

Good Urbanism 101 Working Course Descriptions

Session 1—Urban Design: Urban Form, Design Practice, and Ten Lessons

This session will explore the following questions: What is Urban Design? Why is it important? What are the primary constituent elements of urban form? How do these elements influence development, preservation, accessibility, diversity, and sustainability? How does urban design practice, including all the various professions involved in the creation of urban form, guide these elements? Finally, what are the ten lessons that are crucial for good urban design?

Session 2—Urban Design and Subdivision: Defining Public and Private

Subdivision, the organization of territory into public and private realms, is the first characteristic that defines a landscape. There are forms of subdivision that are unique to the U.S., and this session will explore these, discussing their historical evolution and their common and unique features. Each form of subdivision and its specific block dimensions and configurations has different implications for longterm adaptability, livability, pedestrian and transportation flow, safety, access, health, sustainability, and internal functioning of blocks.

Session 3—Zoning: Regulating the Private Domain

Zoning is the regulatory framework that shapes the private domain. This session will examine the origin, legal basis, and evolution of American zoning regulations and their impact on the American city. Current zoning practices present specific challenges, and new, innovative zoning practices attempting to remedy them—historic preservation districts, special public interest districts, mixed-use districts, form-based codes, transferable development rights, etc.—come with both new pitfalls and new solutions. How can one deal with city officials, business owners, neighborhood associations, and citizens in a way that addresses common fears and apprehensions about zoning changes and opens up possibilities for a more livable, sustainable city that addresses everyone's needs?

Session 4—Streets and Public Works: Making the Public Realm Visible

Streets are the most important part of the public realm. Streets are different than roads, and streets, roads, and other public rights-of-way have many different typologies. Each of these typologies has unique functions, characteristics, and influences on pedestrian and vehicular circulation and local businesses and neighborhoods. The dimensional characteristics of each typologies defines its unique functions, characteristics, influences on circulation, challenges to implementation, and contribution to the neighborhoods or businesses around it. Public works standards that guide the construction of the public realm can be crucial to making great streets and roads and promoting environmental stewardship.

Session 5– Design: The Private Domain

The dimensions of blocks and buildings affect the public realm, the private realm, and the relationship between the two immensely. The design of the private domain is crucial to ensuring a legible relationship between public and private, accessibility, smooth business operations, effective sanitation, public health and safety, and the beauty and character of a city. This session will explore block design and how it accommodates all of its requirements—pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parking, building program, public works requirements, engineering standards, client needs, etc. It will present case studies from Atlanta and analyze mistakes we have made in the city and how they could have been avoided.

Session 6– Designing Atlanta: Urban Design Lessons and Roundtable Discussions

In this session, we will choose a real site in Atlanta, analyze its needs and the opportunities and challenges it presents, and take it through a model urban design process. We will put into practice the lessons of the previous five sessions about public and private realms, streets, zoning, blocks, and urban form.