

Fundamentals of Urban Digital Design

Visual Studies Seminar, Spring 2017 GSAPP

A76398

Fridays 9am-1pm

Fayerweather 201 and 200 North

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Description

This course provides conceptual and practical tools to enhance the visual literacy of urban planners, and teaches how to understand and communicate visual and spatial projects that range from the scale of the building to that of the city. The seminar departs from the premise that images are a form of language, thus during the semester students design and edit photos, series, maps, plans, sections, infographics, charts, renderings, and animation to develop a visual argument. To achieve this goal, classes teach and detail the methods to realizing such work using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop and AfterEffect, Autocad and SketchUp; and discuss conceptual techniques of effective visual communication.

Course Project

Throughout the semester students are asked to build, through visuals, a planning argument persuading an imaginary audience that either a preserved public space has to be built up; or that a preserved building has to be demolished.

Examples of preserved public areas that can be proposed for building are:

- A housing building at St. Patrick's cemetery in New York
- A shopping mall in Central Park
- A Botanical Garden at the Piazza del Campo, Siena
- A police station occupying half of Tompkins Square Park
- A Sports Center at the Champs Elysees

Examples of buildings that can be turned into public open spaces (students would need to provide the use for the new open areas) are:

- Chrysler Building in New York
- L'Etoile, Paris
- Buckingham Palace, London
- The Forbidden City, Beijing
- Wall Street building, New York

During the first half of the semester

Students will work in groups of two, to elaborate an analysis through photographs and plans, persuading for either the preservation or the construction of their public space.

During the second half of the semester

Individually, students will develop a schematic urban proposal for their site through diagrams, renderings and sketches.

Calendar

I Introduction

W01 01/20 **Visual Arguments** INDD
On Evidences and Editing

II Elements

W02 01/27 **Pages** INDD
Book Format & Layouts

W03 02/03 **Series** INDD/PSD
Page Composition & Infographics

W04 02/10 **Photos** PSD
Documentary vs Candid Photography

W05 02/17 **Maps** DWG/PDF
Territorial Scale

W06 02/24 **Plans** DWG/IL
Neighborhood Scale

W07 03/03 **Sections** DWG/ILL
Three Dimensional Maps

W08 03/10 **Editing Workshop (I)** Paper

W09 03/17 Spring Break

03/23 **Halfway Publication Due** PDF

III Rendering

W10 03/24 **Modeling** DWG/SKP
3D Urban Representations

W11 03/31 **Post-Production** SKP/ILL
3D Effects and Compositing

W12 04/07 **Sketching** PDF/INDD
Personalizing your Intervention

W13 04/14 **Animation** AE
Personalizing your Intervention

W14	04/21	Editing Workshop (II)	Paper
W15	04/28	Final Publication Presentation	Paper/Web
	05/05	Edited Final Publication Due	PDF

Class Structure

A typical class will follow the structure below:

- 9am **Instructor Presentation: Concepts & Precedents**
We will introduce concepts and tools relevant to the topic of the class, making especial emphasis in examples and lessons from urban planning, urban design and architecture - however some concepts will necessarily relate to other disciplines.
- 9:30am **Student Presentation: Precedent Analysis**
Each group will have 6' to introduce some visual outcomes
What has been the use of the image and what would be the usefulness of this format, how could we learn and how other have learnt from it.
- 10am **Break**
- 10:15am **Class Assignment**
Instructor will execute an exercise with students with the aid of a tutorial form.
- 12:45am **Group Review of Previous Home Assignment**
We will review some examples of student work from our previous class, and discuss about ways to improve them. At this time students whose work is discussed are expected to take notes, and critically reflect on these comments for later edits of their work.

Deliverables

Most part of weekly assignments lead to a final publication conveying your argument, which will be presented on April 28th, and delivered on May 5th.

Weekly Home Assignments

Weekly assignments consists on a PDF document (laid out in class 1) that includes:

- Your visual home assignment
- Caption or title of your home assignment
- Precedents used/copied/analyzed while doing your assignment, including legends and references as appropriate

Students will upload these documents as PDF to a shared GDrive folder before 11pm on Thursdays.

Name your files in the following way: wkx_familyname

For example, Alejandro would use: wk1_decastro

Editing Workshops

During the semester there will be several meetings where students will present, discuss, and edit their work during class time, with peers and a guest critic. To do so, each student will print a mock-up of her/his work at 1:1.

Halfway Publication

Students will send PDFs with their project, before midnight on the date of the deadlines.

Final Publication

Students will print and present their work as a finalized, bound-publication. They will present, and discuss their work with peers and a guest critic. They will take note of possible edits to do, and present an edited version the following week.

Student Presentation on Precedent Studies

Once during the semester, students will make a short presentation (6') to describe the role of acknowledged urban planning, design or architectural visuals in supporting arguments.

In order to describe the role of the visual in supporting a given argument, the presentation will describe:

- Who is/was the author
- What is/was the medium the visual was produced at (size, format)
- What is/was the argument portrayed at the medium
- Who is/was the audience targeted by the author
- What is/was the role of the visual in regards to the argument
- What is/was the technique used to produce the visual (be exhaustive)
- Do you think that the visual is persuasive? Why?

Students will work in groups of two. To keep presentations to 6' they will write a script of 600 words, which they will upload along with the PDF of the presentation to the GDrive shared folder before class.

Grading

10% Presentation of Precedent Analysis

20% Home Assignments

30% Halfway Publication, and Editing Workshop I

40% Editing Workshop II, and Final Publication

Minimum Standards

Students that present their home assignments with a level of execution that is similar to the ones done in class will receive a pass grade at this portion of the grade. Students presenting work that goes above this level – because of its complexity, consistency, or ingenuity – will be considered for High Pass, however only a small percentage of students will receive this grade. Students that do not submit two or more home assignments; deliver the midterm and final project; present their precedent analysis; or present their work at one of the editing workshops, will fail this portion of their grade.

Attendance

Punctuality is required to cover all instructional materials, and also it is a sign of courtesy to your instructors and peers. Students with more than two unexcused absences (arriving more than 15' late or missing the class) will fail the course.

Assignments

FUDD is not a Theory seminar. For this reason we will not evaluate your visual argument as if it is a research paper, but rather as a literary narrative made with visual means. We will look at how convincingly you tell a story through images. Research to find right data and images will count positively towards the High Pass, but not negatively towards the Low Pass grade.

Other Logistical Matters

Additional Resources

Each week we will upload some documents that speculate on the topics or techniques discussed in class, and a list with online references relevant to the class topic. If you want to know more about the topics and techniques, just let us know.

Working with us outside class.

The TA will be key in helping or guiding your questions outside of class. Students are encouraged to contact for questions that extend the hours of class, but you can write us if you have a question that you think should be addressed to us. If this is the case, please always copy both of us, and the TA, in your email.

Printing Costs

Unfortunately there is no budget for printing during the semester, and printing is mandatory for, at least, our three editing workshops, and for the final presentation.