

URBN 6612 – MUD Advanced Travel Studio
URPL 6000 – MURP Planning Project Studio
LDAR 6606 – MLA Advanced Landscape Design Studio



CO-INSTRUCTORS

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STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This advanced urban design studio will focus on the subject of "Streets as Public Spaces." In the U.S. and much of the western world, downtown streets are prioritized for the automobile, not people. However, downtown streets can become destinations worth visiting, not just throughways to and from the workplace. Transit stops and stations can make commuting by rail or bus a pleasure. Neighborhood streets can be places where parents feel safe letting their children play, and commercial strips can be redesigned as grand boulevards, safe for walking and cycling and allowing for both through and local traffic. Design decisions at the building, street, and neighborhood scales are critical, then, for shaping both perception and actual use of streets, and can help us fundamentally rethink the future of this critical urban space.

Streets traditionally had three main functions: as routes for mobility, as public gathering spaces, and as building frontages. In the early 20th Century, these functions became separated and usurped by the traffic engineer, the landscape architect, and the architect, respectively. An interdisciplinary urban design perspective can bring these functions back together. Due to various political, cultural, and economic reasons, Barcelona has managed to preserve the harmony among these three functions in their streets, resulting in an urban fabric that is the envy of the world. Today, Barcelona is viewed as an international model for using innovative practices that integrate urban design, architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and historic preservation to create an exceptional public realm.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Design excellence: Students will be able to produce cohesive and comprehensive statements about the preferential design of the built environment, employing practices that lead to conceptual, analytical and formal transformation of existing problems into preferred solutions, while remaining attentive to germane content knowledge, professional and ethical criteria. Specifically, students will be able to:

- Identify, organize and assess existing physical, social, economic, political, cultural and regulatory constraints and opportunities.
- Identify, unpack and reassemble the various layers, flows and systems of infrastructure (both natural and human-made) impacting a project area.
- Rigorously evaluate alternative physical design strategies before selecting technically sound solution that addresses site and program.
- Develop cohesive, foundational design solution that resolves extant conflicts or contradictions by responding to the identified contextual constraints, opportunities and processes.
- Objectively evaluate alternative design responses presented by other students.

Communication skills: Students will be able to work individually or in groups to effectively and efficiently convey ideas using verbal, visual and graphic communication techniques appropriate for a wide variety of professional, academic and layperson audiences. Specifically, students will be able to:

- Write an organized, compelling and grammatically correct argument or thesis supported by well-documented research.

- Prepare and present organized, professional, engaging confident and compelling verbal presentations that explain complex ideas and concepts to a wide variety of audiences.
- Construct a well-organized, legible, coherent and convincingly laid out visual presentation that explains complex ideas and concepts in an efficient and effective manner.
- Clearly articulate and document the iterative process of developing design ideas.
- Constructively critique the work of others while actively listening to, seeking out, and responding to constructive criticism from peers, instructor and other experts.
- Act as a respectful member of groups or teams, considering multiple viewpoints and strategies.

Professional expertise: Students will be able to defend the role of the urban designer in the built environment professions and evaluate the various methods and practices employed in the design field. Specifically, students will be able to:

- Assess personal and professional predispositions to reflectively participate in a discourse on the motivations, intents and effects of urban design intervention.
- Critically develop and apply ethical frameworks to appropriately respond to culturally, socially and economically diverse conditions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of urban designers' legal responsibilities with respect to professional standards for public health, safety, welfare and other factors affecting design, construction and practice.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the basic principles of office organization, the different methods of project delivery, the corresponding forms of service contracts and the evolving legal context to render competent and responsible professional services.

Substantive knowledge: Students will develop a critical understanding of the histories, theories and practices of urban design and its role in shaping both built environments and societal relations. Specifically, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand the history of the form and formation of cities.
- Identify the social, economic and political forces that shape the built environment.
- Analyze and discuss in written, visual and oral form relationships between regulations and built form.
- Develop regulatory framework that enable the production of built form in a manner seen preferable to that which currently exists.
- Identify the history and contemporary view of urban design as a professional pursuit.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the conventions, standards and applications pertaining to the production of design plans.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The Barcelona Urban Design Studio will utilize a variety of learning techniques and methods:

- Lectures given by the CU Denver instructors as well as Barcelona-based urban design experts
- Group discussions and debate among students and instructors
- Site visits and observational research at urban locations in Barcelona and nearby communities
- Individual and small-team exercises and assignments
- Team collaboration on analyses, designs, reports, and other deliverables

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The Barcelona Urban Design Studio will require students to be comfortable navigating the streets, public spaces, and other urban environments in Barcelona and nearby communities by foot, by public transit, and, optionally, by bicycle. Knowledge of Spanish or Catalan will be helpful but not required. No strenuous activities are anticipated.

Prerequisites for MUD students are Urban Design Studios I and II, and Design Seminar. The prerequisite for MURP students is Planning Workshop. The prerequisite for MLA students is Landscape Architecture Design Studio 5.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Students are strongly encouraged to acquire the following texts, as they will be relied upon and referenced on a regular basis prior to and during the studio:

- Carmona, Matthew. Public Places Urban Spaces. 2nd Edition. Elsevier Ltd. 2010. Amazon.com link: <https://www.amazon.com/Public-Places-Spaces-Matthew-Carmona/dp/1856178277>
- Busquets, Joan. Barcelona: The urban evolution of a compact city. Applied Research + Design Publishing. 2014. Amazon.com link: <https://www.amazon.com/Barcelona-Urban-Evolution-Compact-City/dp/1940743052>

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to be competent in working with the Microsoft Office applications as well as the Adobe Creative Cloud applications of Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. Some knowledge of GIS may be helpful. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar enough with these applications prior to and/or during the semester to fulfill the requirements of this course. Students are expected to have their own laptop computer with sufficient technical specifications to complete the objectives of this course.

GRADING

Several graded tasks will be assigned throughout the studio that will require students to use different combinations of skills and knowledge. Additionally, students will be evaluated on their professionalism.

Grading Scale:

834 – 866	B
867 – 899	B+
900 – 933	A-
934 – 1000	A

COMMUNICATION

Unless otherwise noted, students will be contacted before, during, and after their international travels via their university e-mail account. Students must make sure they check this address regularly or have it forwarded to their personal e-mail account and that they secure the necessary wireless calling, cellular data, and/or WiFi plans suitable for international travel.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS) at CU Denver. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved. Once a student has provided the instructor with a copy of DRS's letter, the instructor will provide any accommodations that DRS has approved.

PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or words without acknowledgement. The following are considered to be forms of plagiarism when the source is not noted:

- Copying word-for-word another person's ideas or words
- Creating a "mosaic" (interspersing your own words here and there within another's work)
- Paraphrasing (the rewriting of another's work, while still using their basic ideas or theories)
- Fabricating (inventing) sources
- Submitting another person's work as your own
- Neglecting quotation marks when including direct quotes

For assistance on plagiarism and on general writing help, please visit the CU Denver Writing Center:

(<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Centers/writing/Pages/TheWritingCenter.aspx>)

PROPER CITATION

To avoid plagiarism, students must provide proper citation of all text and materials authored by others in all assignments, using the MLA documentation style. The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition, is available from online retailers and bookstores for around \$20, or there are several websites that provide MLA style formatting guidance at no charge, such as (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>).

HEALTH AND SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

Students are expected to follow all health/safety/risk management protocols directed by the studio instructors, as well as strictly comply with all health/safety/risk management policies and regulations mandated by the University. Students should also take full advantage of the many health/safety/risk management resources arranged by the University for the benefit of students. These include:

- Emergency Action Plan (paper version in your possession at all times in Spain)
- GeoBlue Health Plan
- International SOS

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Students are expected to maintain a heightened level of communication at all times during the studio. This means being in regular contact with their fellow students and the course instructors for safety and security reasons, and to maximize collaboration on studio assignments. The communication resources put in place for the studio that students should be familiar with and connected to include:

- WhatsApp message group
- Mobile phone number list
- Shared OneDrive folder
- Shared Google Calendar
- Shared Google Map
- CU Denver email

STUDIO PHASES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Barcelona studio is comprised of two phases, A and B, with each phase consisting of several assignments. Phase A focuses on the urban design of public spaces generally, while Phase B focuses on producing design concepts for a specific site in Barcelona.

PHASE A – URBAN DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

Assignment 1: Barcelona Topics

Assignment 1 requires students to sign up for one of 18 different “Barcelona Topics” that consist of key places, features, events, etc. that are critical to understanding Barcelona. After conducting a bit of research on their assigned topic, each student must share with the studio a 3-minute verbal presentation on their topic, accompanied by one PowerPoint slide that graphically communicates the essence of their topic.

The goal of Assignment 1 is to provide the group with an engaging and participative “crash course” on Barcelona before we depart. Assignment 1 is due on **Friday, May 11 at 9:00 AM** at Pre-Trip Meeting #3.

Assignment 2: Dimensions of Urban Design

Assignment 2 requires a team of three students (six teams total) to sign up for one of the six “dimension” chapters from Carmona’s *Public Places Urban Spaces*. The six dimensions presented by Carmona represent the conceptual framework through which the urban design of public spaces may be viewed, and represent a foundational perspective for subsequent assignments in this studio. The six dimensions (and, therefore, six Assignment 2 teams) are:

- Morphological
- Perceptual
- Social
- Visual
- Functional
- Temporal

Each team will carefully review their chapter, identify its key points and conclusions, and prepare a 15-minute lecture to give in studio, using presentation slides as needed. Each student is expected to have some speaking role within the 15-minute lecture.

The goal of Assignment 2 is to synthesize the dimension from not only an intellectual perspective but, in particular, from an applied perspective; i.e., how could the chapter’s main points about the dimension be utilized to inform a public space analysis and design effort?

Objective 1: Summarize the dimension from a conceptual perspective

Objective 2: Identify the two best Field Data Collection tasks that one could conduct at a public space to assess the space’s performance (success) for the dimension. For each task, identify in a “field-ready” format:

The entities in or regarding the space to be measured. These might be things like buildings, trees, paving, seating, sightlines, users, activities, etc.

The attributes of each entity to be measured. These might be categorical attributes like use, type, function, material, etc., or quantitative attributes like height, distance, count, duration, etc.

The collection methods you would employ to measure the attributes of the entities you identified above and how to interpret the results to arrive at a performance evaluation conclusion.

Assignment 2 is due on **Monday, June 4 at 9:00 AM**.

Assignment 3: Public Space Assessments

Assignment 3 requires a team of three students (six teams total) to perform a comprehensive urban design assessment of an assigned public space in Barcelona, using the six dimensions from Assignment 2 (and other perspectives) as the methodological framework for their assessment. The six sites are:

- Site 1: Jardins del Forat de la Vergonya
- Site 2: Plaça de la Virreina
- Site 3: Avinguda Mistral
- Site 4: Plaça de Salvador Seguí
- Site 5: Plaça del Poeta Boscà
- Site 6: Pla de Palau

Upon the completion of Assignment 2, students will have a comprehensive understanding of the theories that contribute to the design of an urban public space. To begin thinking about how to transfer that theoretical knowledge into practice, each team developed two Field Data Collection/Observational Research methodologies for their dimension.

In reality, there are dozens of possible methodologies and analytical frameworks one could employ for analyzing the quality, design, and/or “success” of a public space. The six dimensions from *Public Places Urban Spaces* represent one such framework that is highly regarded in the urban design field, but many other valid approaches exist. Nevertheless, every urban design analysis methodology to be implemented in professional practice must rely on a theoretical framework of some kind and must respond to at least three factors:

- The purpose and goals of the urban design analysis project (designing a new public space, redesigning an existing public space, activating an unsuccessful space, etc.)
- The built environment context (urban, suburban, small town, etc.)
- The geographic scale of the site

Therefore, professional urban designers must be adept at crafting the most appropriate urban design analysis methodology on a per-project basis, given the specific factors above.

For Assignment 3, each team must:

1. Consider the 12 Field Data Collection/Observational Research methodologies presented in Assignment 2 and identify a set of six methodologies that they will use to assess their assigned public space. These could include one or more methodologies exactly as presented by their classmates, a modified version of one or more of their classmates’ methodologies, or entirely new methodologies of their own design. Either way, each team’s six Field Data Collection/Observational Research methodologies must address in a meaningful way all six of the dimensions outlined in *Public Places Urban Spaces*.
2. Articulate the reasons why they chose the Field Data Collection/Observational Research methodologies identified above.
3. Operationalize their Field Data Collection/Observational Research by conducting the analysis on their assigned public space using their chosen methodologies.
4. Analyze and synthesize their findings across all six dimensions (and other perspectives that may have been used) and provide a comprehensive summary of the urban design of their assigned public space.
5. Identify the key “takeaways” or “lessons learned” about a.) devising a set of urban design methodologies, b.) operationalizing their methodologies, and c.) analyzing/synthesizing the results of their data collection and research.

Each team will give a 20-minute presentation with a full range of maps, diagrams, photographs, and other graphical exhibits to communicate their Assignment 3 work.

Assignment 3 is due on **Monday, June 11 by 9:00 AM.**

PHASE B – THE PUBLIC REALM REIMAGINED AT CAN RICART

Overview

Phase B of the Barcelona studio gives students the opportunity to use the public space analysis and design concepts and methodologies gained in Phase A on a real site in Barcelona—the historic Can Ricart site in the Poblenou neighborhood of Barcelona.

Can Ricart is a former 19th Century textile mill that covers about a four-block area. Part of the site has been restored and adaptively reused as a mixed-use complex anchored by Hangar, an arts center that provides housing, gallery/studio space, research facilities, advocacy, and other support and resources for Barcelona’s arts communities. The remaining part of the Can Ricart site consists of significantly deteriorated historic buildings (ruins) and vacant land.

The Poblenou neighborhood is committed to ensuring the preservation of the deteriorated structures and preserving the Can Ricart site as a legacy of Barcelona’s industrial heritage while allowing new uses and infill development to revitalize the site. The City of Barcelona generally agrees and hopes to include affordable housing on the site.

Surrounding the four-block Can Ricart site are a mix of wide automobile-centric streets that function as minor arterials or major collectors, along with several narrow local streets with a more pedestrian-focused design. Adjacent to the Can Ricart site are several “walled” public parks and plazas that appear disconnected from Can Ricart and nearby blocks. Collectively, our Phase B Study Area consists of an approximately nine-block area, resembling, coincidentally, a Barcelona “superblock”.

Phase B Study Area



Phase B Goals and Objectives

The goal for Phase B is to “Reimagine the Public Realm at Can Ricart” with specifically these objectives:

- How could new streets and paths integrate into and shape the future urban form of the vacant/ruins part of Can Ricart?
- How could the automobile-centric streets adjacent to Can Ricart become more pedestrian-friendly and serve as welcoming connections to Can Ricart’s internal public realm?
- How could the nearby “walled” public parks and plazas connect better to the Can Ricart site?

Students will produce a report document The Public Realm Reimagined at Can Ricart at the end of the semester as the Phase B deliverable. The outline for the final report is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction (*project overview, site history and context, problem/opportunity statement*)
- Chapter 2: Urban Design Impressions (*walking survey summaries*)
- Chapter 3: Existing Conditions Assessment (*relevant data, maps, SWOC analysis findings*)
- Chapter 4: Project Goals and Community Insight (*project goals and objectives, stakeholder input*)
- Chapter 5: Can Ricart Study Area Urban Design Concepts

Phase B will be divided into several assignments, as follows:

Assignment #4: Urban Design Impressions

Assignment #4 requires students to organize into six teams of three students each to conduct a thorough walking survey of the Can Ricart study area to gain a personal understanding of the area and to contemplate the area’s urban design features and qualities. Students should rely on the knowledge and experience gained from their “six dimensions” work in Phase A, but may use whatever observational/data collection methodologies, analysis techniques, and presentation formats they prefer to complete this assignment.

The walking survey will be conducted during the morning and early afternoon on **Tuesday, June 12**, followed immediately by a “pin-up” review and discussion at **2:30 PM**. Tabloid-sized sheets of paper and other materials will be provided to students to allow them to create sketches, maps and diagrams, field notes, etc., while on the walking survey, and for presenting their observations and findings during the Tuesday afternoon pin-up discussion.

Note: Assignment #4 is not intended to be only (final) urban design assessment of the Can Ricart study area, only an initial, yet thoughtful and complete, first impression. Students will make additional site visits and urban design assessments as needed as part of later assignments.

Tip: The results from Assignment #4 will be summarized in Chapter 2, so students should organize their notes and findings into a draft chapter during and immediately following the conclusion of this assignment. This would also be a good time to begin writing a draft of Chapter 1: Introduction.

Assignment #5: Existing Conditions and SWOC Analysis

Assignment #5 requires students to complement their understanding of the study area gained from the walking survey by gathering and analyzing additional (secondary) existing conditions data relating to the Can Ricart study area and to summarize those conditions using a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Constraints) analysis.

Secondary Data: Our project partners, Carmen and Jaime, have provided us with GIS/mapping data and other materials relating to the site that are available on OneDrive. However, students should seek additional sources (e.g. the City of Barcelona) as needed to gain a fuller understanding of the area’s environmental, socioeconomic, and demographic characteristics.

To ensure that all students have a common and shared understanding of the site’s existing conditions, students will conduct Assignment #5 as a single team. However, students may divide into functional sub-teams for efficiency as they see fit.

The Assignment #5 SWOC Analysis presentation is due on **Thursday, June 14 at 4:00 PM.**

Note: Given the time constraints of the studio, an exhaustive existing conditions assessment is not possible. Therefore, students should be strategic and efficient in this effort by identifying those existing condition attributes that are most relevant to the SWOC analysis and the development of urban design concepts for the study area.

Tip: The results from Assignment #5 will be summarized in Chapter 3, so students should organize their notes and findings into a draft chapter during and immediately following the conclusion of this assignment.

Assignment #6: Project Definition and Community Insight

Assignment #6 requires students to write a formal problem and opportunity statement and to articulate the vision and goals for the planning and design work to be completed in Assignment #7. During this assignment, there may be an opportunity to engage with local stakeholders and members of the Can Ricart/Poblenou neighborhood to learn what their vision is for the area (details pending).

This assignment should be completed during the early stages of Assignment #7 but may be iterative in nature and influenced by the timing of potential opportunities to engage with local community members. Therefore, students must remain flexible and willing to modify their vision and goals as needed.

Note: Given the time constraints of the studio, a broader public engagement program is not possible. Nevertheless, students are welcome to informally engage with local community members to gain better insight into what the locals see as important factors for the improvement to the area.

Tip: The results from Assignment #6 will be summarized in Chapter 4, incorporated into Chapter 1, and expressed through design recommendations in Chapter 5, so students should update the draft versions of these chapters in an iterative manner throughout Phase B.

Assignment #7: Can Ricart Study Area Urban Design Concepts

Assignment #7 requires students to prepare a compelling urban design vision for how the public realm in the Can Ricart study area could be reimagined to make it a great place for people and to meet the other goals and objectives articulated in Assignment #6. This urban design plan should include the following elements:

1. An overarching urban design concept that unites the various physical interventions listed below into a cohesive and strategic vision that is illustrated geographically in a single “concept plan” exhibit and concisely communicated through a limited number of summary diagrams, renderings, and bullet-point statements.
2. Specific urban design interventions that are illustrated graphically (maps, diagrams, renderings, etc.) and through brief narrative text:
 - a. Location, and general mass/scale/design characteristics of future buildings in the study area

- b. Location, conceptual design, and characteristics of future streets, walkways, parks, plazas, and other public spaces in the study area
 - c. Alterations, redesigns, and/or reconfigurations of existing streets, walkways, parks, plazas, and other public spaces in the study area
3. Matrices, diagrams, or other graphical techniques that communicate the relationship between the design concept and its various urban design interventions and the problem/opportunity statement and goals/objectives stated in Assignment #6. In other words, demonstrate how your plan will produce the desired outcome.

Note: Given the time constraints of the studio, Chapter 5 should rely mostly on graphics rather than paragraphs of text. Focus on communicating your urban design concept plan graphically, with limited use of text only to provide context and to serve as introductory and transitional “bridges” between graphics.

Tip: Create a unified report and presentation template that is based on the same layout and dimensions so that all graphics are produced only once in their final form and can be easily transferred from presentation to report.

The Phase B presentation is due at **4:00 PM on Tuesday, June 26** and should cover all components of Phase B, but with a clear emphasis on the Assignment #7 work. The Reimagining the Public Realm at Can Ricart report document is due at **12:00 PM Noon on Wednesday, June 27**.