



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

**CDL MAGISTRALE IN ARCHITETTURA (+2)
B018890 ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN LAB**

Teachers: V. Barberis, G. Giovannoni, A. Valentini

1. STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMME

The Architecture and Town Lab. (18 credits) is made of three distinct but integrated components of 6 credits each: Urban Design (Prof. Giulio Giovannoni), Landscape Design (Prof. Antonella Valentini), and Architectural Design (Prof. Valerio Barberis). This is the only lab of the masters program to work on the urban scale.

Each component of the course is made of a series of theoretical and practical lectures. The students of the course will work on the re-design of a public housing neighborhood developing the diverse aspects related to the three disciplines with the three professors. The goal of the lab is to develop a complex neighborhood project which works at different scales and mediates between different problems. We believe that a good design is also the output of a good theoretical and critical awareness. Therefore students will receive reading assignments throughout the course and will be asked to actively participate to the class discussion of readings. The course is intended to be a research lab aimed at simultaneously increasing theoretical awareness and practical experience.

The lab will be held in the first semester.

2. DESIGN TOPIC OF THE 2017-2018 LAB

“Rehabilitation of a public housing neighborhood in the periphery of Prato”

Students of the Architecture and Town Lab will develop a project for the rehabilitation of a public housing neighborhood in the periphery of the city of Prato. The topic will be developed in coordination with the municipality of Prato and with the managers of the public housing heritage of Prato.

Lab final project is a team work (max 3/4 students per group, different nationalities)

Students must choose one of the 3 study areas: Galciana, S. Giusto, Galcetello.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE THREE COMPONENTS

3.1. URBAN DESIGN (Prof. Giulio Giovannoni, teaching assistant Matteo Scamporrino)

3.1.1. Description

Modernist architecture has been for many decades the main model of public housing in the West. The ideal of the modernist 'Radiant City' established itself in the early 1920s thanks to the genius of Le Corbusier and of other distinguished architects and planners. It aimed at providing a solution to the serious environmental and sanitation problems (overcrowding, pollution, traffic congestion) of historical European and American cities. However the Radiant City myth lasted only a few decades. Jane Jacobs, with her seminal 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, initiated a wave of radical critique of modernist architecture. In books such as *Defensible Space*, by Oscar

Newman (1972), *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (1977), by Charles Jencks, *Collage City* (1978), by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, Jane Jacobs' ideas were developed up to establishing the 'dogma' that modernism is the main responsible for the (supposed) failure of public mass housing. The myth of modernism as a solution to all urban ills was in a sense replaced by another opposite myth: that of the failure of all modernist mass housing. However, if the 'modernist myth' largely neglected socio-anthropological implications of urban design, the 'modernist failure myth' was no less detrimental. It had three major effects: firstly it overshadowed the real everyday life of modernist mass housing neighborhoods; secondly it concealed the real causes which determined the failure of *some* modernist public housing neighborhoods; thirdly it largely prevented us from developing appropriate design strategies for these neighborhoods, implicitly assuming their clearance as the main solution.

A careful re-consideration of the modernist failure myth started only recently among urban planners and among public housing scholars and is yet in its early stages. Only sporadic attempts at reassessing the relevance of non-environmental factors in determining the failure of Pruitt-Igoe – the very symbol of alleged modernist failure – were done by planners in the last three decades. However, a small number of urban anthropologists investigated the complex and unpredictable ways in which space is appropriated in modernist mass housing neighborhoods. Their findings largely support the thesis that the way space is designed is anything but determinant of the way space is used. Through careful anthropological investigation the complexity of everyday life can be unveiled. This is a good starting point for sensitively redesigning modernist public housing neighborhoods, avoiding demolitions which are socially traumatic and economically unsustainable.

3.1.2. General Goals and Outcomes

The goal of the Urban Design component of the lab is fourfold:

- **To give a theoretical framework that permits us to understand the complexity of urban design and the difficulty of foreseeing the ways in which designed space is lived.** The debate on modernist architecture fits perfectly with this aim. In the early Twentieth Century the masters of modernist architecture attributed urban planning the task of reforming society. The critics of modernist architecture, indeed, limited themselves to proposing alternative spatial solutions. Both based themselves on the assumption that architecture has the power to govern the functioning of society. A careful historical analysis of the complex causes which determined the failure of some modernist public housing neighborhoods leads us to deconstruct such assumption. Anthropological research on everyday life in some of these neighborhoods, furthermore, highlights the infinite ways in which space is perceived and appropriated by different inhabitants. Any generalization is impossible and each settlement should be understood in its geographical, historical, and social uniqueness. Such awareness makes evident the need of founding urban design on a careful socio-anthropological knowledge of the way each settlement is actually lived and appropriated by different social groups.
- **To introduce students to socio-anthropological research on modernist mass-housing neighborhoods** through the review of existing literature and through the development of a fieldwork in the study areas.
- **To develop a strategic plan and an integrated policy agenda for the study areas** with the help of a decision-making game.
- **To develop a master plan for the study areas.**

3.1.3. Structure and content

a) Historical and Theoretical Framework

The urban crisis and the birth of the modernist utopia

In the early Twentieth Century western cities were facing a major crisis. This was due to several factors including industrialization, an unprecedented process of mass urbanization, and the advent of the car. Cities were congested, polluted, and often devoid of any social and hygienic infrastructure:

plenty of people lived in authentic slums. Different urban utopias were developed at this time to address the urban crisis, foreseeing completely different solutions such as the dissolution of the city into the country (Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Broadacre City'), the creation of small satellite towns around major metropolitan areas (Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City'), and the replacement of historic cities with new modernist settlements featured by the abundance of green and of common facilities (Le Corbusier's 'Ville Radieuse').

The modernist utopia should be understood within the cultural and historical context of the early XXth Century. At that time modernist mass housing neighborhoods generally determined an incredible improvement of existing living conditions. They offered the most modern and advanced equipments, and they were often perceived by its residents as luxurious settlements. Interesting and effective architectural solutions were developed by the major architects of the time in order to contain construction costs thanks to industrialization, ensuring at the same time spacious and high-quality living units. The goal of this section of the course is to 'rediscover' Modernist Movement's original ideas placing them historically and examining some of its major written and architectural documents.

Jane Jacobs, Oscar Newman and the modernist failure myth

The myth of the Radiant City lasted only a few decades. Jane Jacobs, with her seminal 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, initiated a wave of radical critique of modernist architecture. In the words of the author the book was 'an attack on current city planning and rebuilding'. Her target were all architectural movements which in fact had an anti-urban stance: Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City movement, the American 'Decentrists' led by Lewis Mumford and by Catherine Bauer, and the Modernist Movement epitomized by the Athens Charter and by the Corbusian 'Radiant City'. She contended that all them didn't consider how cities actually work, and that streets and sidewalks, so biased by Corbu and by the 'Decentrists', are essential to urban life. Jane Jacobs' book was breathtaking and remarkable. It was based on a deep and insightful use of observation, and it unquestionably demonstrated the enormous gap existing at that time between the 'science' of urban planning - and more generally of architecture - and everyday life.

Jane Jacobs' work opened the way to further research aimed at investigating the correlation between safety and urban form. Oscar Newman developed Jacobs' intuition that 'eyes on the street' are essential to urban security and that the demise of the street strongly contributed to crime. He investigated through statistical analysis a large sample of New York public housing estates concluding that in modernist neighborhoods space could not be appropriated by residents, and that the absence of control determined higher crime rates. Newman's theory was used to explain the failure of Pruitt-Igoe, the large housing project developed in Saint Louis in the 1950s and cleared out only twenty years later because of its decay, abandonment, and crime. What Newman and other scholars neglected is that Saint Louis, as well as other American cities, was undergoing a dramatic social and economic change. Although the whole city was becoming deserted and dangerous, modernist architects were deemed responsible for the failure of the neighborhood. The 'modernist failure myth' -that is the myth that all modernist planning necessarily doesn't work- was in fact established. In 1978 Charles Jenks, in his book *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (1977) said the last word, announcing the death of Modern Architecture and writing its epitaph:

Modern Architecture died in St Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3.32 p.m. (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final coup de grâce by dynamite. Previously it had been vandalised, mutilated and defaced by black inhabitants, and although millions of dollars were pumped back, trying to keep it alive (fixing the broken elevators, repairing mashed windows, repainting), it was finally put out of its misery. Boom, boom, boom.

The assumption 'modern architecture' = 'failure' became in fact an accepted dogma. It was repeated in a number of books and articles, without considering the social and economic context that determined the failure of *some* neighborhoods. Although a correlation between safety and urban form probably exists, the majority of public housing developments still works and is far away from collapsing, both in the US and in Europe. Research on modernist housing is also very incomplete. One the one hand it basically ignores their actual social life, since no careful socio-anthropological

analysis was made – with the exception of a handful of studies, basically confined to French and German settlements. It is exactly the observational method so dear to Jane Jacobs that should have been but was not applied. On the other hand comparative cross-national analysis was very scarce. Such analysis would allow us to invert the perspective and to appreciate the factors determining not the failure but the success of many existing modernist neighborhoods.

This section of the course will review the debate on the failure of modernist architecture as it developed from the early 1960s to the early 1990s, highlighting its limits and its shortcomings.

Deconstructing the modernist failure myth

Although the ‘modernist failure myth’ is still widely accepted, its deconstruction has been going on for some years now. Initially this was limited to the case of Pruitt-Igoe, the main symbol of the alleged failure. In 1991 Katharine Bristol contended that narratives on Pruitt-Igoe had in fact created a myth. By placing the responsibility for the failure of public housing on designers, the myth shifted attention from the institutional or structural sources of public housing problems. Simultaneously, it legitimated the architecture profession by implying that deeply embedded social problems are caused, and therefore solved, by architectural design. Another twenty years later the research documentary *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History* (2011), directed by Chad Freidrichs, pushed further the deconstruction of narratives on Pruitt-Igoe. On the one hand, it told lived stories of former Pruitt-Igoe residents, unveiling many unexpected positive memories. And on the other hand it showed the real causes of its decay. At that time Saint Louis was experiencing a terrible mix of deindustrialization, declining population, falling housing prices, suburbanization, fall of tax revenue, and administrative rigidity that made of Pruitt-Igoe an authentic ghetto made of largely vacant unmaintained buildings inhabited by a largely unemployed population. Such research showed that in such a socio-economic context any neighborhood would have failed, and that design factors, if they played any role, played only a minor role.

On the basis of this research assumptions on public mass housing are now being questioned. The recent book *Public Housing Myths*, edited by Dagen Bloom, Umbach, and Vale (2015), revises of a whole set of prejudices surrounding public housing. These include the assumptions that modernist architecture failed public housing, and that public housing breeds crime. From our standpoint the work of urban anthropologists plays a major role in revision of these assumptions. In fact it unveils the infinite ways in which space is used and appropriated by residents. Although anthropological research on public housing neighborhoods is not particularly extended, its findings are very significant and will be reviewed in this section of the course.

The variety and complexity of modernist mass-housing: a cross-national comparison

Because of their extension, neighborhoods designed according to the principles of modernist architecture are very diverse in age, dimension, social composition, and urban form. They also strongly differ in terms availability of public transport facilities and of social facilities. In the US and in Western European countries these kinds of developments were basically developed between the end of WWII and the late 1960s, with just a few cases being realized after that time. In Eastern European countries, where modernist architecture responded to the egalitarian ideals of the ruling classes, modernist districts went on being developed until the late 1980s. In Asia, finally, they still represent today the main way towards urbanization and modernization. A major difference between countries also exists in terms of social composition and of social segregation. Whereas a number of US neighborhoods experienced serious problems of racial segregation and became authentic ghettos, this problem affected only a small part of Western European neighborhoods, and is almost absent in Eastern European countries, where the social composition is generally very mixed. Their scale is also very diverse, ranging from small neighborhood units to authentic new towns (as in the case of the modernist *villes neuves* developed in the outskirts of many France cities). Finally the urban morphology ranges from the honeycomb patterns of the Amsterdam’s Bijlmer, to the isolated slabs of the Corbusians *unité d’habitation*.

The goal of this section is that of appreciating the complexity and diversity of modernist public housing and to predispose students to understanding the historical, social, dimensional, and

morphological uniqueness of the neighborhoods which will be investigated in the second section of the course. A cross-national comparison will be done ranging from the US to Western Europe to Eastern Europe.

b) The legacy of modernist mass housing

Although the stock of public housing which was designed according to modernist principles changes across countries, it is very significant both in the US and in all European countries. This stock was inherited from the past and needs to be repaired and maintained. Towers and slabs, the typical modernist typologies, also led the way towards urbanization and modernization in many other parts of the world, starting from Chinese cities. In western countries the whole discourse on modernism – what we called the ‘modernist failure myth’ – was a major cultural impediment to adopting appropriate spatial policies for places where very large populations, often belonging to lower social classes, actually live.

The clearance of public housing is almost never the best solution. On the one hand it has a dramatic social impact, disrupting existing communities and uprooting large populations from their living environments. On the other hand it is too expensive and economically unsustainable. According to calculation by architects Lacaton & Vassal (2007) demolishing and redeveloping a public housing unit costs as much as the sum of developing a new unit of the same area and of transforming an existing one into a luxurious apartment of double surface and provided with ample and brand new balconies and terraces. These considerations can be regarded as an updated version of what Jane Jacobs observed about the renewal of alleged slums such as Boston’s Little Italy in 1960s American cities. Although the modernist failure myth largely prevented us from developing appropriate strategies to the renewal of modernist mass housing neighborhoods, great examples of renewal projects exist, mainly in Europe.

The goal of this section of the course is to discuss the legacy of modernist mass housing and to review a number of cases of successful rehabilitation programs which were run in Europe in the last decades.

c) Everyday life in modernist mass housing: socio-anthropological analysis of three neighborhoods in the suburbs

Although the modernist failure myth largely descends from Jane Jacobs’ work, many of its advocates abandoned the observational method on which the American author grounded her work. Not only generalizations about the alleged failure of modernist architecture ignored non-environmental factors and disregarded the aforementioned differences which characterize these settlements (see §2.2), but also they were unable of getting direct knowledge of how real life works in them. If we assume that each modernist public housing neighborhood is unique and different from all the others, as it is certainly the case, then we need to get first-hand knowledge of how it works. Starting from the review of anthropological research on modernist mass-housing this section of the course will introduce students to socio-anthropological analysis on the field. Direct and easy-to-use methods will be presented, aimed at answering questions such as: which are the main publics (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) using public spaces? How is the neighborhood perceived by its inhabitants? Are there conflicts in the use of public spaces? How does public life change across time both on a weekly basis and on a daily basis? Are there publics which are prevented from the use of public spaces? How does the perception of ‘problems’ change across different social groups? An observational schedule will be worked out, and a range of methods will be applied, from counting to tracing to surveying to tracking. Both a report and some panels synthesizing the main findings of the fieldwork will be produced for this section of the course.

d) Re-branding modernist mass housing: an integrated policy agenda

In the third part of the course the class will collectively work on an integrated policy agenda for the three neighborhoods. By integrated policy agenda we mean a set of urban policies ranging from spatial and infrastructural policies to social policies. In the last decades such approaches have been widely applied in Europe to the renewal of public housing neighborhoods. Starting from the early 1990s in Italy specific ‘Programmi complessi’ (complex plans) were conceived by the national

government in order to rehabilitate this kind of neighborhoods. Similar programs were developed in basically all the other European countries. Their main feature is the integration of actors (public actors, private actors, groups of residents) and of actions (infrastructural actions, provision of public facilities, provision of private facilities, interventions on buildings). The distinction between *government* and *governance* has been introduced in literature to distinguish top-down approaches, basically led by a single public actor (government), from horizontal and bottom-up approaches in which decisions are taken through a much more open and interactive process. The strategic plan which will be worked out by the class will adopt a typical governance approach. A decision making game will be run in order to simulate a real decision making arena. Some major cases of strategic planning developed around the world will be reviewed, from Barcelona to Lyon to Florence to Turin. Since public housing neighborhoods usually have a negative imaginary, the first goal of this section will be that of 'rebranding' the three neighborhoods under investigation, trying to re-create a positive imaginary. A general 'mission' will be defined and more specific goals and actions will be identified.

e) Improving modernist mass housing through spatial policies: the development of a master plan.

In the last section of the course each student will develop a master plan proposal for one of the three neighborhoods which will have been previously investigated. Depending on the context and on analyses' outcomes, the scale of intervention can span from small-scale improvements of everyday existing situations to major infrastructural and spatial transformations. The level of detail of the design investigations will be in inverse proportion to the size of the area involved.

3.1.4. Weekly Readings and Activities

Part 1. Historical and theoretical framework

First Lecture – The Urban Crisis and the Modernist Utopia

Suggested readings:

Fishman R., *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, MIT Press, 1982, pp. 3-22, pp. 160-242.

Le Corbusier, 'Mass Production of Houses', in *Towards a New Architecture*. New York: Dover, 1986, pp. 225-265.

Le Corbusier, *The Athens Charter*. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973.

Movies

The City. Directed by Ralph Steiner, Willard van Dyke. 1939. Naxos, 2009. DVD.

Second Lecture – Jane Jacobs, Oscar Newman, and the modernist failure myth

Suggested readings:

Jacobs J., *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1961, pp. 3-25; 143-151.

Jencks C., *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli International, 1972, pp. 7-37.

Newman O., *Defensible Space. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. New York: MacMillan, pp. 22-50.

Newman O., *Creating Defensible Space*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996, pp. 9-30.

Venturi R., *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966.

Movies

The Shock of the New. Trouble in Utopia. Directed by Robert Hughes. BBC and Time Life Films, 1980.

Activities:

Introduction to the stratigraphic analysis

Third Lecture – Deconstructing the modernist failure myth

Suggested readings:

Bristol K., 1991. "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth". *Journal of Architectural Education* 44.3 (March), pp. 163-

171.

Dagen Bloom N., Umbach F., Vale L.J., *Public Housing Myths. Perception, reality, and Social Policy*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell UP, 2015, pp. 1-118.

Movies

The Pruitt-Igoe Myth. Directed by Chad Friedrichs. Columbia, MO: Unicorn Stencil Documentary Films, 2011

Activities:

Stratigraphic analysis

Fourth Lecture – The legacy of modernist mass housing: a cross-national comparison

Suggested readings:

Dagen Bloom N., *Public Housing That Worked. New York in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, pp. 7-114.

Druot F., Lacaton A., and Vassal J.F., *Plus. La vivienda colectiva, Teritorio de excepción*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2007.

Farina M., *Spazi e figure dell'abitare. Il progetto della residenza contemporanea in Olanda*. Macerata: Quolibet, 2012.

Guillot X. et al. *Habiter la modernité : Acte du colloque «Vivre au 3^e millénaire dans un immeuble emblématique de la modernité»*. Saint-Etienne: PU Saint-Etienne, 2006.

Jacob B. and Schäche W., *40 Jahre Märkisches Viertel: Geschichte und Gegenwart einer Großsiedlung*. Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2004.

Kapeller V., *Plattenbausiedlungen. Erneuerung des baukulturellen Erbes in Wien und Bratislava*. Stuttgart: Frauenhofer IRB Verlag, 2009.

Viganò P., *Comment vivre ensemble: prototypes of idiorythmical conglomerates and shared spaces*. Roma: Officina, 2006.

Activities:

Delivery of the stratigraphic analysis

Part 2.

Fifth lecture – (by Matteo Scamporrino)

Sixth lecture – (by Matteo Scamporrino)

Part 3. Everyday life in modernist mass-housing

Seventh lecture – How to study public life

Suggested readings:

Gehl J. and Svarre B., *How to Study Public Life*. Washington (DC): Island Press, 2013, pp. 1-35.

Whyte W.H., *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. New York: Project for Public Spaces, 1980, pp. 10-59.

Movies:

The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces. Directed by William H. Whyte. Los Angeles (CA): Direct Cinema Ltd, 1979.

Activities:

Fieldwork

Eighth lecture – The anthropology of modernist mass housing

Suggested readings:

Augoyard J.F. *Step by Step. Everyday Walks in a French Urban Housing Project*. Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 2007, pp. 7-114.

Bruscaglioni L., Cellini E., Saracino B., “Nuove e vecchie periferie popolari: una ricerca etnografica in due aree di edilizia residenziale pubblica”. *Cambio* 3.6 (December), pp. 27-400

Jouenne, N. *La vie collective des habitants du Corbusier*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005.

Jouenne, N. *Dans l'ombre du Corbusier: Ethnologie d'un habitat collectif ordinaire*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012.

Kahl A., *Erlebnis Plattenbau: Eine Langzeitstudie*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2003.

Keller C., *Leben im Plattenbau. Zur Dynamik sozialer Ausgrenzung*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag,

2005.

Stumpe A., *Paradise lost? Auf der Suche nach dem Paradies im Plattenbau*. Leipzig: Pro Leipzig, 2011.

Activities:

Fieldwork

Ninth lecture – The Anthropology of three modernist mass-housing neighborhoods in the outskirts

Activities:

A presentation of fieldwork findings will be given by students.

Part 3. Rebranding modernist mass-housing: an integrated policy agenda

Tenth lecture – Introduction to strategic planning

Suggested readings:

Dühr S., *The Visual Language of Spatial Planning. Exploring cartographic representations for spatial planning in Europe*. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 1-75.

Healey P. et al., eds., *Making Strategic Spatial Plans: Innovation in Europe*. London: UCL Press, 1997, pp. 3-35, 57-74, 238-250.

Giovannoni G., *Governare il territorio*. Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 22-45, 67-68, 83-99.

Activities:

Decision making game

Eleventh lecture – Towards a policy agenda

Activities:

Collective decision making game

Twelfth lecture – Introduction to master-planning

Activities:

A presentation of strategic plans will be given by students.

Part 4. Improving modernist mass housing through spatial policies: the development of a master plan

Final lectures and reviews

The last lectures will be given in the form of collective workshops. An intensive review work will be done until the delivery of the final master plans.

3.2. LANDSCAPE DESIGN (Prof. Antonella Valentini)

3.2.1. Description

Thinking on the term “Landscape”, we see that in English, Dutch and German the root is the same. It is based on a very strong tradition on naturalistic and ecologic studies. The term “Landscape” in Italian is quite similar to French and Spanish and it recalls a cultural approach based on an aesthetic perception. In Italy, this approach to the landscape as panorama, as an aesthetic view, has been proper of theory and practices, from the first laws on landscape (1939) to the year 2000 when the Landscape Convention was signed in Florence and ratified by Italian State in 2006. In academic world, cultural context and even in the professional practice, the meaning of landscape is changed. The concept of landscape, as indicated by the Convention, includes both a subjective component (human perception) and an objective component (the territory), giving to people a "landscape conscience". Among the innovation introduced by the Convention there is the identification of landscape quality objectives. The Convention furthermore emphasizes the need to extend the focus from areas of greatest interest and environmental importance to all landscapes, standard or even compromised by the pressures of human settlement. Thus, the focus shifts from the protection of areas of particular importance to different policies for landscape management and planning.

Therefore, the design of urban landscape is became one of the most important duties for landscape architects.

3.2.2. General Goals and Outcomes

Landscape design module aims to give a basic knowledge of the landscape architecture discipline, through theory and practices. Furthermore, it aims to develop skills to integrate landscape architecture to different disciplines (urban and architectural design) as usually happens in professional practice, especially at urban scale.

3.2.3. Structure and content

Landscape lessons are articulated into two linked parts:

1. Theoretical lessons that aim to give some basic information about landscape architecture. Starting from a short historical review, we want to discuss on the concept of Landscape, reflecting in particular on the changes in the contemporary approach design after the Landscape Convention (2000).
2. Applied lessons that aim to give practical information (but strongly based on theory) on some themes (roof garden, vertical garden, community garden...) that could also be useful for the Lab project.

The topics of lessons (history, theory, fieldworks) are:

- Brief History of Landscape Architecture: from ancient Egypt and Iraq, Greek and Roman gardens and Islamic gardening, through Medieval period, Italian Renaissance gardens (15th 16th century), French gardens (17th 18th century), English gardens (18th 19th century), to 19th and 20th century.
- Concept of Landscape in Italy and abroad, and its application (laws, practices....)
- Reference Authors. Some protagonists of the 19th and 20th century as Pietro Porcinai, the greatest Italian garden designer; F.L. Olmsted the “father” of landscape architecture with his concept of park system and author of central park in New York; the colorful Brazilian Roberto Burle Marx; and many others (Jellicoe, Halprin...)
- Reference Projects. Some urban landscape project of the late 20th century and contemporary examples: La Villette and Parc Citroen in Paris, rehabilitation of the Quai de la Garonne in Bordeaux, Superkilen in Copenhagen, High Line of New York...
- Concept and examples for Green system/Green infrastructure. Linear open space systems allow penetration into the urban fabric and contribute to the environmental readjustment of settlement.
- Concept of Boundary landscape. Instruments to plan peri-urban landscapes, for the readjustment and regeneration of the no-longer urban and not yet agricultural landscape.

Arguments oriented to give practical information (methodology, design elements):

- Projects in urban context: theory and methodology: analysis, diagnosis, design. Identification of open spaces by environmental, historical, cultural, ecological and natural characters.
- Themes: urban farming, community gardens, pocket gardens, urban greenways, gardens in motion, guerrilla gardening, vertical gardens, roof gardens. Concepts and examples.
- Design principles and elements: soft-scape and hard-scape, vegetation, paving, furniture.

3.2.4. Activities

During the course, there are two mid-term examinations.

These two works are individual. One or two A3 sheets, presented to the class (as pdf or power point, we do not need to print them).

1° mid-term examination:

As students attending the course are coming from different countries, the first exercise is thought to share this cultural heritage. The exercise is a brief research on an historic garden/park or a project or an author of his/her own country that the student considers representative of his/her idea of “landscape”. Students must explain to the class the research. In this way, they share their own knowledge, one to each other, helping to a deeper consciousness about many different cultures.

2° mid-term examination:

As the previous exercise, the second one is an analytic schedule on a project or a landscape architect that the student considers representative of a “good contemporary landscape example”. Students can choose freely the example, not strictly linked to their own countries.

Lab exercise:

The final examination is the laboratory work. Students must develop a vision of new structure and organization of open spaces that combine existing open spaces with projected ones. After have done some analysis to identify the key characteristics of the landscape (**open spaces survey**), students define the strategy and the main goals (landscape quality objectives) and draw the **master plan** of the area (scale 1:2000, 1:1000). Then, they go deeply to a part of the neighborhood and they develop it through plans, sections, details, views (scales to be defined).

Open Space Survey (analysis and diagnosis):

- **Functions and roles of existing open spaces** (use of open spaces, both public and private)
- **Connections** (system of circulation and accessibility es. footpaths, trails, points of aggregation ...)
- **Values. Historic-architectural values** (monumental buildings, attraction points ...) and **natural values** (natural areas, gardens and parks...)
- **Visibility and perception** (visual perspective, emerging elements, detractors...)
- **Structure of the existing greenery** (existing master plan es. rows of trees, woods, trees....)
- **Critical issues and potentialities** (barrier, use interrupted, marginal places or without character, items to enhance and strengthen...)

3.2.5. Suggested books

History:

Maureen Carroll, *Earthly paradises: Ancient gardens in history and archaeology*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum 2003

Philip de Bay, James Balton, *Gardenmania*, Thames & Hudson, London 2000

Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, *The landscape of man: shaping the environment from prehistory to the present day* Thames and Hudson, 1975

Monique Mosser, Georges Teyssot (Editors), *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, Thames & Hudson 2000

Norman T Newton, *Design on the land: the development of landscape architecture* Belknap/Harvard 1971

Chip Sullivan, Elizabeth Boults, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, John Wiley & Sons Hoboken New Jersey 2010

Marc Treib, *Modern landscape architecture: a critical review*, MIT press Cambridge (Mass)-London 1993

Mariella Zoppi, *The European Garden*, Angelo Pontecorboli, Firenze 2016

Mariachiara Pozzana, *The Gardens of Florence and Tuscany- Complete Guide*, Giunti, Florence 2011

Theories:

Council of Europe, *European Landscape Convention*, Florence 20.10.2000

Gilles Clément, "The Planetary Garden" and Other Writings, Translated by Sandra Morris. Foreword by Gilles A. Tiberghien, University of Pennsylvania Press 2016

Elizabeth Kugler (Author), *Intermediate Natures: The Landscapes of Michel Desvigne*, Birkhäuser Architecture; 1 edition 2008

Themes:

Patric Blanc, *The Vertical Garden, from nature to the cities*, Norton Press 2009

Anna Lambertini, *Vertical Gardens*, Thames & Hudson, London 2007

Whitney North Seymour, *Small Urban Spaces: The Philosophy, Design, Sociology, and Politics of Vest-Pocket Parks and Other Small Urban Open Spaces*, New York University Press, 1969

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3.3. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (Prof. Valerio Barberis)

3.3.1 WHAT

The Architectural Design component of the Lab aims at providing students with the conceptual, theoretical and practical tools that are necessary to help them develop an understanding of the complexity of urban and architectural design and the challenges that it has to face in our contemporary society. More specifically, in order to cope with the recent and current developments of some of the key concepts on which social/public housing ideas and models have so far been based (such as the same meaning of “social”, “public”, “collective”, “domestic”), students will be asked to get engaged with a deeper understanding of the changes triggered by the economic and social crises which make it even more important, critical and urgent to focus the architectural debate and discourse on the social/public housing issue, which deals with concerns and questions that go beyond its traditional role (as dwelling facilities).

3.3.2 WHY

The design topic of the course, that is the rehabilitation of a public housing neighbourhood in the periphery of Prato, will be used as a pretext to develop a reflection on the (often conflicting) relationship between the partiality/specificity of an (architectural) project (and design solutions) and the incomplete (and therefore changeable and sometimes unpredictable) character of the city.

The relationship between buildings and urban space plays a key role in the rehabilitation of social/public housing neighbourhood, where the urban spaces in-between buildings can become activators of social practices.

For this purpose, in the first phase of the course, a series of lectures will be held to provide a theoretical and practical framework to a design approach based on observational methods, and intersectional (age, health situation, gender, ethnicity, class, wealth, etc.) and multi-scalar focuses on the ways domestic and urban spaces are used and appropriated by their inhabitants, taking account of different user profiles. Given the importance of the influence of architecture and all the other spatial configurations of the (domestic and urban) environment in the construction of identities, the basic principles of a gender-sensitive and process-oriented methodology will be taught in order to make students aware of the fact that architecture with a capital “A” is more than buildings, more than beautiful objects and design solutions: an expanded agenda is required not only for the sake of the environment and a long-term sustainability, but above all in order to step up efforts in the pursuit of better and more equitable life conditions for everybody. The starting point of these arguments is that space is a social and collaborative production, and that architecture’s main commitment should be to find a response to the needs of everyday life.

3.3.3 HOW

For the final examinations, students are required to submit a design proposal for a set of collective spaces – capable of hosting a variety of activities related to training, interaction and social

participation – by implementing the methodological framework of a gender-sensitive approach, within the public housing neighborhood in the periphery of Prato that has been selected as the project site of the lab.

4. ATTENDANCE

Attendance to the Lab is mandatory. A minimum of 75% of attendance is required. Students who will not attend to the course properly will be excluded from the lab and will be prevented from holding the exam. Regularly enrolled students are asked to hold the exam in the winter sessions in January and February 2018. The exam dates will be communicated later on.

5. EVALUATION AND GRADING SYSTEM

The final score will be so determined:

- Part 1 (theoretical section and readings): 20%;
- Part 2 mid term exercises 20%;
- Part 3 (Master Plan) 60%.