

URPL-GP 2680

# **Topics in Urban Design Spring 2021**

## The Transforming Role of Public Art: Contextualizing History and Redefining Public Space

## Instructor Information

* Professor: Rodney Leon
* Email: rl4306@nyu.edu
* Office Hours: Friday, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM and by appointment

## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 4:55-6:35 PM via Zoom
* Digital Design Labs: Fridays, 12:30-1:30

## Course Prerequisites

* URPL-GP.2625: Environmental Infrastructure for Sustainable Cities *Recommended*

## Course Description

This course entitled **“The Transforming Role of Public Art: Contextualizing History and** **Redefining Public Space”** challenges students toreimagine the Manhattan Civic Center as aHistoric and Cultural District with an emphasis on African-American contributions to the development of New York City.

The Manhattan Civic Center has long been the gateway into New York City. The Civic Center is at the heart of our municipal government and occupies land at the intersection between Chinatown, Two Bridges, South Street Seaport, The Financial District and Tribeca. Thomas Paine Park in Foley Square is located at its geographic center and due to its proximity to City Hall has become a gathering place for social, cultural and political activism. In many ways the

space is becoming an unofficial “Town Square” where large groups of citizens gather spontaneously to voice their opinion publicly.

Most New Yorkers do not realize that City Hall Park and Foley Square both sit within the African Burial Ground and Commons Historic District. The district was designated as both

a New York City Historic District and a National Landmark in 1993. To the south of the district, City Hall Park, once known as “The Commons” served as New York’s Village Green in the early 19th century. To the north of the district the 18th Century African Burial Ground once known as The Negroes Burial Ground is the site where an estimated 15,000-20,000 free and enslaved Africans are buried.

Students will develop and present master planning strategies using public art and cultural activities in a strategic manner to transform the Lower Manhattan Civic Center into a vibrant Historic District. The class will participate in discussions with and present their ideas to local stakeholders representing key government, cultural, business and community organizations. As a final urban design project, students will prepare a Master Planning proposal for a Historic District with emphasis upon expanding the narrative of underrepresented communities.

## Course Format

The course will be structured in two parts around individual and group assignments. The first half of the semester will place emphasis on individual research, mapping, analysis and programming presentation exercises. There will be introductory instructor or guest lecture presentations at the beginning of class followed by brief student presentations and discussion of project and reading assignments. Digital design laboratories that reinforce technical skill sets will be taught by a teaching assistant preceding classes on Mondays. The second half of the semester will emphasize group master planning proposal culminating in Final Project Presentation.

## Learning Objectives

A main goal is to use public art and cultural activities in a strategic manner to transform public space throughout the Lower Manhattan Civic Center into a vibrant historic district. Through the semester and upon completion of the course students will:

1. Develop analytical design processes for Master Planning through precedent investigation, historic research, mapping and site analysis.
2. Gain the understanding of how to take data driven analytical information and communicate visual narratives that can be communicated clearly, effectively and persuasively into coherent conceptual design proposals.
3. Gain experience with technical graphic design software and techniques to facilitate public presentation skills in both academic and professional environment.
4. Establish a unique historic knowledge of the evolution of Lower Manhattan’s urban landscape specifically and New York City in general.
5. Prepare design and planning strategies for review and consideration by planners, policy makers and stakeholders.
6. Gain an understanding of how to utilize history, art and cultural activity as catalysts for urban transformation.
7. Build consensus across sectors for implementation of diverse, equitable and inclusive policy strategies concerning issues having social, political and cultural impact.
8. Propose and create opportunities for expanding economic development through cultural activities and spaces in diverse communities.

## Learning Assessment Table

For PADM-GP, MSPP-GP, PHD-GP, UPADM-GP, and URPL-GP courses, use the following table:

| **Graded Assignment** | **Course Objective Covered** |
| --- | --- |
| Midterm Project 1 |  |
| Final Project 2 |  |

Refer to the [URPL-GP 1603 Urban Planning and Practice Methods](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1lfCMmymwA4CrOysU3nGyDTEpzJ-OOy_O) course syllabus for format example.

## Required Readings

[Learning resources might include any of the following: textbooks, software, relevant reading materials, videos, recordings. In addition to listing learning resources, this section could also address these questions:

* How will students access learning resources (e.g. NYU Classes, bookstore, library, etc.)?
* Are there any suggested resources in addition to those required in the course?
* How will students use required learning resources for the course (e.g. preparation, in-class reference, completing assignments, etc.)?]
* [LIST READINGS AS BULLET POINTS]
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## Course Schedule

* Week 1

1. Date: February 8
2. Topic: Introduction to the course
   1. Assignment 1: Read Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers, Prepare Precedent Analysis

* Week 2
  1. Date: February 18
  2. Topic: Memorial Landscape Typologies
  3. Review Assignment 1
  4. Assignment 2: Historic Mapping of Lower Manhattan Civic Center
* Week 3
  1. Date: February 22
  2. Topic: African Burial Ground Commons and Historic District (A Virtual Tour)
  3. Deliverable: Review and present Assignment 2
  4. Assignment 3: Mapping of Existing Memorial Landscape (Optional Site Visit)
* Week 4
  1. Date: March 1

1. Topic: Guest Speaker, National Park Service
2. Deliverable: Review and present Assignment 3
   1. Assignment 4: Site Selection for Proposed Intervention

* Week 5
  1. Date: March 8
  2. Topic: Guest Speaker, Black Gotham Experience
  3. Deliverable: Review and present Assignment 4
  4. Assignment 5: Site Analysis and Concept Documentation
* Week 6
  1. Date: March 15

1. Topic: Cultural Contextuality
   1. Deliverable: Review and present Assignment 5
   2. Assignment 6: Conceptual Design Development

* Week 7
  1. Date: March 22

1. Topic: **Midterm Presentation: Project 1**
   1. Deliverable: Individual Conceptual Design Presentation
   2. Assignment 7: Team Formation

* Week 8
  1. Date: March 29
  2. Topic: Guest Speaker Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC)
  3. Deliverable: Team Discussion
  4. Assignment 8: Interim Submission
* Week 9
  1. Date: April 5
  2. Topic: Master Planning Narrative Formation
  3. Deliverable: Interim Review and Discussion
  4. Assignment 8: Interim Submission
* Week 10
  1. Date: April 12

1. Topic: Master Planning Development
   1. Deliverable: Interim Review and Discussion
   2. Assignment 8: Interim Submission

* Week 11 (NO CLASS)
* Week 12
  1. Date: April 26
  2. Topic: Master Planning Presentation Review
  3. Deliverable: Interim Review and Discussion
  4. Assignment 8: Interim Submission
* Week 13
  1. Date: May 3
  2. Topic: Master Planning Presentation Review
  3. Deliverable: Interim Review and Discussion
  4. Assignment 8: Interim Submission
* Week 14
  1. Date: May 10

1. Topic: **Final Presentation Project 2** (Guest Critics) o Deliverable: Group Master Planning Presentation . o

## Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | 4.0 points |
| **A-** | 3.7 points |
| **B+** | 3.3 points |
| **B** | 3.0 points |
| **B-** | 2.7 points |
| **C+** | 2.3 points |
| **C** | 2.0 points |
| **C-** | 1.7 points |
| **F** | 0.0 points |

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

* (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

* (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

* (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

* (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

* (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

* (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
* (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with NYU Classes

[This section should describe how the course will use NYU Classes. See example below:]

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the NYU Classes site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code.](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code) All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath.](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/academic-oath) Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) [Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

Class Policies

[Feel free to make this section your own. Add any additional instructions or information that you believe students need to know. Some examples of categories for this section: attendance [for those of you teaching intensive courses, please be explicit since missing even one day or a portion of a day may be too much and students may need to choose a different course], reporting illnesses or emergencies, participation, re-grading, late submission policy, technology use in the classroom, your response time, [incomplete policy,](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/incompletes) [course withdrawal policy,](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/registration/add-or-drop) etc.]