Apply existing and new solutions to these study areas
- Collaborate with local communities to refine design solutions and create mechanisms for change
- Demonstrate these solutions on-site using tactical urbanism techniques to build temporary installations to prove effectiveness
EXPECTATIONS

We intend to treat this class as a primer on how planning, urban design and landscape architecture projects are conducted in the professional world. As such, we will treat you as we would treat any other practitioner in the real world. There will be assignments and deadlines, yes, but much of the path of this seminar will be made by the class as a whole. We will be there along the way as a resource and to provide guidance, but the legwork will be yours.

This seminar is fundamentally about problem solving. Essential in the early stages of any project is understanding and defining the problem at hand. Potential solutions will need to be developed and vetted using the resources and professional experts made available to the class. Time will be required outside of class to conduct needed work, site visits, research, benchmarking, and other information gathering activities. Collaboration will be necessary. It is expected that students will be proactive in tracking down needed information, developing group work plans, and delegating the work effort. Class time will be spent learning about issues and solutions, presenting to classmates, and, as the course progresses, participating in critiques and work sessions. With the limited class time available on a weekly basis, students should show up to class ready listen to outside speakers, ask informed questions, and share ideas.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE

This class will utilize Carmen. All background material, readings and assignments will be posted to Carmen. Class members will be responsible for using Carmen to share all research gathered and use Carmen to turn in all assignments.

Standard professional software will be an integral part of this course. PowerPoint will be used for presentation, InDesign will be used for report preparation, and CAD and GIS will be used for plan concept preparation. Other programs, such as SketchUp and Photoshop, may also be used to prepare graphic concepts. Using these programs will be essential to learning how work is done in the professional setting and allow for the required and necessary collaboration between class members.

COURSE SCHEDULE

In general this seminar will be broken down into four phases:

1. **Understanding and Best Practices** (weeks 1 –5): In class presentations by professional experts, benchmarks and best practices research, readings, group presentations.
2. **Planning, Design, Focus Area Study** (weeks 6 - 9): Focus areas (up to 4) will be selected, visited and planned for. Tactical Urbanism sites will be selected and planned for and an outreach/event plan will be created. Instructors will be available to collaborate and critique plan concepts. Student work groups will conduct in-class critique of work and presentations to the class.
3. **Tactical Urbanism Demonstrations** (weeks 11-12): Tactical urbanism demonstrations will be held to showcase at least two of the focus area solutions to the general public.
4. **Final Report and Presentation** (weeks 13-15): Developing and completing the final plan documents, enduring a critique and presenting the final plan to an invited group.

It is worth noting that while there are four phases, the work effort will certainly overlap. As instructors, we have purposefully structured the first five weeks of the course, with the idea that the remainder of the course must be flexible in order to accommodate tactical urbanism demonstrations and other items that will need to get firmed up as the class develops a work program to complete all the necessary tasks. This will be a collaborative effort and will require the diligence of all class members.

**BEST PRACTICES GROUPS**

To facilitate the understanding of the numerous design and infrastructure components inherent in street and streetscape design, the class will be divided up into four best practices groups that will explore in great detail how each component can be implemented. This will require assembling information and details on best-in-class design and the identification of trends and best practices (each group should also endeavor to find examples of these improvements and solutions on OSU’s campus and/or in local communities). Each group will be given a set of readings and a list of web resources to review as a starting point for their research. Each group will build on this information to develop a strong understanding that can be shared with the rest of the class and provide the foundation for the eventual plan report that will be the final product of this course. Individual **Summary Reports and Presentations** will be the final work deliverable for this portion of the class. As this is the foundation for the rest of the class it is imperative that each group take this initial task seriously, otherwise the entire class schedule will be in jeopardy.

**Group 1: Green / Sustainable Infrastructure**

This group will take the lead on understanding the ecological advantages, design, engineering and appropriate usage and application of green/sustainable infrastructure in the public realm and across the full spectrum of street typologies.

**Group 2: Bicycle Accommodation**

This group will catalog and explore approaches to accommodating and facilitating the use of bicycles and non-motorized transportation across all street typologies, assessing opportunities, challenges, best practices and innovations.

**Group 3: Traffic Calming**

This group will need to understand the myriad of traffic calming devices across street typologies and their appropriate usage and application.

**Group 4: Pedestrian-Friendly Street Design**
This group will be responsible for understanding how to create a safe and inviting pedestrian realm within a variety of street typologies, and will explore a wide range of factors that affect pedestrian comfort and mobility, including the physical design of the street itself, as well as the relationship between the street and surrounding buildings and land uses.

WEEK 1
January 7: Frostbite
January 9: Course introduction, skills assessment, team assignments, schedule, and reading assignments.

WEEK 2
January 14: MORPC Complete Streets Policy presentation and discussion
January 16: Context Sensitive Design presentation and discussion (Street typologies)

Deliverables:  
* InDesign and PowerPoint templates
* Background Reading Summaries

WEEK 3
January 21: Green Streets presentation
January 23: OSU Approaches to Traffic Calming

WEEK 4
January 28: “Complete” Complete Streets presentation
January 30: NYC + Poyton + Charles Marohn – discussion

Deliverable: Reading Summaries

WEEK 5
February 4: In-class presentations (groups 1 + 2)
February 6: In-class presentations (groups 3+4)

**Deliverable:** Best Practices Presentations (PowerPoint and pdf)

Best Practices Report Sections (InDesign and pdf)

WEEK 6

February 11: Tactical Urbanism Introduction and Focus Area Assignments. Delegation of class member responsibilities.

February 15 (Saturday): Site visits

WEEK 7

February 18: Work session to develop plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

February 20: Work session to develop plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

WEEK 8

February 25: Work session to develop plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

February 27: Work session to develop plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

WEEK 9

March 4: Work session to **finalize** plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

March 6: Work session to **finalize** plans and concepts and Tactical Urbanism event

**Deliverable:** Final Concept Plans and Tactical Urbanism event program

WEEK 10

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11
March 18/20: Final Tactical Urbanism event planning and Event #1

WEEK 12

March 25/27: Final Tactical Urbanism event planning and Event #2

WEEK 13

April 1: Work session to review Tactical Urbanism Event results and assign next steps to create final report and presentation

*Deliverable: Results presentation on Events #1 and #2*

April 3: Work session to complete plan report and presentation

WEEK 14

April 8: Work session to complete plan report and presentation

April 10: Work session to complete plan report and presentation

*Deliverable: Draft plan report and presentation*

WEEK 15

April 15: Final in-class review

April 17: Final presentation

*Deliverable: Final plan report and presentation*

**GRADING**

All grading will be done as fairly and as consistently as is reasonably possible. Assignments that are turned in late for any reason will have 20 points taken off the first day late, 30 points the second day, and 50 points after that point. The instructor will take into consideration assignments that are late due to unforeseeable circumstances.
Students wishing to appeal the grading of an assignment must make the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days after an assignment is returned.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is passing off as one’s own ideas, words, writings, etc. which belong to another. You are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own even if you should have the permission of that person. Any instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (University Rule 3335-5-487)

Grading Breakdown

Best Practices Presentation and Summary Report: 25%
Draft Focus Area Concepts and Tactical Urbanism Planning: 25%
Tactical Urbanism Events / Final Plan and Presentation: 40%
Participation/Collaboration/Communication: 10%

Transformation of numerical grade to letter grade will be according to the schedule summarized below:

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ADA Policy Statement
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 292-3307. Additionally, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, so your disability can be properly accommodated.