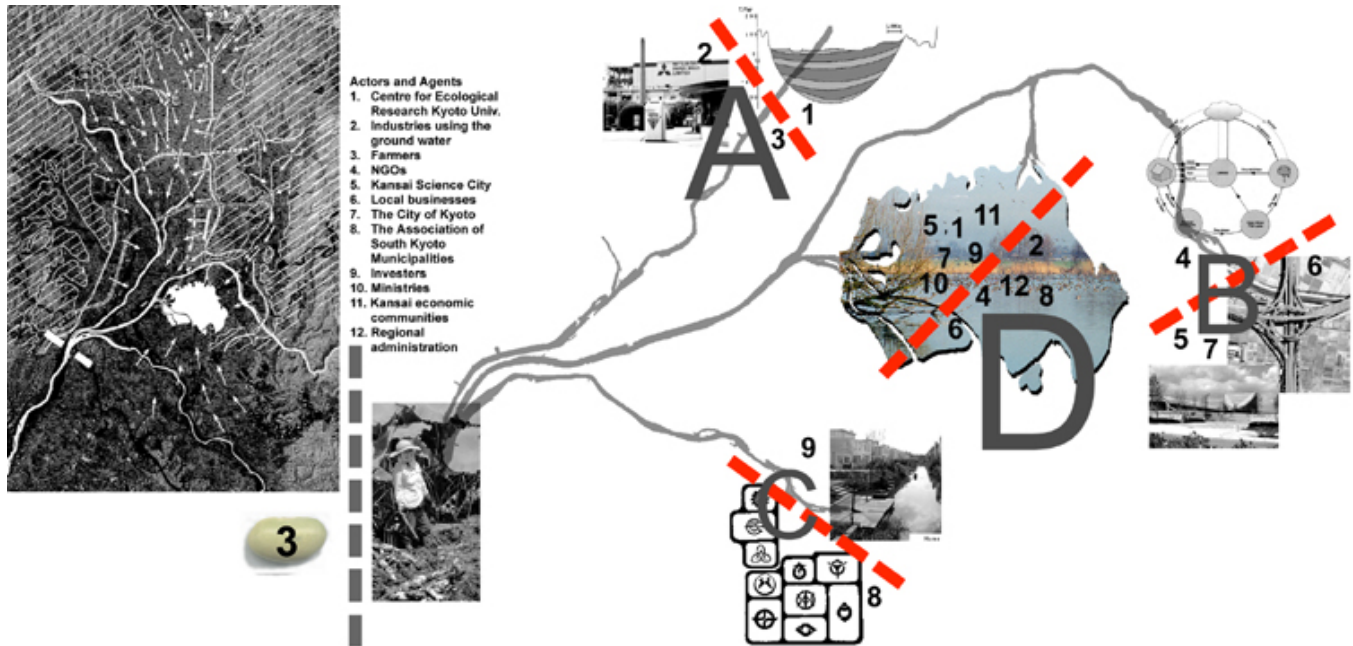


UDES 509A: Topics in Urban Design

Instructors: Condon | Hein | Kellett | Lokman | Stevens

UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
2018W1 (Fall) | Thursdays 2:00—5:00 in MCML 394



Drawing from "Future Visions of Kyoto for the 21st Century" (1998) by CHORA Institute of Architecture and Urbanism

Contact Information

Course Coordinator:

Kees Lokman (klokman@sala.ubc.ca)

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Patrick Condon (pcondon@sala.ubc.ca)

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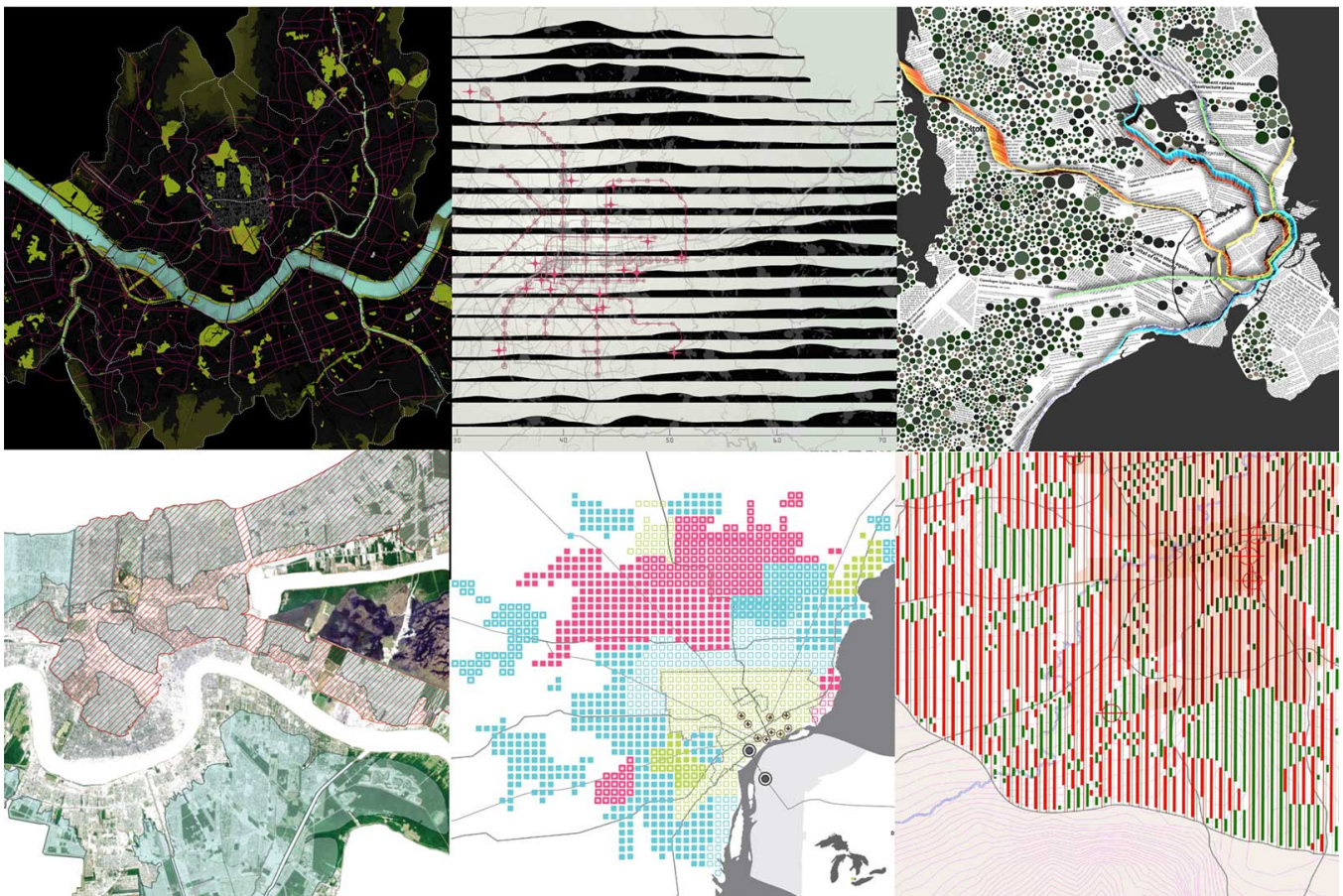
For office hours, please contact individual course instructors to setup a time and date.

Overview

This course examines a range of concepts, tools and strategies for research and design in the contemporary realm of urban design. The course aims to develop a set of skills associated with the designer's role in analyzing and shaping the urban fabric. We will explore broad design research questions, as well as specific methods for seeing, visualizing, organizing, and intervening in a range of different urban context. In doing so, the course aims to build the necessary tools and skills to assist students in building a strong design research framework and robust set of design methods in subsequent design studios.

The course is organized as a set of two-week-long modules that incorporate lectures, readings, debates, and assignments, which aim to facilitate scholarly exploration through dialogue, discussion, and reflection. We will examine how broader transformations in social, environmental, economic and technological realms have affected research methodologies and discourse in urban design. In addition, the course will discuss how urban design methods have drawn upon methods developed in allied disciplines and fields.

Each module's assignment will focus on developing drawing techniques and methods to analyze and represent a range of urban forces, actors and spatial conditions for two sites in Vancouver. Each method will explore and introduce student to different drawing tools and techniques. The course will approach drawing as a projective tool. By this we mean that drawings should not simply document what already exists but point to new ways of seeing the site, and/or identifying possibilities for future interventions. As such, drawings developed over the semester should be seen as future projects in the making.



The course will be exploring a range of representation methods and techniques.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Situate a range of theoretical positions and contemporary ideas about urban design research methods and its connection to the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, art and urban planning;
- Interrogate and interpret a range of design-related research methods and techniques by employing them in exercises relevant to your studio project;
- Compare and contrast the benefits and limitations of discussed design-related research strategies and methods over others;
- Develop an intellectual framework for design and research, and an awareness of an emerging personal theoretical position and approach to urban design;
- Use drawing as a creative practice to represent visible and invisible layers of the urban fabric, and as an operative tool to highlight possibilities for interventions
- Achieve clarity in the expression of ideas: orally, in writing, and through graphic representation.

Course Format *(per 2-week module)*

The course is organized around five (5) two-week modules, each led by a different instructor. In addition to providing a good framework for introducing a range of urban design methods, this format allows students to be exposed to a handful of SALA faculty that teach across different programs (urban design, architecture and landscape architecture). Generally each module will be structured as described below but each instructor has the freedom to adjust the format to best fit his or her needs.

Class 1 (3hrs):

- Introductory Lecture (60mins)
- Discussion (15 mins)
- Assignment Introduction (15 mins)
- Assignment of Debate Question + Debate Prep (30mins)
- Working in Pairs on Assignment (60mins)

Class 2 (3hrs):

- Debate (45 mins)
- Working in Pairs on Assignment (45 mins)
- Pinup and Discussion of Assignment (90mins)
- Assignment of Readings and Assignment for Next Module

Schedule

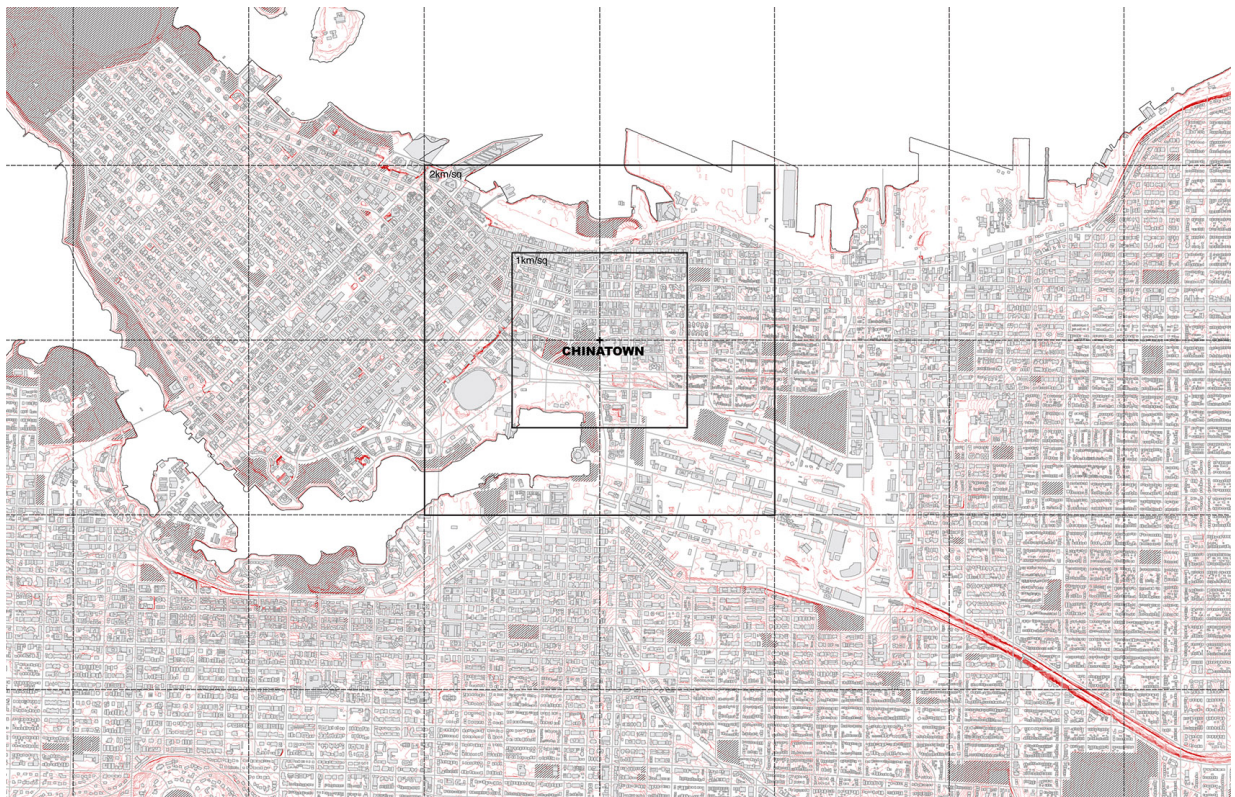
06-Sep	Week 1	Introduction	<i>course introduction + panel discussion</i>
13-Sep	Week 2	I. Experience	<i>lecture + asgmt I introduction</i>
20-Sep	Week 3	I. Experience	<i>debate + asgmt I review + asgmt II introduction</i>
27-Sep	Week 4	II. Morphology	<i>lecture + asgmt II progress review</i>
04-Oct	Week 5	II. Morphology	<i>debate + asgmt II review + asgmt III introduction</i>
11-Oct	Week 6	III. Informality	<i>lecture + asgmt III progress review</i>
18-Oct	Week 7	III. Informality	<i>debate + asgmt III review + asgmt IV introduction</i>

25-Oct	Week 8	IV. Transect I Systems	<i>lecture + asgmt IV progress review</i>
01-Nov	Week 9	IV. Transect I Systems	<i>debate + asgmt IV review + asgmt V introduction</i>
08-Nov	Week 10	V. Metabolism	<i>lecture + asgmt V progress review</i>
15-Nov	Week 11	V. Metabolism	<i>debate + asgmt V review</i>
22-Nov	Week 12	Refinement	<i>desk crits</i>
29-Nov	Week 13	Refinement	<i>hand-in</i>

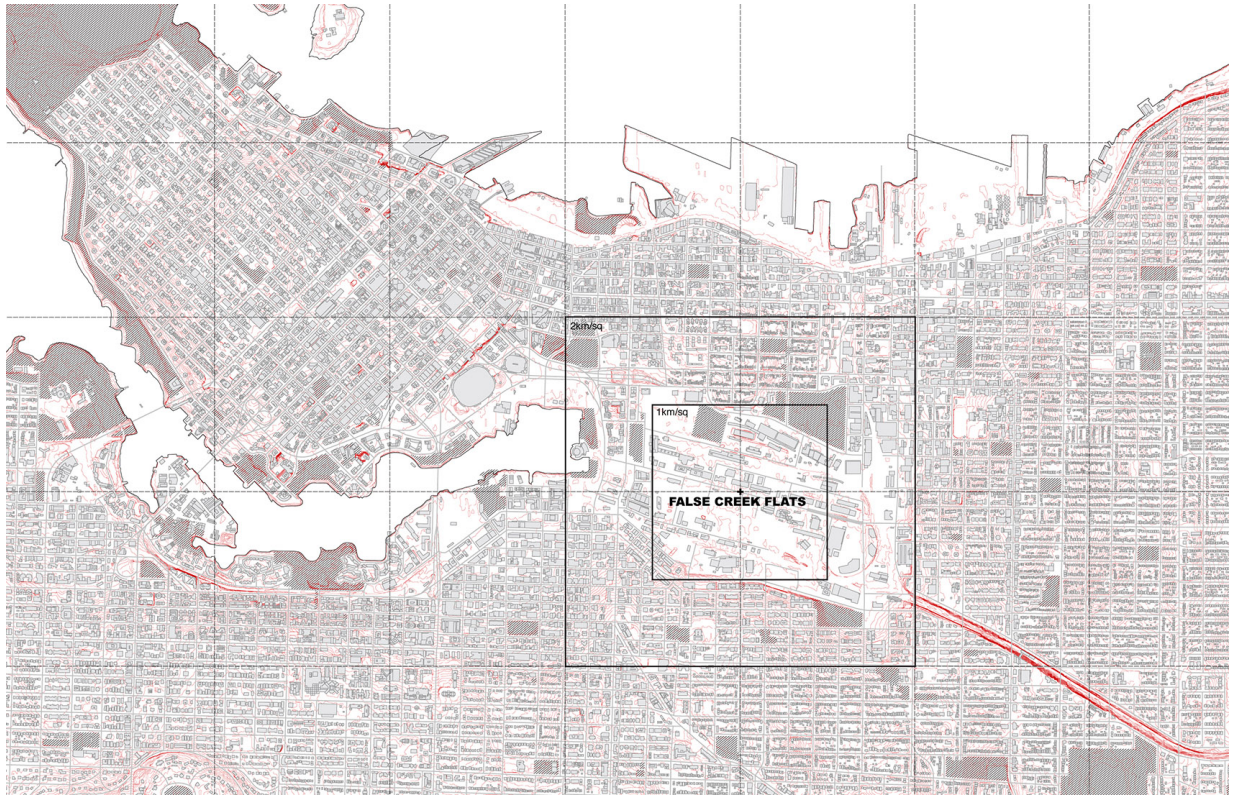
Assignments

The assignment structure will be similar each week: Students will work in pairs to analyze and/or intervene in either Chinatown of the False Creek Flats by applying the research method/lens discussed in a particular two-week module. The idea is that by analyzing and restructuring the same area through different lenses students will gain a deeper understanding of the different ways a project, problem and solution might be framed/derived. Assignment briefs will be handed out and presented by the instructor at the beginning of each module.

The last two weeks of the semester will be used to revisit and refine the drawings of one particular module in order to improve clarity of the analysis and proposition.



Chinatown focus area



False Creek Flats focus area

Modules *(readings are subject to change)*

INTRODUCTION: WAYS OF RESEARCHING

Week 1: Introduction

- Course Introduction
- Module and Assignment format
- What are (urban design) research methods?—Panel discussion with all course instructors

FRAMES: WAYS OF LOOKING AND SEEING

Weeks 2 & 3: Experience *(Scot Hein)*

A method of research and design focusing on people's perception and collective experience of the build environment, including notions of aesthetics, proportions, sense of place and way-finding.

Students will be introduced to “Experiential” methods of deriving contextual qualities/attributes for selected sites in Vancouver’s Downtown Core. Through direct observation as pedestrians, students will observe and record built form evidence of scale/frontage, streetscape rhythms, visual punctuation/emphasis, proportionality including fenestration, textures, colour, materiality, transparency/opacity, light/dark, distinctive detail, evidence of local narrative and gathering. Documentation methods for the above will be “practiced” towards as an exercise that can be conducted with stakeholders of any future context the students may be working in. Upon completing the documentation exercise, and assembly of visual research, students will observe, and then propose/critique potential intervention strategies towards a shared understand of how to strengthen place identity and experience.

Relevant Readings

- Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Island Press, Washington, DC, 2010.
- Jacobs, Allan. *Great Streets*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1993.
- Cullen, Gordon. *The Concise Townscape*. Van Nostrand Reinhold Co, New York, 1971.
- Dobbins, Michael. *Urban Design and People*. John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, N.J., 2009.
- Carmona, Matthew. *Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Architectural Press, Oxford; Boston, 2003.
- Alexander, Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein. *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1977.

Weeks 4 & 5: Morphology (Ron Kellett)

A method of understanding the city through a study of its main elements (buildings, streets, urban blocks, and public spaces) as well as the actors and processes that are shaping and transforming these elements.

Morphology refers to a study of fundamental spatial attributes — size, shape, geometry, pattern, for example. The term was coined by Goethe as a branch of biology, specifically those aspects of the that ‘science that deal with the essence of forms’. The term has since been adapted to applications in many fields. In urban design, morphology refers to the physical, spatial attributes of the principal elements of a city — building types, parcel types, block types, street patterns, for example — aka the language of ‘urban form’. Since the 1950’s morphology, and its derivatives type, typology, and topology have provided a conceptual framework to a diversity of urban analysis and synthesis methods.

Relevant Readings

- Anne Vernez Moudon ‘Getting to Know the Built Landscape: Typomorphology’ pp. 289 – 311 in Franck and Schneekloth (eds) ‘*Ordering Space: Types in Architecture*’ (1994)
- Anne Vernez Moudon, ‘Ch. 3 Elements of Order: Gridiron, Lots and Boxes’ pp. 51-74 and ‘Ch. 5 The Physical Structure of Urban Space’ pp. 89 – 95 in *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (1982)
- Rob Krier, ‘Ch. 1 Typological and morphological elements of the concept of urban space’ in ‘*Urban Space*’ (1975) pp. 15 – 40
- Serge Salat, Françoise Labbé, Caroline Nowacki, ‘Part I Cities and Complexity’ and Part I Ch. II ‘What is the Form of a City’ pp. 23 – 52 in ‘*Cities and Forms in Sustainable Urbanism*’, (2011)
- Françoise Labbé, ‘Part V: Ecoreighbourhood Design and Technology Ch. II Designing a Prototype in the Shanghai Region’ pp. 409 – 432 and ‘Part VII: Assessing Urban Form Ch. I A New System of Spatial Indicators’ 482 – 498 in ‘*Cities and Forms in Sustainable Urbanism*’ (2011)

AGENCY: WAYS OF INTERVENING

Weeks 6 & 7: Informality (Sara Stevens)

A method of reading and understanding informal settlements, and how design practices can respond by implementing creative, strategic interventions (tactical urbanism, urban acupuncture).

Critiques of modernist planning and design processes from Jane Jacobs forward have questioned how to balance the top-down methods of designers and technical experts with the local intelligence imbedded in places and communities. Who should have agency in remaking urban space? In what way should existing neighbourhoods

be remade—through wholesale clearance and reconstruction, or through more incremental and sensitive measures? This module will examine more recent interest in informal cities, tactical urbanism, and urban acupuncture as design methods that contrast older, authoritarian approaches.

Relevant Readings:

- Roy, Ananya, "Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71:2 (2005), 147-158.
- Turner, John F. C. *Housing by People*, London: Marion Boyars: 1976. (excerpt)
- Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, *Soak: Mumbai in an Estuary* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2009). (excerpt)
- Urban Think Tank, "Drawing on the Public Good," *JAE* 70:1, 62-63.

FRAMEWORKS: WAYS OF ORGANIZING

Weeks 8 & 9: Transect I Systems (Patrick Condon)

A method of organizing the urban fabric by creating synergies between social, economic and environmental systems, policies and actors.

This module explores a research method to help designers understand the elements and topics that should be considered when addressing sustainability. The method weaves together multiple aspects of urban design, and presents a framework for integrating social, ecological and economic aspects to create healthy cities. Students will be looking into the interactions of urban systems, transportation networks, affordability, walkability and green infrastructure. Furthermore, this module will spend some time looking at the transect as a means to understand and structure density, sectional relationships and natural systems.

Relevant Readings

- Condon, Patrick M. *Seven Rules for Sustainable Communities: Design Strategies for a Post-Carbon World*. Island Press, Washington, D.C, 2010.
- Farr, Douglas. *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*. John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, N.J, 2008.
- Talen, Emily. "Help for Urban Planning: The Transect Strategy." *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2002, pp. 293-312.

Weeks 10 & 11: Metabolism (Kees Lokman)

A method of organizing the city by understanding, quantifying and recalibrating the inputs and outputs (of energy, water, food, water, and people) within urban regions.

Whether focusing on buildings, neighbourhoods or entire cities, the urban metabolism framework seeks to answer questions such as: What materials and resource flows are coming in and out of an area? How can currently discarded waste materials be turned into resources? How can we create synergies between different urban functions, land uses and ecosystem services? This module will explore how the urban metabolism framework aspires designers to develop a multi-scalar approach that shifts between abstract and concrete representations of nature; between manipulating flows and associated physical landscapes, and; between addressing social and ecological needs. The assignment will focus on the agency of design in identifying, visualizing and reconfiguring material flows and associated spaces in the project area.

Relevant Readings

- Stremke, S., and J. Koh. "Integration of ecological and thermodynamic concepts in the design of sustainable energy landscapes." *Landscape Journal: Design, Planning and Management of the Land*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2011., pp. 194-213.
- The International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam. *Urban metabolism: sustainable development Rotterdam*. (2014). [online] Available at: http://iabr.nl/urban_metabolism_rotterdam.pdf
- Kennedy, C., S. Pincetl, and P. Bunje. "The Study of Urban Metabolism and its Applications to Urban Planning and Design." *Environmental Pollution* 159, no. 8 (2011): 1965-1973.
- Broto, Vanesa Castán, Adriana Allen, and Elizabeth Rapoport. "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Urban Metabolism." *Journal of Industrial Ecology* 16, no. 6 (2012): 851-861.
- Ferrão, Paulo, and John Fernandez. *Sustainable Urban Metabolism*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2013.

REFINEMENT: WAYS OF DRAWING

Weeks 12 & 13: Assignment Wrap up

Grading

The collective learning experience will depend largely on the initiative and diligence of each class member in contributing to and becoming actively conversant in the course material.

Grades and course evaluations are based on:

Discussions and Debate Participation	15%
Assignment I	15%
Assignment II	15%
Assignment III	15%
Assignment IV	15%
Assignment V	15%
Final Hand-in	10%

Grades are based on UBC SALA's General Grading Practices where:

90–100	A+	
85–89	A	<i>(Clearly excellent engagement, knowledge and performance)</i>
80–84	A-	
76–79	B+	<i>(Good grasp of material with evidence in work products)</i>
72–75	B	
68–71	B-	
64–67	C+	<i>(Satisfactory comprehension and work products, little initiative)</i>
60–63	C	
0–59	F	<i>(Unsatisfactory comprehension and work products—Fail)</i>

Academic Integrity

Students should become familiar with the guidelines and policies of the university and school regarding academic integrity and misconduct. Any questions or concerns should be immediately addressed. Your instructors, advisors and department faculty can answer questions and help to understand the policies.

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. Further information is available at [this link](#). For all cases of academic misconduct, [disciplinary measures](#) (including a failing grade for the course, suspension, and/or expulsion) will be followed according to UBC policies.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

Safe Space

This course provides a respectful, supportive, educational, and safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, two-spirited and intersex (LGBQTTI) persons or those questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. If you have any questions or concerns regarding safe spaces at UBC, you can email positive.space@ubc.ca, visit <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/home/>, or drop by the Equity & Inclusion Office.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory for the scheduled duration of class sessions (Thursdays from 2.00pm—5.00pm). More than one unexcused absence will constitute grounds for lowering your grade. Since most discussions and class activities will take place at the beginning of the class period, it is important that all students should be in class promptly at 2:00pm. Arriving late or leaving early, unless authorized by the instructor, will be considered an unexcused absence.

No extensions; the deadlines are firm (excepting Academic Concession). Late assignments will be docked 10% for each day they are late. Continuous progress and improvement during the semester will positively affect your grade.

Land Acknowledgment

This course acknowledges that we meet on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people. Find out more about this land acknowledgement [here](#).