Humphrey School of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota

Planning and Design for the Urban Public Realm
PA 5290 – Syllabus – 2020 – DRAFT
July 23, 2020

Figure 1. Aerial photo of the George Floyd Memorial at 38th and Chicago. What will it become?

Course Information and Logistics

Basics
PA 5290, Section 5, 1.5 Credit Hours (half-semester course)
Friday Mornings, 9:00-11:45 AM via Zoom meeting, plus asynchronous lectures/videos
Seven class sessions, September 25 – November 13 (No class 10/16 – APA Conf.)

Instructor Peter H. Brown, FAICP, AIA, Ph.D.
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Website: http://www.peterhendeebrown.com/
Cell Phone: 612.501.9590

My Three Rules
1. Attend every class – If you must miss a class, send me a message in advance
2. Video on at all times – I want to see all of your faces and hear all of your voices
3. Be prepared for class – do all of the readings and be ready to discuss them
Office Hours
I will stay online after class to answer questions. I am available by appointment by phone, email, or zoom, and will respond as quickly as I can to email. (Do not use my UMN email.)

Communications
I will send emails to the entire class from time to time so you are responsible for regularly checking your UMN email. *Let me know if you use a different email address.*

Required Readings and Course Materials
Everything you need to complete the course will be posted to the Canvas site or contained within this syllabus. You will not be required to buy any books or any other materials. There will be a set of readings each week, all chapters of books and articles (no complete books). You will average three readings per week at 10-30 pages each, so assume a total of 60-90 pages of reading per week.

Before Class Starts
Because class is only seven weeks and starts several weeks into the semester, I want to maximize the value and quality of our time together so, for our first class, there will be assigned readings and a video lecture to watch. Please do all of the readings and be prepared to discuss them in the first class. Prior to the first class I will also make appointments to meet each of you on zoom for about 15 minutes – I would like to get to know each of you a little bit before we start and to learn what your interests are so that we can focus our time and efforts most efficiently. I will also send a survey out before the first class to find out more about your interests.

Regular Class Meeting Format
Class Time: Class will meet on Zoom during the scheduled class time. Class is scheduled once a week for two hours and forty-five minutes, but that is a long time to be on zoom so some of that time will be replaced with asynchronous content (below). Generally, I plan to have much of the class be “flipped,” with our live time together dedicated to student discussion and screen sharing, individual guests, and panel discussions. I will ask you all to help me manage the class, for example, monitoring the chat. I plan to invite a lot of people to visit us on zoom for individual talks as well as panel discussions and that will bring new perspectives and be fun and interesting, too.

Walks Together: I hope to hold several of our class sessions outdoors, in public places, during class time on Friday mornings. We may, for example, take several walking tours of public places, stopping along the way for discussion of readings and student papers. I will send a survey to all students in advance of our first meeting, seeking information about your ability and willingness to attend these in person meetings, for example, physical mobility, access to automobile/bike, if you are local, etc. More to follow. We will all have to be flexible and adaptable but I think if the weather cooperates we will have the opportunity to have some great in-person classes outdoors this fall.

Asynchronous Content: I also plan to post some pre-recorded video lectures.slide shows and videos of seminars for you to watch before class. My lectures will be relatively short and succinct, for example 15-20 minutes and 15-20 slides, each focused on a single topic, maybe one or two per week. There will also be several longer videos of seminars.
Introduction

Introduction for Fall 2020 – What’s new this year

This course is going to be very different from the previous two years I have taught it. 2020 has been an interesting and uncommon year when it comes to what we call the “urban public realm.” Since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic in March, our collective experience of the urban public realm and its meaning and value to us have changed dramatically. Where once we thought of streets and parks and plazas as places to pass through or casually recreate, today we see our experience of the public realm as being even more important. Our use of public places has increased as parkways once dominated by cars were closed off and filled with pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, roller skaters, roller skiers, and people on all other sorts of wheeled conveyances. Park spaces that were once often largely empty have filled with people getting exercise, enjoying nature, visiting playgrounds, meeting friends, social-distance dating, taking walking happy hours, having picnics, playing spike ball, hoola-hooping, and in the case of the homeless, camping out to avoid the dangers of shelters, to socially distance themselves, and in some cases, both. We have been learning to use our public places many new ways, some traditional, some adaptive, and some temporary.

On May 25, George Floyd was killed and what we mean by “the public realm” evolved once again. As mostly peaceful and a few violent protests gained momentum here in the Twin Cities and around the world, our experience of the public realm included protests, marches, riots, property damage, the creation of new public art, the erection of new monuments, and the removal of old ones. Although this recent series of events has seemed shocking, it is not necessarily new, as cities have been sites of protest for millennia and places where different people have come together – and often into conflict – over who the city is for and what people can do in its public places. A French philosopher named Henri Lefebvre, after witnessing the student riots in Paris in 1968, wrote a seminal essay called “The Right to the City” and a healthy cannon of literature on that subject has been growing ever since. But Lefebvre wasn’t first: Going back a couple of hundred years, it was Baron Haussmann who, under the direction of Napoleon II, bulldozed through the old narrow, winding streets of medieval Paris and created broad, new avenues, not for the aesthetic reasons we think of today, but rather for economic and militaristic reasons. Protests had been difficult to manage before in those twisted and winding streets, so Haussmann made it easier for military forces – men, horses, and canon – to maneuver and gain control. And that huge debt-financed public works project made the city more expensive (through property taxes to pay down the debt) and exclusive, pushing lower income people out in an early form of “gentrification.” One former student of this course noticed that, following George Floyd’s murder, the character of the protests at the Minnesota State Capitol and on Lake Street were fundamentally different, and she wondered if a “Haussmann effect,” helps explain the more peaceful protests at the wide-open capitol grounds while the closer confines of the street grid in South Minneapolis led to greater unrest and property damage.

The economic effects of Covid – the recession, job losses, and a decline in business – mean that cities and other governments will have less tax revenue and therefore less money to spend on the public realm in the coming years. This will mean not only fewer projects for new or revitalized public places, but also less money for maintenance,
operations, and programming. It’s possible that our public realm will become a little worn and ragged in the coming years.

*I EXPECT WE WILL SPEND MORE TIME THIS YEAR ON THESE ISSUES OF COVID, PROTEST, TEMPORARY USES, AND ADAPTIVE USES. WE WILL, HOWEVER, SPEND TIME ON LONGER RANGE QUESTIONS OF HOW TO PLAN FOR, CREATE, AND TAKE CARE OF OUR URBAN PUBLIC REALM. SO, THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION, FROM PRIOR YEARS, SPEAKS MORE TO THAT OBJECTIVE.*

**The Original Course Introduction (2018, 2019)**

The flight to the city is on, and to enhance both productivity and quality of life in our cities, we must invest in our urban public realm. Many of the 75 million members of the millennial generation are abandoning their suburban upbringings and demanding a new urban lifestyle, complete with new real estate product types for living, working, and playing, all with an emphasis on shared social spaces – inside and out. Many of their parents – the 74 million baby boomers – are demanding similar things. Together, these two cohorts represent nearly half of our population and they have started to reshape our cities in powerful ways.

Cities need to reinvest in older parks, plazas and streets, but they also need to provide new public spaces in developing areas that never had them - waterfronts, industrial sites, rail yards, and acres of surface parking. As important is the re-envisioning of the public right-of-way – the street – as a place that accommodates not just cars but multiple transportation modes including buses, rail, bicycles, and scooters and other forms of personal transport, all integrated into an accessible, pedestrian-friendly, and green environment. The greening of city streets is critical for the creation of lush and livable places while also producing social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Perhaps most important, the work of improving our public realm requires a commitment to multi-disciplinary collaboration and broad and genuine stakeholder engagement processes at an entirely new level. Complicated public realm projects require a form of project team leadership that looks more like representative democracy than a single design visionary. Facilitating this process – and successfully building this new public realm - requires uniquely skilled and open-minded planners and designers who can help us all envision a better way to live together in our cities.

The purpose of this course is to help planners, designers, and other city builders come to understand the opportunities and challenges of project implementation through the lens of a specific project type: *The Urban Public Realm Project.*

*WE WILL STILL DO SOME OF THIS, BECAUSE THESE LONGER-RANGE ISSUES ARE STILL IMPORTANT AND WE, AS PLANNERS, MUST STILL UNDERSTAND HOW TO PLAN FOR, PRODUCE, AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC SPACES.*
Course Objectives

The course integrates theory and practice into a framework for understanding the experience of public places and the role of planning and design in the implementation of urban public realm projects – from inception through construction, start-up, and ongoing operations. Students will pursue the following three objectives:

Passion: Develop a general interest in and an understanding of the urban public realm and learn how to evaluate the character and quality of different types of public spaces.

Tools and Skills: Analyze how urban public realm projects are created by collecting and summarizing information such as objectives, budgets, timelines, narratives, and organizational charts that, together, explain the “who, what, where, why, when, and how” of public realm production, maintenance, and use.

Generalization: Develop your own theory of the public realm while learning about project implementation – the process of taking a project from vision to reality – across a broad range of urban development projects.

Context and Questions

The course will consider the following topics:

- History, character, and uses of the urban public realm
- Recently recent trends including adapting to Covid and the city as site for protest
- Recent trends such as re-urbanization and increased demand for public realm
- Public realm projects in the 21st c. American City with a focus on the Twin Cities
- Creation of the Public Realm – the Capital Project: Planning, design, construction, and one-time funding
- Management of the Public Realm – the Operating Model: Operations, maintenance, programming/activation, and ongoing funding
- Types of owners, operators, and funders: Cities (city parks departments, independent park boards, public works departments), conservancies, special districts, business improvement districts, private owners, etc.
- A framework for implementation: Vision=Planning+Design+Politics+Finance
- Funding, fundraising, finance and the role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in public realm projects
- Miscellaneous Topics: Typologies, S/M/L/XL, pocket parks, temporary projects, temporary uses, adaptive uses, pilot projects, parklets/parklots, park equity, surveillance/privatization of public space, privately owned public spaces (POPS), heritage, historic preservation, historic/cultural landscapes, public art, landscape urbanism, green urbanism, how parks change/adapt over time, accessibility, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), public safety, homelessness, and more.

Students will seek answers to the following questions:

- What is the public realm?
- Who owns the public realm and who has a right to it?
- What are the different types of public realm spaces?
• What is good urban design for the public realm?
• What are the most important features of a successful public space?
• What are the characteristics of a successful public realm project?
• What are strategies for successful project implementation?
• Who drives the production of the public realm, what are their interests, and how do those interests affect outcomes?

Course Format, Work Product, and Evaluation

The instructor will present short tutorials, case studies, and lectures on background topics such as project economics, design and construction, stakeholder engagement, and politics. The instructor will facilitate class discussions of the readings, current relevant news, and brief individual student presentations of papers. For the week two class session (week three, if rain) we will take a walking tour of the urban public realm in downtown Minneapolis and stop to discuss the readings for that week along the way. There will be individual guests and panel discussions with public realm experts most weeks. Coursework will include three graded assignments that will build upon one another. Each of the assignments will be an individual paper of ~800 words plus graphics. Illustrate your paper with a plan, photos, and other graphics as appropriate to explain your thinking and discuss ideas from several of the readings. The first paper will be based upon your own personal experience of a public place, the second will be an analysis of how a place was created, and the third will summarize your personal theory of the urban public realm.

Assignment #1: Response Paper – Your Experience of Place  30%
Passion. Write a personal essay about your personal experience of a public place. Start with why you care about this subject and then offer your own brief definition of the “urban public realm.” Select a place, study it, and describe it: The location, physical space, character and quality of the place, uses and users, overall experience, what works and what doesn't, and your overall assessment. Visit the place several times, at different times of the day, on different days of the week (weekday/weekend), for an event, and when it is un-programmed. Why did you pick this place? Do you love it, hate it, feel ambivalent, or just are not sure? What public realm issues in particular are highlighted by your place? Include one or two photos or illustrations and a plan. Cite at least three readings: Which ideas from the readings most helped inform or illuminate your understanding of the place?

Assignment #2: Analysis Paper – How was it created?  30%
Tools and Techniques. Write a paper describing how a public place came to be. Select a public realm project in the Twin Cities that has been completed or initiated since 2000. This should be a different place from the one you used in the first assignment. Collect information and use it to describe how the place came to be. Whose idea was it? Who promoted it? Who designed it? Who paid for it? Who were the stakeholders? How does it operate/work today? What were the controversies? How did it turn out? The final product will be a concise narrative that tells the story of how the place was created. Discuss vision, location and size, design, key features, budget, funding, timeline, stakeholders, planning, operations, key actors, outcomes, and current status. Illustrate your paper with a timeline, budget, plan, and pictures. Identify your sources of
information and discuss at least three readings (different from the first paper) that helped to inform or illuminate your understanding of how the place was created.

**Assignment #3: Final Paper – Your Theory of the Urban Public Realm**  30%

**Generalization.** Write a paper that summarizes how you think now about the urban public realm. Summarize the key learnings and conclusions from your analyses, observations, and personal experiences. Your paper must reference at least five (5) readings from the semester that you found helpful in understanding the public realm. Illustrate the paper with photos, plans, tables and other information as required explain your observations. You may include your personal critical observations on the strengths and weaknesses of the places you studied in the first two papers. Make your own argument and conclude by answering this question: *What do you think the greatest challenges and opportunities are for urban public realm production in the 21st century city?* Students will present their final papers in the last class in summary form. This should be a short, three to five-minute talk including several illustrations and you will summarize two or three key lessons or ideas you found most interesting.

**Only submit quality work product**

Please be sure to submit complete work that has been copy-edited, formatted, paginated correctly, and that is graphically consistent. Print it once, review it, edit it one more time, and finalize it before submitting. **SUBMIT ALL ASSIGNMENTS VIA CANVAS BY 6PM THURSDAY NIGHT, THE NIGHT BEFORE CLASS.**

**Participation:** Because there are only seven class sessions, I will take attendance and I expect you to be in every class. If you will be late, need to leave early, will miss class, or are sick, please send me an email in advance. I expect everyone to do all of the readings in advance and be prepared to discuss them in class and I will call on you. You will learn by hearing one another’s perspectives and ideas. This will not be a one-way lecture class.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment #1: Response Paper – Your Experience of Place</th>
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<td>Assignment #2: Analysis Paper – How was it created ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #3: Final Paper – Your Theory of the Urban Public Realm</td>
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<td>Participation:</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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**Potential Places to Study (examples, mostly local)**

- **Types**
  - New Signature Park
  - Revitalized Park
  - Pocket Park
  - Neighborhood Park
  - Plaza
  - Historic Landscape
  - Spiritual Landscape
  - Cultivated Landscape
  - Street
  - Pedestrian Mall
  - Bridge
  - Playground
  - Bicycle Facilities
  - Rails to Trails
  - Expressway lid
  - Levee
  - Infrastructure
  - Street Tree programs
  - Public Art
  - Conservation
  - Environmental remediation
  - Ecological Design
  - Related Amenities/ Concessions
Privately owned public spaces (POPS)
Urban Core places
Suburban town centers
Suburban and exurban places
Sub/exurban Lifestyle centers
Parks/gardens on vacant lots
Skateboard parks
What else can you think of?

• Completed Projects
  o Peavey Plaza (MPLS)
  o Nicollet Mall (MPLS)
  o The Commons (MPLS)
  o Midtown Greenway (MPLS)
  o Gold Medal Park (PPP/MPLS)
  o Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (MPRB/Walker)
  o Mill Ruins Park (MPRB)
  o Federal Courthouse Plaza (MPLS)
  o Pedro Park (Saint Paul)
  o Parklots/lets – parks in the Right-of-way

• In Progress Projects
  o Water Works (MPRB)
  o Scherer Brothers Lumber site (MPRB)
  o Hennepin Avenue (City)
  o Basset Creek Daylighting (PPP)
  o What else can you think of?

• Sites of Protest/Temporary Uses
  o George Floyd Memorial, 38th and Chicago
  o Lake Street and MPD precincts
  o Monument Ave., Richmond, VA
  o Powderhorn Park

Class Schedule

Week 1 – 9/25: Introduction, Theory and Practice of Public Realm Production
Watch Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “Introduction and a Framework”
Read Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, The Course Syllabus
Low, Setha, Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place, New York: Routledge, 2016, “Chapter 2, Genealogies: the concepts of space and place,” pages 11-33.
Discussion:
  • Readings
  • Special guest and/or panel discussion, debrief

Week 2 – 10/2: Place and Space (AND FIELD TRIP)
Watch Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “Planning”
Removal of Confederate Monuments from Public Spaces, a panel discussion offered by the Society of Architectural Historians: [https://vimeo.com/sah1365](https://vimeo.com/sah1365).

**Read Before Class:**

**FIELD TRIP – A WALK THROUGH MINNEAPOLIS:** We will meet at the Blue Rooster in the Sculpture Garden and walk through Downtown, ending at the Stone Arch Bridge.

**Discussion:**
- Readings (We will stop to discuss the readings along our walk)

**Week 3 – 10/9: Urban Design – History and Theory**

**Due Before Class:** Assignment #1

**Watch Before Class:**
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “Design”

**Read Before Class:**

**Discussion:**
- Readings
- Assignment #2
- Special guest and/or panel discussion, debrief

**Week 4 – 10/16: NO CLASS – UPPER MIDWEST APA CONFERENCE**

**Week 5 – 10/23: Urban Design – Practice**

**Watch Before Class:**
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “Money”

**Read Before Class:**
Panelist bios, websites, and news articles

**Panel Discussion:** Planning and Design of Public Realm Projects (Local experts)
Discussion:
- Readings
- Special guest and/or panel discussion, debrief
- Funding, Sources and Uses of Funds, Capital and Operating Budgets

Week 6 – 10/30: Politics, Stakeholders, Communications, Process
Watch Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “Politics”
Due Before Class: Assignment #2
Read Before Class:
Panelist bios, websites, and news articles
Miller, Kristine, Introduction to Design Equity, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2018, Chapters 1-3, pages 1-14 (keep reading if interested - the whole book is only 60 pages and it is all good)

Discussion:
- Assignment #2
- Readings
- Special guest and/or panel discussion, debrief

Week 7 – 11/6: Growth Politics, Finance, and Project Management
Watch Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “PPPs for Urban Public Realm Projects”
Read Before Class:

Discussion:
- Readings
- Special guest and/or panel discussion, debrief

Week 8 – 11/13: What Have We Learned? Final Papers – Presentations/Discussion
Watch Before Class:
Brown, Peter Hendee, video lecture: “The Last Lecture”
Due Before Class: Assignment #3
Discussion:
- Student presentations/discussion of Assignment #3 (5 minutes each max.)
- What have we learned? How can the course be improved?
Adherence to Relevant University Policies

In all of your work, students in this course are expected to adhere to the following the following university policies:

1. Grade definitions from the Administrative Policy
2. Scholastic Dishonesty
3. Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences
4. Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom
5. Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials
6. Student Conduct Code
7. Sexual Harassment
8. Equity, Diversity, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Affirmative Action
9. Academic Freedom and Responsibility: For courses that do not involve students in research

The full text of these polices can be found at the following link: http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/SYLLABUSREQUIREMENTS_APPA.html.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website at http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

Remember that there are advisors in the Humphrey Student Services office who are trained and experienced counselors. They are available at very short notice to address any concerns you have and provide further resources within the University. Humphrey Student Services, HHH 280, 612-624-3800

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at (612) 626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when it is stated or implied that an individual needs to submit to or participate in conduct of a sexual nature to maintain their education standing, or when the conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive and unreasonably interferes with an individual’s performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. The University prohibits members of the University community from engaging in, or assisting or abetting another’s engagement in, prohibited conduct; requires employees to take timely and appropriate action when they know or should know that prohibited conduct is occurring or has occurred; and addresses violations of this policy through disciplinary or other responsive action up to and including termination of employment or academic dismissal. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Sexual_Harassment_Sexual_Assault_Stalking_Relationship_Violence.pdf](https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Sexual_Harassment_Sexual_Assault_Stalking_Relationship_Violence.pdf)

I want to let you know that, in my role as a University employee, I am required to share information that I learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about the personal support resources and options for investigation that they can choose to access.

You are welcome to talk with me about concerns related to sexual misconduct. You can also or alternately choose to talk with a confidential resource; the University offers victim-advocacy support professionals, health services professionals, and counselors that will not share information that they learn about sexual misconduct.