Never before have so many people lived in the villages, towns, and cities of our planet’s increasingly complex and ever-expanding metropolitan regions! Our approach to the physical design of these communities will fundamentally affect their economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

MRDC’s Urban Design 101 will examine the transformative impact that innovative physical planning and design of the "public realm" are having upon the quality and success of urban life. The course will introduce a cross section of our region’s civic leaders – representing a mix of public, private and non-profit organizations – to the basic concepts, vocabulary, and techniques of urban design as reflected in a variety of contemporary place-making initiatives in Memphis and across the country.

Urban Design 101 has been created to introduce local leaders to emerging design concepts that are guiding our nation’s most exciting neighborhood stabilization, downtown development, waterfront revitalization, new town planning, public spaces, historic revitalization, and mass transit projects.

Classes will feature multi-media presentations by local and national faculty, class discussions, small group exercises and a neighborhood planning and design workshop. Participants will be encouraged to connect the urban design theories, concepts, and techniques being explored in class to current design challenges and opportunities confronting our local communities within our region!
Time & Location  Tuesday evenings from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, September 28th through November 16th. Classes will be held at the Center City Commission, 114 N. Main Street where the MRDC has its office. There is street, garage, and lot parking nearby.

Lead Instructor  Mr. Chooch Pickard, AIA, MRDC Executive Director and Chief Designer Officer, will serve as Lead Instructor for the Urban Design 101 course. Chooch is a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has completed several preservation reuse projects in Downtown Memphis including Court Square Center, the renovation of the historic Lincoln American Tower and Lowenstein Building. Chooch is President of AIA Memphis and serves on the MATA Board of Commissioners.

Joining Chooch this semester for individual classes will be a combination of Memphis-based lecturers as well as guest lecturers from outside of our region.

Course Topics  

Sept 28  **Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important? - Part I**  
*Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss*

This session will define urban design, offer a compelling rational for its importance, and provide several examples of local, national, and international “best practices” of relevance to citizens of the Greater Memphis Region.

Oct 5  **Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important? - Part II**  
*Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss*

This session will continue to explore the basic concepts of urban design introduced during week one.

Oct 12  **Complete Streets**  
*Michael Oakes, PE, County Engineer, Shelby County*

“Complete Streets” is a term that embodies the need for our streets, boulevards and avenues to be designed for multi-modes; to effectively deal with walking, cycling and transit in addition to automobiles and trucks. This lecture highlights the problems of the present systems and discusses some safer, more neighborhood friendly alternatives and the transformative effect that such roadways can have on sustainability and livability.

Oct 19  **Implementing Unified Development Code Tools to Create a More Livable Community**  
*Josh Whitehead and Don Jones, Memphis & Shelby County OPD*

This will be a working session using the new UDC Building Envelope Standards, applying them to Memphis neighborhoods. The UDC is a form of form-based zoning that is becoming increasingly popular throughout our region and nation.
Oct 26  Transforming the Urban Landscape through Community Gardens and Farmers Markets

Josephine Williams, Gro Memphis and Curtis Thomas, The Works Inc.

Josephine and Curtis will describe how local residents and leaders are transforming abandoned lots into vibrant community gardens that are improving the appearance of our city’s neighborhoods, building a sense of community, and supplementing the incomes of local residents. They will also describe how the city’s expanding number of farmers markets are enhancing food access and security for residents of poor and working class neighborhoods and providing exciting new public spaces for social networking.

Nov 2  North Mississippi Greenways Initiatives and the State of Regionalism in the Mid South

Robert L Barber, FAICP, Director of Planning, City of Hernando, MS.

North Mississippi has been busy the last few years developing the foundations of a comprehensive greenways and blueways system. Mr. Barber will present an overview of their promise for enhanced livability in North Mississippi and offer a perspective on the opportunities presented for greater regional understanding and cooperation throughout the Mid South.

Nov 9  Using Public Art to Create Memorable and Transformative Places

John Weeden, Executive Director, UrbanArt Commission

This session will present various examples of successful place-making in which artists, landscape architects, architects, and planners worked with citizens to re-design public squares, plazas, parks, and public buildings as networks of living rooms where the civic life of a healthy democracy can be recalled, pursued, and celebrated. Participants will be encouraged to re-imagine uninspired public spaces in their communities using innovative approaches to public art-making.

Nov 16  Using the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Program to Revitalization Aging Commercial Corridors

Kimberly Nyberg, Program Director, Tennessee Main Street Program

Kimberly will explain how neighborhood leaders and local businesspersons throughout Tennessee and the nation are using the four elements of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to breathe new life into aging commercial corridors in rural areas, small towns, and major cities. Kimberly will explain how coalitions of small business persons, neighborhood activists, and municipal officials have used organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring to generate 57,000 new businesses, create 230,000 new jobs, and attract more than $17 billion in new investment within economically distressed commercial corridors.

(Please note that course topics are subject to change)
Costs
Enrollment costs $200. Tuition for Urban Design 101 helps underwrite the course. A modest number of scholarships for those with limited incomes are available. Mail or bring your check to Memphis Regional Design Center, 114 N. Main Street, Memphis, TN 38103, Attn: Urban Design 101.

Participation
Community leaders representing a broad cross-section of our region’s business, government, labor, non-profit, faith, retiree, and civic groups are being sought to participate in Urban Design 101. Considerable effort is being made to assemble a class that reflects the age, race, ethnicity, gender, and income diversity of our community. If you are interested in participating in the Fall 2010 course, please email Chooch Pickard at cpickard@mrdcinfo.org.

Optional Texts


City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village Revised edition, David Sucher, Self Published: City Comforts Inc. (Seattle), 2003


Readings
Brief readings will be periodically distributed.

Information
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