Abstract: This course builds upon the idea that community planning and design provide strategies for positive change, capacity building and the development of both physical and social capital. The class gives students opportunities to foster community change through a focus upon public scholarship, public interest design and planning, and through participatory community planning partnerships with local community groups, agencies, and individuals. The intersection of political, economic, social, and cultural factors in planning and urban design will be emphasized, as well as the ethical role of designers and planners in working with communities. Objectives:

i) To introduce students to community planning/design and participatory community practices particularly as these relate to issues of sustainable development, social equity, and social space.
ii) To encourage critical reflection on the role of neighborhoods in building, empowering, maintaining, and sustaining communities.
iii) To gain experience with community-scale data, citizen participation, and preparing oral reports and planning documents.
iv) To examine ethical responsibilities to diverse public interests, to clients, to colleagues and oneself.

Methodology & Content: The CPW takes the Charlotte-Mecklenburg regional area as its focus. Projects addressed in the class will be drawn from local communities and executed in collaboration with local residents, groups, and agencies. Our collaborations with neighborhood partners will enrich the learning experience for students, provide benefits to the community, and establish a set of research agendas. A review of planning and design policies and theories will be presented in readings, seminar discussions, and workshop sessions. A wide range of skills and tools will be addressed including demographic analysis, community participation, information gathering, mapping/site analysis, design speculation and visioning, and the preparation of community plans. Major topics include neighborhood identity, collaborative planning and urban design, sustainable development, social capital and social justice in our built environments. Classroom activities include (1) weekly updates detailing the status of student projects, (2) seminar discussions led by the instructors and (3) student/faculty reviews of projects. A significant amount of time will be spent outside of class on assignments, research, neighborhood meetings, and presentation development.

Required Texts: TBA (readings are on Atkins electronic course reserve).

Grading: The majority of the semester will involve collaborative teamwork. These activities will build upon classroom instruction and extend into our partnering communities. Assignments will be evaluated upon level of completeness/comprehensiveness, level of analysis, and upon overall quality. Assessment breakdown will be as follows: Interim Review of Assignments: 30% (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4); Final Review of Assignments: 40% (Assignment 5); Participation in Class/weekly reading assignments/discussion questions: 30%