Urban Form

Course Description
ARCH 4050/6050

Fall 2015

Professor Deborah E. Ryan  deryan@unc.edu
W 9:30am – 12:30pm at the Charlotte Center City Building / 3 Credit Hour Elective

PREMISE
Economics, social forces, attitudes about density, ideas about sustainability, and incentives to encourage good design are all forces that affect contemporary urban form. A city’s plans illustrate a response to these forces and together, can define a vision for its future. To bracket the study of these ideas, the class primarily focuses on the urban design of Charlotte, and on guest lectures by the people who have made the decisions that have shaped it.

CONTENT
This is a class about how cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas change. It is an introductory course for advanced undergraduates and graduates that examines both the evolving structure of the American metropolis and the ways that it can be designed and developed. We will survey the ideas of a wide range of people who have addressed urban problems and acted to alter cities, suburbs, and regions through modern city design and planning. We will analyze the values implicit in each of their proposals, stressing the connections between ideas and design. We will focus on sustainable practices and principles in the design of cities. Attempts to control growth and suburban sprawl will also be covered. Topics will include residential density, planning for big box retail (and its demise), the challenge of affordable housing both in the US and internationally, the design of urban infrastructure (specifically streets and mass transit), environmental justice, and the value of localism in designing the modern American city.

METHOD
Students will become familiar with modern city planning through films, readings, guest presentations that will take place in architecture, landscape architecture and planning offices in Charlotte, class discussions, case studies, local field studies and research projects. The ability to ride a bike is a plus as we will use them to get around uptown Charlotte for study trips and some office visits.

EVALUATION & GRADING
Evaluation will be based on the following:
Online Quizzes and in class exercises 40%; Research about field study sites 10%; Residential Density Case Study 15%; Transit station study 15%; Final 20%. Attendance in class and at school-wide lectures is required. More than one unexcused absence may result in failure of the course.

Partial List of COURSE READINGS
All readings will be available on Moodle. They will include
• Going Green and Going Online, Smart City Radio • Kelbaugh, Douglas, The History of Cities and the Role of Architects