

the analogous city

urban seminar

[syllabus]

monday, tuesday, thursday: 9:00 – 10:15
wednesday: field studies
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office hours: by appointment



course description

This seminar will focus on the study and analysis of the built fabric of the city in general, and specifically, on the Italian townscape in particular. Structured as a series of critical lectures and discussions that explore the architectural language, typologies, and spatial configurations of the Italian medieval and renaissance city, the course combines theoretical readings with field studies. The field studies will provide the students with opportunities to document and analyze the structural elements that organize the city along side the theoretical readings that speak to the same subject. The readings will provide a platform for weekly discussions, two essays, glossary, and the semester project.

course structure

Lectures, critical discussion, weekly field trips, and reading assignments gather to form the center of the class. The seminar will serve as a *table* or *apparatus* for seeking an understanding of principles and theoretical models of city form. These models correspond with the required readings for the class. Reading and its corollary, field analysis, will be brought together through the discussions. The text books and additional readings provided by the faculty, provide related, though distinctly different, vantage points or models for examining the structure of the city. Careful, methodical study of each model will provide the intellectual tools and vocabulary necessary for deciphering the city. Following each field study, students will bring both their experience and questions to the table in the form of analytical drawings, sketches, site documentation, and written observations that search for connections between the critical concepts of the readings and their direct study of the townscape.

evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

participation in discussions	30%
essays + glossary of terms	30%
field studies / sketchbook	10%
project	30%

discussions

Critical discussion is at the heart of the class and is considered to be the primary tool for making sense of, sorting out, and fashioning a growing understanding of the material. Participation is vital and requires that each student come to the table prepared with reading notes, summaries, and/or field observations, diagrams, and sketches.

writing assignments / essay

There will be a couple of short, informal writings constructed around field observations, comments, and connections to readings. Critical portions of these are to be incorporated into the semester project as well. These informal writings will serve as a point that gathers critical elements that will be incorporated into the project and the glossary. Field observations and critical assessment and summaries of the readings, as well as the glossary of terms will coalesce (through writing and re-writing) into a brief "essay" (≥ 1000 words) that

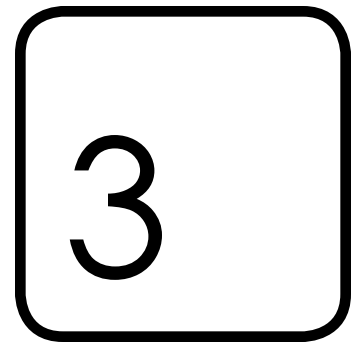
NOTE: This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule. It is based on the most recent information available as of the date of its issuance. It is as accurate and complete as is possible at this time. The instructors reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary and/or appropriate. An effort will be made to communicate any syllabus changes in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

the ambiguities arising from the process of drawing. Vagueness, allusion, and enjambment are part of the process of dialogue and discovery: this is a work of scientific investigation, of dialogue with the city and with the reading materials. This is a work of searching and making connections through building up and unearthing.

The drawing is not a pristine object, but a working drawing – a work in progress that shows all the signs of age, transition, permanence, and study. The single drawing should be considered a map that precisely defines the study area and its elements. The purpose is to study the fabric of the city and build up the drawing with as much information as possible as you go about studying a central “room” within the city – one that is, itself, a primary element *in* the formation of the city and a microcosm of the city. In this study, students are expected to make critical connections to class readings (and discussions) and incorporate these into the drawing as well. Text and words should be introduced in the work (the drawing) in a fashion similar to the other layers. With each reading, lecture, and discussion, additional information should be brought into the drawing. This information may include any ideas or elements or drawings that support or add depth and layers to the study. Analogies and similar conditions may be incorporated – drawn from the diversity field trips that are part of the program. In each case, the elements brought into the drawing should be ordered in response to the existing drawing. Indeed, the urban plan of the study area should be considered the primary ordering device for the work. The completed work, while partially obscure due to the nature of the drawing process and the techniques or media involved, should be clear in its presentation of the analogous city.

thoughts

urban plan of piazza / street (study area)
relationships to larger urban fabric
primary elements and artifacts
edges and boundaries
centers
walls, gates, streets
street patterns
entries and in-between zones (public – private)
loggias
public spaces (interiors of churches and civic buildings)
housing / dwellings / palazzos
sequences (movement, processions)
fountains
monuments
steps, stairs, topographic changes
secondary elements and “furniture”
elevations (proportional studies)
sections (the urban room as vessel)
details of critical elements (plans and elevations)
diagrams (a taxonomy of elements, buildings, spaces: a system of classification)
axonometrics of urban rooms and elements
critical qualities of urban artifacts
compose drawing in layers using light coats of gesso in-between
the drawing becomes a three-dimensional construction
build up
consider different media, materials, and methods / techniques
limit media and use systematically for clarity
pochet
figure/field
consider overall organization, structure, and readability
grafts
re-draw as necessary
drawings should be interconnected: this is a single drawing
time as a contributing factor (a palimpsest)



precision and care of scientific drawings (compass)
taxis, construction lines, alignments, overlaps
 a laboratory for exploration of inter-relationships and connections
 drawing should contain the richness of the actual urban fabric
 connections to readings
 process is product



schedule

week	date	book	reading
2	04FB	Mayernik	"introduction" (pp 1-13) "Rome" (pp 15 - 88)
3	09-12FB		field trip: Rome
4	18FB	Lynch	"the image of the environment" (pp 1-13) "the city image and its elements" (pp 46-90)
5	25FB	Mayernik Lynch	"Florence and Siena" (pp 133 - 194) "city form" (pp 91-117) "a new scale" (pp 118-120) appendices A, B, C (pp 123-181)
6	04MR	Mayernik	"Venice" (pp 89 - 132) "Pienza" (pp 195 - 217)
7	09-12MR		field trip: Venice
8	14-21MR		spring break
9	25MR	Rossi	chapter 1, "the structure of the urban artifact" (pp 29-61)
10	01AP	Rossi	chapter 2, "primary elements and the concept of area" (pp 63-65 + 86-101) chapter 3, "the individuality of urban artifacts: architecture" (pp 103-107 + pp 112-137)
11	08AP	Blizard	chapter 5, "between the buildings"
12	15AP	Blizard	chapter 6, "remembering the city"
15	04MY		"all schools final exhibit"

reading

required

- 1 Mark A. Blizard, Architecture: Land Culture Practice. Kendall/Hunt: Dubuque, Iowa, 2008.
- 2 Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1960.
- 3 David Mayernik, Timeless Cities. Westview Press: Boulder CO, 2003

provided by faculty

- 1 Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1982.

glossary of terms

Students will generate a glossary of terms – constructed in their note book through the process of reading and studying the city and presented formally at the end of the semester in hard-copy and virtual, Word™ file. Over the course of the semester, the terms should grow, through additions, conglomeration, questioning, searching. Footnote as necessary. Begin here:

study area - Rossi, p 63.

a clearly defined area that immediately borders either a street or a piazza within the larger framework of an urban center.

analogy - O.E.D

equality of ratios; in proportion

a representative in different circumstances or situation

something performing a corresponding part; correspondence or adaption of one thing to another

equivalency or likeness of relations

resemblance of form or function between organs which are essentially

different (tail of fish to tail of whale)

class policies

- 1 seminar and field trip attendance is mandatory.
- 2 you are responsible for all material covered in class and for all assigned readings.
- 3 all work submitted for completion of this course will be governed by the standards of "scholastic dishonesty" in the UTSA undergraduate catalog. see also the faculty handbook (section VI, chapter 2, section 2.37). plagiarism and its results will be discussed in class.
- 4 questioning, participating, engaging, reading, discussing, and "tossing ideas and thoughts back and forth" are necessary components of the seminar environment – you must come prepared to the table to be a vital part of the seminar.
- 5 no late arrivals or early departures.
- 6 turn your cell phone off. No instant messaging is permitted.
- 7 all note taking is to be done by hand during the seminar in order to facilitate the discussion.
- 8 there will be no time extensions for assignments.
- 9 selected completed work will be archived for accreditation of the architectural program.



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