

## **Public Spaces Public Life for South Downtown**

Architecture 503 / Landscape Architecture 504

Fall Quarter 2008

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Public Spaces Public Life interdisciplinary studio will study and design public spaces near Seattle's South Downtown Transit Hub, with the goal of creating a socially vibrant, ecologically healthy public realm. During the term, our Master Studio will benefit from involvement of the renowned Copenhagen firm Gehl Architects, which is currently consulting to the City of Seattle to improve the pedestrian and environmental quality of the city's downtown. The studio will build upon data that students working for the UW's Green Futures Lab have conducted for this project in the past several months.

The intent of the studio is to offer an exploration of creating high-quality public space. The initial portion of the studio will involve limited urban context analysis, and a simultaneous series of rigorous formal explorations. We will utilize and expand on the 12 Quality Criteria as defined by Gehl Architects, while also applying the Seattle Green Factor at the urban design scale.

### **COURSE GOALS:**

- to practice working on ecologically sound and vibrant public space design at the urban design scale;
- to explore, implement and expand on the application of the 12 Quality Criteria for public space as outlined by Gehl Architects;
- to investigate and utilize the Seattle Green Factor as applied to urban environments;
- to explore applications of ecological and sustainable design to public urban space, through precedent studies, planning and design;
- to think about strategies of reusing and retrofitting infrastructure and buildings as a sustainable design strategy;
- to develop graphic and verbal communication skills, and the ability to work in teams;
- to practice working between scales, using both large and small scales to inform the other.

*The project will give us the opportunity to approach the questions:*

- What is "sustainability" as applied to urban landscape, infrastructure and buildings?
- What are effective goals and benchmarks that cities can establish with regard to sustainability of urban environments?
- What strategies can increase the life, voluntary use and energy of urban public places?
- What is appropriate and workable in an urban environment like Seattle?
- What are the particularities of the Seattle situation that should drive the planning (as all sustainable design should be)?

It is often the actual *urban landscape*--the space between buildings--that is forgotten in the sustainability equation, and *this will be our focus*. We will also look at adaptive reuse of infrastructure, buildings and the intersection of architecture and urban landscape as a means to exploring 'best use' strategies for making cities better places to inhabit.

*Some of the systems we will investigate:*

- Water: stormwater, water cleansing and re-use,
- Spatial structure / public space for human use, cultural repository, and urban vitality
- Ecological systems, particularly vegetation and habitat
- Circulation and transportation connections
- Energy and climate, including energy source, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration and embodied energy in materials and waste
- Best practices for reusing/recycling materials. How can we make what we have better?

## **STUDIO PROCESS and EXPECTATIONS**

We will meet Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30 to 5:30 and often on Fridays (students are expected to be in class and work Fridays on group or individual projects) for *group presentations, discussions, field trips, working time and desk critiques*. Students will work individually and in groups on inventory, analysis, design, and presentations. Each participant is expected to be in class during the scheduled class time. When Gehl Architects are scheduled to be in town, we expect you to be in studio at all times, and plan on slightly longer days.

You are highly encouraged to continue your sketchbook from Copenhagen (or start a new one) that documents your research and design explorations. Consider including your research and design process, notes from readings, class discussions and community meetings, solutions seen, heard, and imagined, and your reflections and conclusions about process and product.

## **READINGS AND RESOURCES**

A list of resource books on Reserve in the AUP library will be available on-line. You are encouraged to share new resources with each other as you discover them throughout the term. The required book for the course is: *Life Between Buildings* (Jan Gehl), which is available at the UW Bookstore. We have ordered other books there that you may wish to purchase: *New City Spaces* (Gehl and Gemzøe), *True Urbanism* (Hinshaw), and *Sustainable Urbanism* (Farr). Other books on the reading list are on reserve as listed and will be excellent resources.

## **COURSE WEBSITE**

<http://courses.washington.edu/gehlstud/>

### **U-Drive:**

To log in under windows, right-click the red "N" in the lower left corner of the screen and select "Novell Login". Click the Advanced button , and make sure the parameters are set to the following:

Username:      larc504  
password:      copenhagen  
Tree:           UWCAUP  
Context:        COURSES.CAUP  
Server:          jabba.caup.washington.edu

To login on a mac, use the menu item /Go/Connect to Server/ from the finder. Enter your username and password, then select the volume USERS.JABBA. This volume will be mounted on your desktop. Open it to find the course folder.

## **STUDIO EVALUATION**

Evaluation will be based on departmental and college standards, with a numerical grade at the end of the term for Landscape Architecture students and evaluation forms for Architecture students. Evaluation will be based roughly on the following:

Context Analysis	10%
Precedent Study	10%
Mid-term	20%
Final Design Package (including book pages)	50%
Class Participation	10%

CDs with all of your files, including scans of your process work, are required at the end of the term.