

URBP 152/232: Urban Design Studio

spring 2008
WSH 218

instructor: Benjamin Grant
san José state university

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Meetings:

Monday 4:00 PM – 6:45 PM
218 Washington Square Hall

Instructor:

Benjamin Grant
bgrantsjsu@gmail.com

Office Hours:

Mondays 7-8 PM (or by appointment)
218 Washington Square Hall

The Studio

The Urban Design Studio gives students a chance to work on real-world design problems using the same information, tools and techniques used by professionals. Students will work in teams to gather data, conduct a rigorous site analysis, develop design interventions at several scales, and present them to one another, the instructor, and outside reviewers. The course will also introduce a wide range of tools and concepts for the development and presentation of design ideas.

Although this course emphasizes the physical and spatial aspects of the city, urban design is an interdisciplinary field, and students are expected to support their proposals with a thorough understanding of contextual factors, including: community priorities, land use, transportation, built form, ecological conditions, the public realm, economic conditions, and historical context. The goal is to develop solutions that strike a balance between bold, visionary transformation on the one hand, and sensitivity, flexibility, and feasibility on the other.

The Site

This course will explore the potential evolution of North San Jose, with an emphasis on the North First Street corridor in the Vicinity of River Oaks Parkway. This area has for some time served as San Jose's industrial heartland, and is the location of major employers like Sun, Cisco, EBay, and Agilent. These job centers form the backbone of San Jose's economy as well as its identity as "The Capital of Silicon Valley".

At the same time, the physical landscape of North San Jose leaves a great deal to be desired. Most of these employers occupy sprawling, inward-looking campuses, with nondescript buildings set behind vast parking lots. The resulting

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built environment is auto-dependent, lacking in public space, and without a visual identity befitting its economic importance. Large numbers of in-commuters produce severe congestion and environmental problems.

More recently, major efforts have been made to integrate land use and transportation planning in the area. The VTA North First Street LRT has connected the area to Downtown and broadened the transportation options. City Agencies and local stakeholders have been updating the North San Jose Area Development Policy, which calls for intensification of land uses near transit, an increase in housing development, and a better pedestrian environment.

In light of these broad goals, we consider the future of several major sites in the North San Jose, proposing design interventions for each. Among other questions, we will ask: How might we create a distinctive urban center in this sort of landscape? How can new development support the area's key economic role? What elements can be harnessed to foster a sense of identity and place? What mix of uses, activities, and amenities can improve the area's environmental footprint? How might a few catalytic actions result in changes to the surrounding area? What is the long-term relationship of North San Jose to the city and the region? What physical form and aesthetic character will the area take on in the coming years and decades?

Expectations:

Students are expected to devote considerable time outside of class meetings to coursework, both in groups and as individuals. Readings are minimal and there is no written paper. This is to ensure adequate time for studio work.

Coursework will be presented in graphic and oral form. All students are expected to contribute to visual presentation materials and to present them to the class and to outside reviewers. Some prior experience with graphic communication is recommended.

Because presentations are given to outside review panels, extensions can not be granted. Only under extraordinary circumstances, and with the instructor's *advance permission*, can individual conflicts be accommodated.

A studio is intended to replicate, to the extent possible, professional design work. Students are expected to be proactive and conscientious in shaping the design process, seeking out information, and communicating both inside and outside the studio.

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Collaboration is a fundamental element of professional design practice. Students should expect to share their work with each other and the instructor at all stages. Students of different levels are expected to work together and communicate effectively. Grading will reflect engagement, commitment, progress and communication, not simply the quality of the final designs.

Class Schedule (subject to modification)

1/28	Course Overview/Introduction
2/4	Base Materials/Research Assignments
2/11	Graphic Communication (Illustrator)
2/18	Site Tour
2/25	Site Analysis Pinup
3/3	Site Analysis Desk Crit
3/10	SITE ANALYSIS REVIEW
3/17	Transportation/Land Use Integration
3/24	– SPRING BREAK–
3/31	– Cesar Chavez Day– no classes
4/14	Conceptual Design desk crit
4/21	CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW
4/28	Studio work
5/5	pinup
5/12	desk crit
5/19	FINAL PRESENTATIONS

In addition to regular class meetings, several walking tours will be conducted of relevant urban districts in the Bay Area. Students will be encouraged, but not required to attend these.

Tools and Materials

We will use both digital and “by-hand” design tools in this course, and students are encouraged to combine them in creative ways. Adobe Illustrator (available in department computer labs) will be introduced and used for presentation layouts, and SketchUp will provide a basic, optional 3D modeling tool. Students with knowledge of additional software such as AutoCAD or FormZ may incorporate them to a limited extent.

All students will be expected to keep a sketchbook for field notes, sketches, and ideas. Life-drawing, perspective sketching, and diagramming ideas by hand will be incorporated into the class meetings. Students should expect to acquire some

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basic materials (tracing paper, straight edge, engineering scale, pencils, markers, etc.).

A digital camera will be useful, although one per team should generally be adequate.

Students may make limited use of the departmental plotter to print large-scale final presentations.

Course Website

Course materials will be posted on an E-Campus website (<http://online.sjsu.edu/>). Students are expected to check the website regularly.

Grading:

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Teamwork and Communication	15%
Interim Pinups/Desk Crits/Assignments	15%
Site Analysis Presentation	20%
Concept Design Presentation	20%
Final Presentation	20%

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Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without proper attribution. It is a very serious offense both in the university and in your professional work. In essence, plagiarism is both theft and lying: it is stealing someone else's ideas, and then implying that they are one's own.

Plagiarism will lead to grade penalties and a record filed with the department chair. It may also result in your failing the course and/or having the incident permanently noted in your SJSU student records.

If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to make sure you clarify the issues *before* you hand in written work.

Learning when to cite a source and when not to is an art, not a science. However, here are some examples of plagiarism that you should be careful to avoid:

- If you use a sentence (or even a part of a sentence) that someone else wrote and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If you paraphrase somebody else's theory or idea and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If you use a picture or table from a web page or book and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If your paper incorporates data someone else has collected and you don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.

The University of Indiana has developed a very helpful website with concrete examples about proper paraphrasing and quotation. See in particular:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html>
<http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html>
<http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html>

At the last page listed you will find a quiz to test how well you understand proper paraphrasing.

If you still have questions after reading these pages, feel free to talk to the advisor personally. There is nothing wrong with asking for help, whereas even unintentional plagiarism is a serious offense.

If you have questions about the official SJSU policy on plagiarism, please read the "Policy on Academic Dishonesty" at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.htm>. In addition, the "Academic Dishonesty Procedures" are available in any SJSU Schedule of Classes.

Recommended Citation Style

When you cite another author's work in any written assignments, use footnotes and a bibliography following the "Turabian" style:

For print sources, follow the directions in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press, 1996). Copies are available in the SJSU King library and in the main office of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (WSH 216). Additionally, the book is relatively inexpensive, and you may wish to purchase a copy (there are often cheap, used copies available through on-line book sellers).

For electronic sources, follow the directions at Maurice Crouse's page "Citing Electronic Information in History Papers" available at <http://cas.memphis.edu/~mcrouse/elcite.html>.

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The page begins with a discussion of the theory behind good citation style, and then provides detailed examples of how to cite all sorts of sources. Be sure to follow the guidelines for Turabian-style citations.

Please note that Turabian's book describes two systems for referencing materials: (1) footnotes or endnotes, plus a corresponding bibliography, and (2) in-text parenthetical references, plus a corresponding reference list. Be sure to use the footnote and bibliography system for all work you turn in during the semester.

Students with Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.