

## What Is a City?: Exploring Life and Design for Urban Environments

UF Quest 1, Trial 3: Nature + Culture  
General Education – Humanities

Semester: Spring 2020

Day / Time: Tuesday P5-6 (11:45am to 1:40pm), Thursday P5 (11:45 to 12:35)

Location: Tuesday Little Hall 121, Thursday Matherly Hall 107

Credits: 3

Lecturer Sarah Gamble

Office: 250 Architecture Building

Office Hours: Wednesday P7 (1:55 to 2:45pm), Thursday P6 (12:35 to 1:40pm)

Email communication: Canvas Email preferred, [sarah.gamble@ufl.edu](mailto:sarah.gamble@ufl.edu) as needed

### Course Description

Exploring the most popular setting for contemporary life, this course investigates urbanity, asking engaging, open-ended questions about culture, values, priorities, and quality of life. With the global population exponentially rising, cities continue to grow and evolve to accommodate life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This semester we will explore the composition of a city and the design of and life within urban environments, asking questions about the origin of cities, how they are designed and lived in today, and our vision for the future. The course incorporates perspectives and knowledge from a range of disciplines, including architecture, urban planning, urban design, history, and others to expose students to a range of contexts, societies, landscapes, perspectives, and variables that impact urban environments and life within them.

The course will spark curiosity about the spaces and places present within the city, as we look to understand their morphology and how they impact our way of life, including daily routine, behavior, spending, and relationships. We will consider why individuals and families are drawn to a range of urban environments, tied to relational networks, employment, mobility, and affordability. Throughout the course, resiliency and sustainability will be investigated, asking questions about the implications of our climate crisis on urban inhabitants. This course will bridge disciplines, perspectives, cultures, and continents to take a wholistic look at cities around the world and contemporary life within them.

### Course Format

Lectures will be populated with photographs, drawings, video, and other media to communicate key principles and examples. In-class exercises will spur discussion and exploration of course materials. Assigned readings will provide a broader context to the subject matter and support content discussed in class.

Each week, a small group of students will briefly present the week's readings with other students asking questions. At the conclusion of each week, students will reflect on the week's lecture content and personal thoughts / conclusions through writing. Students will be tested on course content in the form of pop quizzes, mid-term exam, and final exam.

### Course Credit Policies

*General Education Objectives and Learning Outcomes: Humanities (H)*

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Humanities Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to...

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

### *UF Quest 1 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes*

This course is a UF Quest 1 subject area course in the UF Quest Program. Grounded in the modes of inquiry and expression characteristic of the arts and humanities, Quest 1 courses invite students to explore essential questions that transcend the boundaries of any one discipline—the kinds of complex and open-ended questions they will face as critical, creative, and thoughtful adults navigating a complex and interconnected world.

Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of essential questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students apply approaches from the humanities to mine works for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

### UF Quest 1 Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to...

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).

### *Course Student Learning Outcomes*

Reflecting the curricular structures of Quest 1 and these Humanities General Education designations, students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to develop urban environments and how these environments are designed in relationship to and impact culture, lifestyle, landscape, history, values, and community (Content for Gen Ed H and Q1)
2. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on the design of urban environments and their impact on urban life, including community, quality of life, daily routine, behavior, spending, relationships, and the natural environment (Critical Thinking for Gen Ed H and Q1)
3. Connect course content on urban environments with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond, ie. housing, affordability, mobility, employment, quality of life, etc. (Connection for Q1)
4. Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written formats about life and design for urban environments and other relevant subject

matter engaged in the course. (Communication for Gen Ed H and Q1)

### **Experiential Learning**

As part of the course, you are expected to take part in experiential learning. At several points in the semester, you will be asked to visit spaces and places on campus to further engage and explore content covered in class, for example: the crosswalk adjacent to Turlington Hall, the architecture of the Law School, and/or landscape design of the (former) Natural History Museum. You will be asked to reflect upon these experiences in your weekly reflection assignments. The completion of these visits will be assessed as part of your weekly reflections and questions may appear on the mid-term and final exams.

If a student is unable to visit these on-campus locations, please talk with the instructor to make special accommodations at least 48 hours before the weekly reflection is due. The instructor will then be aware and able to make any additional accommodations related to exam questions.

### **Assignments**

#### Weekly Reflections

- Description: Compose a 250-word reflection in response to a provided prompt tied to the week's course content. 1 reflection per week for 12 weeks. (No reflection Week 8, 14, and 15.) Reflections due the Monday of the following week by 12 noon submitted via Canvas.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

#### Paper

- Description: Develop one (or a combination of) 250-word reflection(s) into a 1,000-word paper analysis in response to the provided prompt. Paper due the Monday of Week 15 by 12 noon submitted via Canvas.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

#### Reading Presentation

- Description: Prepare an overview / reflection on an assigned readings to provide to the class. Be prepared to answer questions from other students about the reading. Presentation date will be assigned to each student.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 4

#### Reading Questions

- Description: Prepare questions on the assigned reading to ask after the Reading Presentations. Date will be assigned to each student.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 4

#### Pop Quizzes

- Description: 5 unannounced, pop quizzes will test your knowledge of course content taken from in-class discussions, lectures, and readings.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 4

#### Mid-term

- Description: An assessment at the mid-point in the semester composed of multiple choice, image identification, and short answer. Exam given during the 2<sup>nd</sup> class of Week 8.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 4

#### Final Examination

- Description: An assessment at the end of the course composed of multiple choice, image identification, short answer, and essay. Final Exam date TBD.
- Course SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

## Weekly Class Schedule

### Week 1: *The City*

Framing Questions: What is a City? What is life like in an urban environment?

Lecture Topics: The definition of city / urban vs. rural, suburban, and tribal; National and global trends toward urban living; advantages and disadvantages of an urban way of life

Readings: "Long Island, New York", Chapter 1 of *Flaneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London* by Lauren Elkin. p. 25 - 37 [Women's History / Urban Issues]; "The Mayor of Happy", Chapter 1 of *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design* [Urban Design]

### Week 2: *Origins and Physical Development*

Framing Question: How have urban environments been established and developed?

What are the elements that compose a city?

Lecture Topics: brief history of urban development; the elements that compose a city; density and sprawl

Readings: "Chapter 3: The City Image and Its Elements" from *The Image of the City* by Kevin Lynch (p. 46-90) [Urban Theory]; "What is Sprawl?" by Oliver Gillham (p.378-398) [Urban Development]; "Land Use" by Bozeman Science (online link in Canvas)

### Week 3: *Culture and Community*

Framing Question(s): How do the inhabitants of a city shape the physical environment, relationships, and living?

Lecture Topics: Culture's impact on the built environment; the built environment's impact on community, relationships, interaction; involvement in public life and collective decision-making

Readings: "Introduction" and "The Use of Sidewalks: Contact" from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs (p. 3-25; 55-73) [Urban Planning]; "The Neighborhood Unit" by Clarence Perry (p. 78-89) [Urban Design]

### Week 4: *Environment and Our Senses*

Framing Question(s): How do our senses impact our experience and perception of space and place?

Lecture Topics: The five senses and our perception of space; space vs. place

Readings: "The Phenomenon of Place" by Christian Norberg-Schulz (p 125 -137) [Architecture]; "Part 2" of *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* by Juhani Pallasma (p. 39 – 50) [Architecture]; "Hearing in Architecture" in *Experiencing Architecture* by Steen Eiler Rasmussen (p.224 – 240) [Architecture]

### Week 5: *Living and Moving*

Framing Question(s): How does our movement within the city shape our perception, daily routine, and way of life?

Lecture Topics: the mode and speed by which we move impacts our everyday and perception of the city; types of transportation based on culture and environment; walking as a fundamental right; the concept of accessibility and ADA.

Readings: "Chapter 11: The Solitary Stroller and the City" in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* by Rebecca Solnit (p. 171 – 195) [History]; "The Theory of the Derive" by Guy Debord from *the Situationist Anthology* (p. 1 – 6) [Urban Design History]

### Week 6: *Quality of Life*

Framing Question: How does our physical environment impact our quality of life?

Lecture Topics: Variables impacting quality of life: affordability, mobility, stability, etc; Daily life for those experiencing poverty, homelessness, injustice, etc; Public health and the physical environment

Readings: “Walking? You’re risking your life in Florida, the deadliest state for pedestrians” by Linda Robertson in the Miami Herald (online link in Canvas) [Public Safety / Transportation]; “Our Health Is a Function of Where We Live” in the Lancet by Shifalika Goenka and others (p. 2168 – 2169); Watch *Urbanized* (available through UF’s Kanopy documentary subscription service)

#### *Week 7: Visionaries*

Framing Question: How have others envisioned ideal cities for living?

Lecture Topics: Contrasting views of the city of future / ideal city: Le Corbusier, Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Designers of China’s Traditional Walled Cities, the New Urbanist

Readings: “A Contemporary City” by Le Corbusier (p. 315-324) [Architectural / Urban Planning History]; “Broadacre City: A New Community Plan” by Frank Lloyd Wright (p. 325-330) [Architectural / Urban Planning History]; “The Charter of New Urbanism” by Congress for New Urbanism (online link within Canvas) [Urban Planning]

#### *Week 8: Reflection / Review / Mid-term*

Lecture Topics: Review of Weeks 1 – 7, Mid-term

Readings: None.

#### *Week 9: City-Making*

Framing Question: How are cities made? How can I be involved in the shaping of my living environment?

Lecture Topics: Overview of land use principles, zoning, and code; Built environment professionals’, government’s, and the community’s role in city-making

**Media:** “Introduction to Zoning Codes” by City Beautiful (online link through Canvas) [Urban Planning]; “Zoning by Design” TEDtalk by George Proakis (online link through Canvas) [Urban Planning History]

#### *Week 10: Streetscapes*

Framing Question: What is the role of the street in urban life?

Lecture Topics: Elements of the street; relationships between the streetscape and architecture, transportation, public space, and quality of life

Readings: “Three Types of Outdoor Activities” and “Integrate or Segregate” from *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space* by Jan Gehl (p.9 – 14, 101 -120) [Architecture / Urban Design]; “Conclusion: Great Streets and City Planning” by Allan B. Jacobs (p. 214-217) [Urban Design]

#### *Week 11: Housing*

Framing Questions: How does housing impact daily life? How are economics involved?

Lecture Topics: Housing Typologies: single family, duplex, multi-family, low-rise, mid-rise, high-rise; The economics of housing: market rate, affordable housing, etc; housing communities and neighborhoods.

Readings: “How do we know when housing is affordable?” by Edward Glaeser and Joseph Gyourko from the *Affordable Housing Reader*. (p.111-115) [Urban Planning]. *Pamphlet Architecture #5: The Alphabetical City* by Steven Holl (p. 4 – 59 with images). [Architecture]

#### *Week 12: Parks and Public Spaces*

Framing Questions: How do cultures and communities use public / park spaces? Why are public / park spaces an essential amenity for urban life?

Lecture Topics: The importance of shared public space; Public space and park typologies; Trends in the current design.

Readings: “The Life of Plazas”, “Sitting Space”, and “Sun, Wind, Trees, and Water” in

by William Whyte (p. 98-113) [Urban Design]; “Austin Central Library” in *Texas Architect* magazine by Aaron Seward and Sarah Gamble (online link through Canvas) [Architecture]

**Week 13: The Composition of Uniqueness**

Framing Questions: What are the elements and characteristics which make an urban place unique?

Lecture Topics: Local character and feel of a city; In-between space; historical preservation; public art

Readings: “The Generators of Diversity” from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs (p. 143-151) [Urban Planning]; Example Creative Placemaking case studies from the National Endowment for the Arts *Exploring Our Town* website (online links through Canvas) [Public Art / Creative Placemaking]

**Week 14: Resiliency + Sustainability**

Framing Questions: How is climate change impacting urban environments? How can we make them more resilient?

Lecture Topics: Concepts of resiliency and sustainability; current and upcoming impacts to global urban environments; opportunities for environmental education and increased resiliency

Reading: “Chapter 1: Living in a Complex World” in *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World* by Brian Walker and David Salt (p.1-14) [Environmental Studies]; “Afterword: Replacement” by W. G. Clark in *The Hand and the Soul: Aesthetics and Ethics in Architecture and Art* (p. 279-283) [Architecture]; “A Safe Operating Space for Humanity” by Johan Rockstrom and others in *Nature* magazine (p.472-475) [Natural Resources / Environmental Studies]

**Week 15: The Future of Cities**

Framing Questions: How do we participate in shaping the city of the future?

Lecture Topics: Trends and opportunities in shaping the city of the future; Review for final exam.

Readings: None

**Readings**

All texts and other media will be available through Canvas (e-learning).

**UF Grading Policy**

Information on UF’s grading policy can be found at the following location:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

**Grading Criteria**

24% Weekly Reflections (12 total) = 240 points (20 points each)

15% Paper = 150 points

6% Reading presentation = 60 points

5% Reading questions = 50 points

10% Pop Quizzes (5 total) = 100 points (20 points each)

10% Attendance = 100 points

15% Mid-term Exam = 150 points

15% Final Exam = 150 points

100% Total = 1000 points

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	93-	90-	87-	83-	80-	77-	73-	70-	67-	63-	60-	0-
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

## **Class Policies**

### **Canvas**

The Canvas website will serve as the hub of communication for the course. All readings, assignments, announcements, etc will be distributed / collected through the site. It is your responsibility to actively review the Canvas page and remain updated about the course. Set your notifications accordingly to receive information in a timely manner.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is expected and will be taken at each class. Each student will have 2 discretionary, unexcused absences from class. After 2 absences, each additional absence will subtract 2 percentage points from the 10 total percentage points allocated to attendance in the overall grade. Upon the 8<sup>th</sup> absence, students will be asked to withdraw from the course or receive a failing grade. For excused absences aligned with the University's policies (illness, religious holidays, etc), students should inform the instructor as soon as possible and provide documentation.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **Late Work Policy**

Late work is subject to a 20% grade penalty for each 24-hour period it is late. To be excused from submitting work or taking an exam at the assigned time, you must give 48 hours advance notice and/or meet the UF standards for an excused absence.

### **Class Demeanor**

Students are expected to arrive to class on time, stay the full class period, and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Electronic devices should be turned off and placed in closed bags. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be kept to a minimum.

### **Materials and Supplies Fees**

There are no materials or supply fees for this course.

### **Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **Academic Honesty**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge that states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'"

The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructors.

**Students with Special Needs and Accommodations**

Students with special physical needs and requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. All attempts to provide an equal learning environment for all will be made.

**Counseling and Wellness Center**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.