UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE
DIDA
DIPARTIMENTO DI
ARCHITETTURA

CDL MAGISTRALE IN ARCHITETTURA (+2) B018890
ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN LAB
Teachers: Giulio Giovannoni, Valerio Barberis, Antonella 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), Architectural Design II (Prof. Valerio Barberis), Urban Landscape Design (Prof. Antonella Valentini).
This is the only lab of the master 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 neighbourhood of the city of Prato developing the different aspects related to the three disciplines with the three professors. The goal of the lab is to develop a complex 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 discussions. 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 2020-2021 LAB

“Rehabilitation of a neighborhood in the periphery of Prato”
Students of the Architecture and Town Lab will develop a project for the rehabilitation of a neighbourhood in the periphery of the city of Prato, focusing on the theme of the rediscovery of the ancient water tracks: the “gore”, that were so important in the past for the industrial activities of Prato and that now could be reused for ecological purposes.
The topic will be developed in coordination with the municipality of Prato.
The Lab final project is a team work (max 3/4 students per group, different nationalities).

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE THREE COMPONENTS

3.1. URBAN DESIGN

Prof. Giulio Giovannoni

3.1.1. Description

Although Tuscany is world famous for its preserved historic centers and its beautiful countryside, most Tuscans live in the *campagna urbanizzata*, a patchwork of voids, factories and homes – the typical Italian version of suburban sprawl. These areas are the productive and social heart of the region and its most dynamic frontier. While certainly not famous for their aesthetic qualities they are highly active socially and economically. The studio will explore the link between theory and action using urban design to develop an urban project that can transform the *campagna urbanizzata* in Prato into a real city, equipped with services and facilities, living spaces, and a system of interconnected public spaces.

Some of the techniques used throughout the studio will be stratigraphic analysis, multisensory public space analysis, social life analysis, strategic visioning, decision-making games, master-planning, design zooms aimed at verifying the feasibility of the overall urban project. If possible in consideration of current restrictions, students will take a study trip to Prato to explore the site and meet with local administrators, scholars and business people.

3.1.2. General Goals and Outcomes

The main goals of the Urban Design Studio are the following:

1. deconstructing the complexity of urban space to build a manageable design and operational dimension;
2. building an urban spatial strategy by working at different scales;
3. working on the urban project in its spatial, symbolic and social dimensions;
4. positioning urban design in current trends of societal and urban change;
5. building a spatial policy agenda by integrating different visions and interests;
6. masterplanning ‘a la carte’;
7. thinking of the urban project as an opportunity for the experience of space and time.

3.1.3. Course Structure, Content and Schedule

The course is structured into the following five sections.

Section 1. Urban Design between Theory and Practice

Learning Objectives: 1) identify the specificity of urban design with respect to architectural design and landscape design; 2) evaluate how urban theory impacts urban design; 3) identify the social role of the urban designer.

Summary. Urban design can be defined as theory in action. Different theoretical frameworks produce different outputs. Urban design impacts the life of people in many different ways and can be socially just or socially inequitable. The urban designer plays an important role in the society and needs to be socially and ethically responsible.
Duration. 1 theoretical lecture on October 1st.

Section 2. Disentangling Urban Complexity

Learning objectives: 1) disentangle urban complexity; 2) select information relevant to the urban project.
Summary. The city, and more generally the territory, is a complex text whose understanding is made difficult by the overabundance of information and of 'signs'. In this section of the studio we will learn to disentangle such complexity and to understand and select information which is relevant to the project.
Duration: 2 weeks, from Sept. 24th (lecture on the topic) until Oct. 8th (delivery of assignment 1).

Section 3. Designing for the Poeple

Learning objectives: 1) evaluate how urban space is used and perceived by different social grups; 2) define design criteria that take into account the needs of different social groups.
Summary. The city is inhabited by different groups with diverse needs and (often conflicting) goals. In order to develop a socially sensitive project it is necessary to have a good understanding of the social dynamics which happen in space. This will be done applying anthropological and observational methods.
Duration: 2 weeks, from Oct. 8th (lecture on the topic) until Oct. 22nd (delivery of assignment 2).

Section 4. Envisioning an Urban Strategy

Learning objectives: 1) outline, explain, and justify an urban design strategy; 2) represent and communicate that strategy.
Summary. An urban design project is a complex operation which affects the life of many people and which impacts the economy, the society, and the environment. The development of an urban design strategy aims to mediate between different economic, environmental and social needs and to find a balance between the goals of the different social groups.
Duration. 2 weeks, from Oct. 22nd until Nov. 5th.

Section 5. Translating the Strategy into an Urban Project

Learning objectives: 1) develop a masterplan; 2) develop design zooms for the most relevant parts of the masterplan.
Summary. Although being related to space and to specific sites, the strategy developed in section #4 is conceptual and must be translated into a proper project. The project usually crosses different scales with different levels of detail. The scales of the project depend on the issues/topics being developed and can range from a maximum of 1:5000 (for large open areas) to a minimum of 1:500 (for urban design zooms).

Duration. 6 weeks, from Nov. 5th until Dec. 17th. Weekly revisions will be possible until the exam session.

3.1.3. Assignments and grading

Assignment 1: Stratigraphical Analysis. The assignment consists in developing the 'stratigraphical analysis' of the urban area assigned for the analysis/project, following instructions provided during the lectures. A pdf booklet will be delivered. The assignment is intended to be developed in small groups. Weight on the overall evaluation: 20%. Grading system: score 18-30. Duration: Sept. 24th-Oct. 8th (delivery).
Assignment 2: Lived Space Analysis. The assignment consists in developing the 'Lived Space Analysis' of the urban area assigned for the analysis/project, following instructions provided during the lectures. A pdf booklet will be delivered. Findings will be collectively presented and discussed during the class. The assignment is intended to be developed in small groups. Weight on the overall evaluation: 20%. Grading system: score 18-30. Duration: Oct. 8th-Oct. 22nd (delivery).
Assignment 3: Strategic Plan. The assignment consists in developing a Strategic Plan for the analysis/design area. A Strategy panel will be delivered. The assignment is intended to be developed in small groups. Weight on the overall evaluation: 20%. Grading system: score 18-30. Duration: Oct. 22nd-Nov. 5th.
Assignment 4: Urban Design Project. The assignment consists in developing an urban masterplan for the analysis/design area (1 board, scale to be decided, to be developed in small groups, weight on the overall evaluation 20%, grading system: score 18-30) and some design zoom areas (1 board, scale to be decided, to be developed individually, weight on the overall evaluation 20%, grading system: score 18-30). Duration: Nov. 5th-1week before exam (final delivery).

3.1.4. Readings

Readings will be provided to the students on the Moodle platform on a weekly basis. Suggested general purpose readings are the following:

- Giovannoni G., *Tuscany beyond Tuscany. Rethinking the City from the Periphery*, Didapress, 2017.
- Ingersoll R., *Sprawltown. Looking for the City on Its Edges*,
- Makeower T., *Touching the City: Thoughts on Urban Scale*, Wiley, 2014.
- Meeda B. et al., *Graphics for Urban Design*, Thomas Telford, 2006.
- Lang J., *Urban Design: A Typology of Procedures and Products*, Architectural Press, 2005.
- Sheppard M., *Essentials of Urban Design*, Csiro, 2015.
- Sieverts T., *Cities without Cities: An Interpretation of the Zwieschenstadt*, Spon Press, 2003.

Suggested readings on specific topics are the following:

- Ben-Joseph E., *Rethinking a Lot. The Design and Culture of Parking*, MIT Press, 2012.

- Dreiseitl H. and Grau D. (eds.), *New Waterscapes. Planning, Building and Designing with Water*, Birkhäuser, 2001.
- Duneier M., *Sidewalk*, Macmillan, 1999.
- Institut pour la ville en movement, *Passages: Espaces de Transition pour la ville du 21^{e} siecle*, Actar, 2017.
- Ivers C.B., *Staging Urban Landscapes: The Activation and Curation of Flexible Public Spaces*, Birkhäuser, 2018

3.2. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN II

Prof. Valerio Barberis

3.1.1 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).

3.1.2 Why

The design topic of the course, that is the rehabilitation of a neighbourhood in the periphery of Prato along the *gore* network, 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 urban neighbourhoods, 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.

3.1.3 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 neighbourhood in Prato that has been selected as the project site of the lab.

3.3. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Prof. Antonella Valentini

3.3.1. 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 has been strong in theory and practices, up to the year 2000, when the Landscape Convention was signed in Florence. From that date in academic world and 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". 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 human settlement pressures. Thus, the design focus shifts from the protection of particular importance areas to landscape management and planning.

Therefore, the urban landscape design is one of the most important task for landscape architects. As landscape architects, we have to manage transformation in our cities, aiming at increasing qualities in the urban environment.

3.3.2. General Goals and Outcomes

The landscape design module aims to give a basic knowledge of the landscape architecture discipline, through lessons on general theory, concept and history and more “practical” lessons, by many landscape project examples. Furthermore, it aims to develop skills to integrate landscape architecture to different disciplines (urban and architectural design) as usually happens in the professional practice, especially at urban scale.

3.3.3. Structure and content

Landscape lessons are articulated into two strongly linked parts:

1. Theoretical Lessons: History, Theory, Fieldworks. These lessons 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: Topics, Design Elements, Methodology. These lessons aim to give “practical” information strongly based on theory. Many themes are explored as Roof Garden, Vertical Garden, Community Garden..., that could also be useful for the Lab project. A methodology to analysis and design the urban areas is given.

Topics of the first part:

- Concept of Landscape in Italy and abroad, and its application.

- 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.
- Masters. 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 Copenaghen, 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.

Topics of the second part:

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

3.3.4. Evaluation

Mid-term examination:

During the course, there is one mid-term examination. This work is individual.

As students attending the course are coming from different countries, this first exercise is thought to share this cultural heritage. The mid-term exercise is a brief research on a garden/park project that the student considers representative of his/her idea of "a good contemporary landscape project example". Students can choose any example, but it would be nice something of yours own countries.

The exercise in made by one or two A3 sheets (pdf) to delivered by e-mail (date to fix, in October).

Final examination

For the final examinations, students are required to submit design proposals for the periphery of Prato that has been selected as case-study by of the lab. Students must develop a vision of new structure of open spaces that combine the existing ones. After

have done the analysis to identify the key characteristics of the landscape (**open spaces survey**), students define the strategy and the mail goals and draw the **master plan** of the area (scale 1:2000, 1:1000). Then, they go deeply develop it through plans, sections, renders, details, views (scales to be defined).

Attendance to the Lab is mandatory. A minimum of 75% of attendance is required. Students who will not attend 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 2021. The exam dates will be communicated later on.

3.3.5. Suggested books

- History:

Maureen Carroll, *Earthly paradises: Ancient gardens in history and archaeology*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum 2003
Monique Mosser, Georges Teyssot (Editors), *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, Thames & Hudson 2000
Chip Sullivan, Elizabeth Boults, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, John Wiley & Sons Hoboken New Jersey 2010
Mariella Zoppi, *The European Garden*, Angelo Pontecorboli, Firenze 2016
Mariachiara Pozzana, *The Gardens of Florence and Tuscany- Complete Guide*, Giunti, Florence 2011

- Themes:

Woods Ballard et al., *"The SuDS Manual"* 2015.
M.A. Benedict, E.T. McMahon, *Green infrastructure: linking landscapes and communities*, Island Press, Washington DC 2006.
Patric Blanc, *The Vertical Garden, from nature to the cities*, Norton Press 2009.
Gilles Clément, *"The Planetary Garden" and Other Writings*, University of Pennsylvania Press 2016.
FAO, *Guidelines on Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry*, by F. Salbitano, S. Borelli, M. Conigliaro, Y. Chen, FAO Forestry Paper 178, Rome 2016.
Elizabeth Kugler, *Intermediate Natures: The Landscapes of Michel Desvigne*, Birkhäuser Architecture; 1 edition 2008.
Anna Lambertini, *Vertical Gardens*, Thames & Hudson, London 2007.
April Philips, *Designing urban agriculture: a complete guide to the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of edible landscapes*, Wiley, 2013.
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.
David Tracey, *Guerrilla Gardening: A Manualfesto* New Society Publishers, 2007.

- Contemporary landscape architecture:

Philip Jodido, *Landscape Architecture Now*, Taschen Cologne 2012.
LAE, Landscape Architecture Europe, *Fieldworks*, Birkhauser, Basel 2006.

International Biennial of Landscape Architecture**,** various catalogue, ed. Paysage: "*Remaking Landscapes*" (1999), "*Gardens in Arms*" (2001), "*Only with Nature*" (2003), "*Landscape: a Product / a Production*" (2006), "*Storm & stress*" (2008), "*Liquid Landscape*" (2010), "*Biennial versus Biennial*" (2012), "*A Landscape for You*" (2014), " *Tomorrow Landscapes*" (2016)
PAYS.MED.URBAN, *Good Practices for Landscape. Catalogue of good practices for the landscape in periurban areas*, 2011.
See numbers of the Italian magazine "Architettura del Paesaggio" (printed, in Italian and English). See also other magazines: TOPOS, LA+ Journal (University of Pennsylvania), Paisea (in Spanish and English).

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 2020. The exam dates will be communicated later on.

5. EVALUATION AND GRADING SYSTEM

The final score will be so determined as an average of the scores gained in the three components of the Lab.