

Fundamentals of Urban Digital Design

Visual Studies Seminar, Fall 2017 GSAPP

Fridays 2pm-6pm, Fayerweather 200N (Lab) and 200S

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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 AfterEffects, 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 police station occupying half of Tompkins Square Park; or 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: the Chrysler Building in New York; the Buckingham Palace in London; the Forbidden City in Beijing; or the Wall Street building in 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

		Introduction	Software
W01	09/08	Evidence-Making and Visual Arguments	INDD
		Elements	
W02	09/15	Instances	INDD/PSD
		Book Format, Page Composition	
W03	09/22	Photos	PSD
		Documentary vs Candid Photography	
W04	09/29	Maps	CAD/AI
		Territorial Scale	
W05	10/06	Plans	CAD/AI
		Neighborhood Scale	
W06	10/13	Sections	CAD/AI
		Three Dimensional Maps	
W07	10/20	Editing Workshop (I)	Print
		Rendering	
W08	10/27	3D Modeling	SKP/AI
		Urban Representations	
W09	11/03	3D Post-Production	SKP/AI
		Effects and Compositing	
W10	11/10	2D Fine Tuning	SKP/PSD
		Adding realism or narrative to your rendering	
W11	11/17	2D Sketching	PDF/INDD
		Personalizing your Intervention	
W12	11/24	Thanksgiving Break	
W13	12/01	Animation	AE
		Personalizing your Intervention	
W14	12/08	Editing Workshop (II)	Print/Video
W15	12/15	Final Publication Due	(PDF)

Software: Adobe Illustrator (AI), Adobe AfterEffects (AE), Adobe Photoshop (PSD), Google Sketchup (SKP), Adobe InDesign (INDD), Autocad (CAD)

Class Structure

A typical class will follow the structure below:

2pm **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.

2:40pm **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 learned from it.

3pm **Break**

3:15pm **Class Tutorial**

Instructor will execute an exercise with students with the aid of a tutorial form.

5:45pm **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

They consist on a PDF document (layout in class 1) including a visual produced by the student; a title; and legend, references and precedents used/copied/analyzed

Editing Workshops

Twice during the semester, students will discuss and edit their work with peers and guest critics in class. In these sessions each student will print a mock-up of her/his work at 1:1 and take notes of edits to do.

Final Publication

This is the edited version of students' visual project, printed as a finalized, bound-publication.

Student Presentation on Visual Precedents

Once during the semester students will make a short presentation (6') describing the role of visuals in supporting urban planning and design arguments. The presentation will describe the author, medium and technique of the visual, and why it was used to persuade a certain audience.

To keep presentations to 6', students will upload a PDF of the presentation to a GDrive shared folder before class, and write a script of 600 words.

Grading

10% Presentation of Precedent Analysis

20% Weekly Home Assignments

30% Editing Workshop I, and Midterm Publication

40% Editing Workshop II, and Final Publication

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.