

# **THE STREET**

**The Ubiquitous Public Space**

**ARC 5931-903**

**3 CREDITS**

**SUMMER 2013**

**TR 1:00 – 3:50 PM**

**HMS 442**

**Instructor: Vikas Mehta, Ph.D.**

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**Meetings by appointment only**

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**SCHOOL of ARCHITECTURE + COMMUNITY DESIGN  
COLLEGE of THE ARTS  
UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA**

## COURSE OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES

Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.

— Jane Jacobs

The joy and pain of urban existence, the comfort and hardship of it, its efficiency or failure are influenced by the wisdom or the thoughtlessness with which streets are planned.

— Charles Mulford Robinson

We encounter streets everyday. Our daily life depends on them. Most of us walk on them, drive on them, we access our places of living, work, and shopping from a street, and many use the street for some leisure activity. Streets play a major role in structuring the form of settlements, particularly urban settlements. A considerable portion of land in cities—one-third to half of it—is devoted to streets that serve as the prime infrastructure for movement, access, and connectivity and in carrying and delivering utilities and services. Streets bring light and air into buildings. But most importantly, streets of all types, in cities new and old, are the most immediate and ubiquitous public spaces that support a myriad of cultural, economic, political, and social activities.

This course will introduce students to the street as a physical and social space. In studying the street, we will find that one of the cardinal roles of the street, as public space, is to provide a setting for a range of active and passive social behaviors. Hence, at the same time, this course is as much about people as it is about place. And so, it is simultaneously based in a social, psychological, and spatial exploration of what makes streets good for people. In this course, we will discuss the various meanings and uses of the street as a physical and social construct, a brief physical and social history of streets, and the changing and current meanings of the street in contemporary societies.

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to a number of factors and challenges in the understanding, planning and design of streets that are conducive to achieving the social and physical qualities desired by people. The course will focus on a wide range of topics regarding the street, such as street images and meanings, street culture, sociology and anthropology of streets, historic, utopian and ideal streets, the development of

new street types in the past two centuries, contemporary streets, and finally a transactional model of making sociable streets.

### **COURSE FORMAT and ORGANIZATION**

This course will be conducted in a lecture/seminar format, and will be structured around the major topics listed below. Students will also complete two assignments regarding the mapping, reading and remaking of a street in Tampa. The course topics will focus on some of the fundamental issues regarding the meaning, design and planning of streets that are relevant to academics and professionals. Topics for the class will include the following:

- Defining a street: images and meanings
- The street in history
- The role of the street in contemporary society
- The physical and programmatic typology of streets
- The culture of streets
- Typology of social behaviors on streets
- Needs for making sociable streets
- The street as place and as public space
- Designing and planning sociable streets

### **REQUIRED TEXT and OTHER READING**

Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge.

Throughout the semester, readings, handouts, newspaper articles and other material may be placed on Blackboard. Please check the website regularly to see if information has been posted.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance is mandatory for all classes, scheduled meetings and events. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class, late arrival, or early departure due to some important circumstances must provide notice to the instructor, in writing or by e-mail, at least one week in advance. Each unexcused absence will result in 3% grade reduction.

**QUALITY of WRITING and DISCUSSIONS**

A strong emphasis will be placed on the quality of your oral and written expression throughout the semester. Students will be expected to communicate at a graduate level in both media. Poorly written assignments and examinations will be penalized. According to the *Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE)* at USF there are four cognitive levels associated with writing papers and answering exam questions. Your answers will be evaluated on whether they meet a Level 4 Analysis.

Level 1: Knowledge: Accurately recalls or describes, identifies information which was presented in class or readings. This involves memorization.

Level 2: Comprehension: Translates or rephrases known words, interprets or explains in a way that demonstrates understanding of the material.

Level 3: Application: Uses what is understood in a new situation. Uses what is learned in the assignment or in class.

Level 4: Analysis, Synthesis, & Evaluation: Assumes knowledge, comprehension and application (Assumes levels 1, 2, & 3). Demonstrates creativity and critical thinking.

All assignments must be proofread for punctuation, grammar, and spelling.

**POLICY on PLAGIARISM**

Students attending USF are awarded degrees in recognition of successful completion of coursework in their chosen fields of study. Each individual is expected to earn his/her degree on the basis of personal effort. Consequently, any form of cheating on examinations or plagiarism on assigned papers constitutes unacceptable deceit and dishonesty. This cannot be tolerated in the University community and will be punishable, according to the seriousness of the offense, in conformity with this rule. Please see the USF plagiarism policy in detail at the University website.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA + GRADING POLICY**

Grading for the course will be based on the following criteria:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Contributions to In-Class Discussions | 30% |
| • Assignment 1                          | 30% |
| • Assignment 2                          | 40% |

**GRADING SCALE**

A+	4.00	A	4.00
A-	3.67	B+	3.33
B	3.00	B-	2.67
C+	2.33	C	2.00
C-	1.67	D+	1.33
D	1.00	D-	0.67
F	0.00		

**Interruption of Normal Operations**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

**Religious Preference Absences**

Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent due to a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, at least two weeks in advance of any work that will be missed because of the observance.

**Disability Accommodations**

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice (typically 5 working days) prior to requesting an accommodation.

## SCHEDULE

### 1

T 05 14

Introduction to the Course and  
Why the Street?

Discussion on Syllabus  
Your experiences of streets  
Can the street be a place?

Introduction to Assignment #1

### 2

R 05 16

The Street – definitions, images, meanings

Discussion on Assignment #1

Readings:

- Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge. Chapter One: A Ubiquitous Urban Space for People, pp. 7-25.
- Fyfe, N. (ed.) (1998). *Images of the Street*. London: Routledge. Introduction, pp. 1-10.

### 3

T 05 21

A Brief History of the Street

Discussion on Assignment #1

Readings:

- Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge. Chapter Two: The Street Evolving, pp. 27-55.
- Kostof, S. (1992). *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. Chapter Four: The Street, pp. 189-243.

### 4

R 05 23

Street Typologies and  
Street Culture

Discussion on Assignment #1

Physical typologies  
Programmatic typologies

Readings:

- Edensor, T. (1998). The Culture of the Indian Street. In N. Fyfe (ed.), *Images of the Street*. London: Routledge. Pp. 205-221.
- Jacobs, A. (1993). *Great Streets*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Introduction, pp. 2-11.

- Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge. Chapter Seven: Making Sociable Streets, pp. 181-188.
- Rapoport, A. (1987). Pedestrian Street Use: culture and perception. In A. V. Moudon (ed.), *Public Streets for Public Use*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 80-92.

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T 05 28

Reading, Mapping and Representing the Street and Tampa's Case Study Streets

Discussion on Assignment #1

Readings:

- Clay, G. (1987). The Street as Teacher. In A. V. Moudon (ed.), *Public Streets for Public Use*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 95-109.
- Jacobs, A. (1985). *Looking at Cities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 3: Clues, pp. 30-83.

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R 05 30

Studying the Street and Tampa's Case Study Streets

Readings:

- Lynch, K. and Southworth, M. (1974). Designing and Managing the Strip. In Banerjee, T. and Southworth, M. (eds.) (1990). *City Sense and City Design: writings and projects of Kevin Lynch*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Pp. 579-616.
- Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge. Chapter Four: Three Streets, pp. 67-96.

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T 06 04

Reading and Mapping Tampa's Case Study Streets**Presentation and Discussion on Assignment #1**

Introduction to Assignment #2

**8**

R 06 06

Sociology of the Street

Discussion on Assignment #2

Readings:

- Levitas, G. (1978). Anthropology and Sociology of Streets. In Anderson, S. *On Streets*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. 225-240.
- Whyte, W. H. (1988). *City: rediscovering the center*. New York: Doubleday. Chapter Two: The Social Life of the Street, pp. 8-24.

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T 06 11

The Sociable Street and  
The Street as Place

Discussion on Assignment #2

Readings:

- Mehta, V. (2013). *The Street: a quintessential social public space*. London: Routledge. Chapter Five: Sociable Streets, pp. 97-116 and Chapter 6: Needs for Social Behavior on Streets, pp.174-180.
- Moore, R. (1987). Streets as Playgrounds. In A. V. Moudon (ed.), *Public Streets for Public Use*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 45-62.

**10**

R 06 13

The Street as Public Space**Draft presentation Assignment #2**

Readings:

- Loukaitou-Sideris, A. and Ehrenfeuchth, R. (2009). *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 12: Revisiting Public Space and the Role of Sidewalks, Pp. 265-273.

**11**

T 06 18

ReMaking: Street as Place

Class Exercise/game  
Work on Assignment #2 in Studio

**12**

R 06 20

ReMaking: Street as Place**Presentation and Discussion on Assignment #2**



**ASSIGNMENT 1: Reading, Mapping, Representing**

Each student will be assigned an important street in Tampa. For this assignment you need to show a keen READING of the street to MAP and REPRESENT it as a cultural and physical space. You can use any media to do so but the first-hand experience of the street is required. The READING, MAPPING and REPRESENTATION must display your own understanding of the street. It must be more than depicting the existing conditions. Editing is key to this, as is the layering of information.

**ASSIGNMENT 2: ReMaking**

Using the READING, MAPPING and REPRESENTATION from Assignment 1, each student will suggest planning and design ideas to strengthen the inherent character of the street and to make the street more pertinent to the lives of people who use it and depend on it. ReMake the street as a place. Think about what you need to do to concretize the image of the street even more than it is as a part of the neighborhood/district but also of the city as a whole. Use any media to represent your intervention.