



AG2125 Defining the Elements of Urbanism 7.5 credits

Stadsbyggandets praktiska och diskursiva grunder

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

Establishment

Course syllabus for AG2125 valid from Autumn 2010

Grading scale

A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Education cycle

Second cycle

Main field of study

Built Environment

Specific prerequisites

A Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) in architecture, landscape architecture or urban planning. Previous studies should include courses corresponding to a minimum of 30 ECTS credits in the field of urban design. In addition documented proficiency in English B or equivalent (TOEFL, IELTS e.g).

Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

Intended learning outcomes

Urbanism is broadly speaking defined as the study of cities, but different fields concentrate on different aspects. In architecture & urban planning, urban form and structure is the focus. The Urban Design discipline concerns the arrangement, appearance and functionality of villages, towns and cities, and in particular the shaping and uses of urban public space. The Aim is to explore the dynamics and complexity of various issues in urban design that have their impact on everyday built environment and social patterns. This course will engage the advanced architecture and planning students in the fundamental historical understanding of urbanism and how the theoretical and informed knowledge of looking at the city may help advance, and what relevance it has for effective and sensitive urban planning & design interventions in space, in order to create better contemporary places.

After Completing the Course, the Student will acquire conceptual knowledge and understanding of Urbanism as well as Urban Design and will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the role of urban design in the longterm development of cities towards a sustainable society;
- to show wide knowledge and understand the key elements that constitute urban design;
- acquire an in-depth insights into international research and development in urbanism and urban design, and the methods used in the planning and design processes of sustainable urban structures;
- to understand, analyze, and influence the variety of forces—social, economic, cultural, legal, political, ecological, technological, aesthetic, in shaping the built environment;
- develop the student's capacity to address the complex and multi-layered fabric of the contemporary city and the system of forces that continuously reconfigure it.

Course contents

This course will serve as an introduction and overview of the basic tenets, disciplinary threads, and bodies of scholarship associated with the idea of urbanism. As stated previously Urbanism is often defined as the study of cities, where for in urban planning and architecture, urban form and structure are in main focus, while in sociology, urbanism may be more about social interaction and community within the context of cities. Historians may be particularly interested in historical patterns of urban growth and change. What all these fields have in common is a concern for the created human habitat and the problems – and potential solutions – that habitat inspires. This course is designed in such a way to enable the students to adopt a critical & reflective perspective towards past & current urban design theories, pedagogies and conventional practices on the ground, and to develop an in-depth and interdisciplinary approach toward a more meaningful urban design for the future.

Course Objectives are to:

1. Familiarize the students with selected writings and critiques on urbanism and urban design history & theory (established and emerging);
2. Comprehend the current state of urbanization, the emerging contemporary city, and the

issues and challenges facing urban design;

3. Help the student develop a level of comfort with the integration of urban design into the field of urbanism;

4. Discuss a conceptual approach for understanding what we are working with in order to advance sensitive design interventions.

Disposition

The course will involve a balanced mix of lectures, seminars and discussions. In addition, students will prepare one periodic group essay with their personal analysis on key issues discussed. Finally, an in depth individual term paper will be required on a student selected subject from a master list of possible topics to be offered by the instructors.

Course literature

Alexander R. Cuthbert, *Designing Cities: Critical Readings in Urban Design*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Shane, David Grahame. 2005. *Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modeling in Architecture, Urban Design and City Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Michael, Larice and Elizabeth, Macdonald. 2006. *The Urban Design Reader*. London: Routledge.

Kostoff, Spiro, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1991.

Kostof, Spiro, *The City Assembled: Elements of Urban Form through History*, Little Brown, Boston 1992.

Examination

- PRO1 - Project, 4.0 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F
- SEM1 - Seminars, 1.0 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F
- ÖVN1 - Essay, 2.5 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

Other requirements for final grade

Lectures, Seminars, Attendance (SEM1; 1.0 credits)

Periodic Essay, Discussion (ÖVN1; 2.5 credits)

Project Term Paper (PRO1; 4.0 credits)

Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.