

## **CRP 455 AESTHETICS AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE IN URBAN DESIGN**

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### **Course Objective**

Planners and designers often speculate about the effects of their plans on individuals, yet they lack an adequate empirical basis for making such judgments. Since the 1960's, much research has been done on the relationship between the physical environment and humans.

This course aims to examine that research with an eye towards identifying directions for making environmental design more fitting to its inhabitants. The course focuses on the way individuals experience (perceive, construe, evaluate, use, and sustain) their surroundings. It aims to give students an understanding of the complex interrelationships between physical settings and users (individuals and groups who interact with the settings). The course also seeks to give students an understanding of how to generate that knowledge through various research and analytical research tools (including both conventional and participatory action research tools) and to establish design guidelines for the design and sustainability of new environments.

### **Course Content and Structure**

This course provides students with the theoretical views in environmental aesthetics, methods and techniques used in research, and human design principles in a number of settings including urban plazas, urban waterfronts, residential areas, and university campuses. Students also practice the translation of the theoretical knowledge into a real life situation or in their studio projects.

The course stands on the premise of improving students' skills in the processes of working collaboratively towards liberating outcomes, working both as a stakeholder and as a facilitator. Each student has his/her experiences and standpoint to offer which will differ from what others have to offer.

This course has a mix of undergraduate and graduate students. This occasionally may intimidate some students (both undergraduates and graduates). In the conventional ideology of university life, having undergraduates and graduate students together is supposed to mean that we have more expert participants. This course does not stand on this premise. Being a young undergraduate and expressing your reactions from that position is as valuable for clarifying the issues in the course as being a highly experienced graduate student. The contributions of undergraduates and graduates are often very different and highly valued by both.

The class will normally move between mini-lectures, small group work, and collaborative plenary sessions. Small group work will rely on students' forming a self-managing group, expressing their own expertise and interests in the process of modifying the itinerary of the course and experiencing participatory group processes.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to define terms in environmental aesthetics, identify and describe important principles, discriminate between different points of view, and construct problem solving approaches using the methods and techniques.

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