Overview

As a former University Architect, I have come to understand North American colleges and universities as some of the largest and most complex designed environments on earth. Whether we view them as physical objects or human organizations they exhibit characteristics that are relevant to virtually all types of design thinking and organization theory. A wide range of disciplinary perspectives are relevant to understanding these places, including architecture, landscape architecture, environmental planning, higher education, art history and infrastructure engineering. This course is designed to further the knowledge of students in each of these disciplines.

Beginning with history and theory, the students in the course establish an analytical framework for seeing, knowing and understanding these unique places. Critical areas of inquiry include: campus growth and adaptation, technological evolution, preservation and restoration of historical context, functional and fiscal imperatives, and sustainable patterns of campus development. The concluding assignment will be a design brief describing the solution to issues that derive from the analysis of a specific campus.

The future of the academic campus and related human environments is the central theme of this course. The outcomes for students will be threefold: 1) understanding of the physical and cultural complexity of the campus, 2) engagement with clients (those professionals involved in the planning and design of the region’s colleges and universities), and 3) production of a portfolio-worthy design brief that defines an actual campus issue, identifies precedents, articulates terms of successful solution and recommends directions toward solution.

The form of the design brief is dependent on the type of issue that is pursued, and these are in turn dependent on the background and interests of the student and the needs of the particular campus. The identification of the design brief will be made in consultation with the student, client and instructor.
Planning and Design of the University

Multidisciplinary approach

This will be a multidisciplinary seminar because no discipline can claim all of the knowledge and skills necessary to the planning and design of colleges and universities. Planners and design professionals are typically engaged in these environments in an episodic manner. Higher education administrators have responsibility for critical academic functions and their support, but usually have only anecdotal knowledge of the broader context. Their involvement in the creation of the campus is equally episodic. This course strives to provide understandings that transcend the limitations found in project specific perspectives.

Campuses have been created and influenced by many different agents. In recent years, donors, intercollegiate athletics and scientist entrepreneurs have been added to the list traditional actors and disciplines that impact the physical evolution of colleges and universities. This course is intended to increase the theoretical, analytical and practical knowledge of campuses for students in architecture, landscape architecture, higher education and related disciplines.

Readings and related video will be available online and include portions of:

- *American Places*, M. Perry Chapman
- *Campus*, Paul Venable Turner
- *Educating by Design*, Strange and Banning
- *Mission and Place*, Daniel Kenny, et al
- *The Oregon Experiment*, Christopher Alexander, et al

Organization and structure

The course is organized into four segments:

- Classes 1-4 will involve lectures by the instructor and invited guests, in-class discussion of assigned readings, and writing assignments, including the development of a shared framework for the analysis of colleges and universities.

- Classes 5-6 will be devoted to detailed exploration and analysis of the UM-TC campus. Activities will include interviews with campus planners and architects, and the refinement of the data collection and analysis tools to be applied to other campuses.

- During class weeks 7-8 each student will complete research and analyze of a different campus that is comparable to UM-TC utilizing the data collection and analysis tools developed.

- During class weeks 9-15 each student will prepare and present a design brief and have individual consultations with the instructor. A draft presentation will be made in week 12. Final projects will be presented in week 15 and during Finals to client-centered review groups.
Design Brief

In week 4 each student will begin the process of determining a particular campus of interest for their Design Brief. Specific campuses will have been carefully chosen in consultation between the student and instructor to satisfy the experience and interests of the student and the availability of appropriate client representatives and issues that will serve the learning objectives of the course. The instructor’s review and approval of a design brief topic will consider the student’s professional trajectory, specifics of the institution, and the needs of the client.

The instructor will arrange for each student to have a consulting engagement with the campus architect, university landscape architect, campus planner or other relevant representative of that campus. During weeks 7 and 8 the campus professional and student will develop a topic for a consulting assignment that will be documented in a design brief. In this way, the relationship between the student and campus representative becomes analogous to a consultant/client relationship.

The design brief is the conclusion of the consulting assignment and is the final course product. It is a report and presentation of a campus planning issue providing sufficient information to move that issue/problem from the category of being ill-defined to well-defined, from messy to focused.

The topics are intended to be systemic in nature. Although they emerge from a specific campus, they should be relevant to many comparable environments. While a topic may lie most comfortably in a particular discipline, students will be encouraged to expand their comfort zone by exploring the issue from the widest possible range of disciplinary perspectives. Class presentation of topics and design briefs, while in draft form, will further multidisciplinary collaboration and exploration.

The design brief document will be 2,000 to 3,000 words plus attachments and illustrations, if appropriate for the topic. Illustrations will typically be diagrams, maps and annotated photography. A design brief outline would include:

- Problem Statement: What is the issue? How is it manifested?
- Context/Precedent/Exploration: How has this issue been addressed on this campus and elsewhere?
- Research Findings: What does the literature and common practice have to say about this issue? What campus specific data is available and relevant?
- Proposed actions toward a solution
  - Goals: What are the characteristics of a solution? How is it defined?
  - Proposed process and tasks
  - Variables/values/requirements
  - Alternatives considered/ranking/evaluation of probable success
- Recommendations/Observations
Planning and Design of the University

Presentation and discussion

Professional practice in all disciplines requires effective presentation of information in written, oral and graphic forms, as well as interaction and discussion with clients and work group members. This course will provide opportunities for all of these modes of communication, as follows:

- In addition to the design brief, there will be three writing assignments, each involving experience of an important aspect of campus planning and design.

- Participation in discussion of readings is expected from all students, and each student will lead the group in at least one area of the readings or campus data analysis.

- Each student will make at least four presentations to the class. The first will involve a specific topic from the readings and/or campus specific research. The second will concern the specific campus that will be the site of the design brief, the third will be a rough draft of the design brief and the final presentation will be of the design brief. Both the draft and final presentations will include a client-centered outside group.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the semester the student will have

- Gained an understanding the history of American college and university development
- Learned the principal theories, forces and practices that have shapes these campuses.
- Interacted with campus and facility planning leaders and gained insight into the day-to-day processes by which the UM-TC continues to evolve.
- Developed an analytical framework for understanding UM-TC and one of 30 comparable US campuses.
- Applied that framework and related understanding to the study of a campus on which a design brief will be developed. Each student will study a different campus. Campuses will be selected in consultation between the student and instructor.
- Interacted with a professional representative on the selected campus who will be the client for a consulting assignment.
- Completed a consulting assignment, in the form of a design brief, concerning a current issue on the selected campus.
- Become better prepared for professional engagement in contexts of physical and organizational complexity, including colleges and universities.

Finally, I hope that the range of perspectives represented in the course will lead students to a richer appreciation of these places and related environments. As we work together to understand the University of Minnesota and other colleges and universities of the region, students will encounter the limits of existing precedents, current design thinking, and relevant organizational development. As a result the student will gain insights and learn skills that will be applicable in a wide range of planning and design responsibilities, including those involving the continuing evolution of higher education.
Planning and Design of the University

Class Schedule

1. January 17 -- Introduction and Goals
   Course Introduction and Brief History of Campus Planning and Design
   Current Research on Place and Meaning
   Initial Assignments

2. January 24 -- UM Campus Planner
   University of Minnesota campus perspective
   Discussion of Reading (UM-TC Master Plan) and Research Assignment (Comparable Campus)

3. January 31 – History and Theory
   Colleges and Universities scholarly perspective
   Discussion of Reading (Chapman) and Writing Assignment

4. February 7 – Olmsted and Landscape Architecture History
   Discussion of Reading (Turner) and Research Assignment (UM-TC Data)
   Discussion of project campus possibilities

5. February 14 – Master Plan Redux
   Understanding UM-TC
   Discussion of Reading (Alexander) and Research Assignment (Comparable Campus)

6. February 21 -- Understanding the University Architect/Landscape Architect
   Interviewing - responsibilities and issues
   Discussion of Reading (Kenny) and Writing Assignment

7. February 28 – UM-TC & Comparable Campuses
   Presentation of Topic Areas by students
   Discussion of Reading (Strange & Banning)

8. March 6 – Place on Campus
   Special presentations by graduate students
   Discussion of Reading (tbd) and Writing Assignment

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9. March 20 -- Initial Focus Campus Presentations
   5-minute presentations (10 slides) of each focus campus,
   Master plan, iconic images and basic data

10. March 27 – Independent Study
    Campus visits/phone conversations/interviews for design brief
    First draft of design brief topic

11. April 2 - 5 -- Individual consultations and review (to be scheduled)
    Campus research and design brief development

12. April 10 -- Draft Presentation of Design Brief
    5-minute presentations (10 slides) of design brief topic/issues for class discussion

13. April 16 - 19 -- Individual consultations and review (to be scheduled)
    Design Brief development

14. April 23 – 26 -- Individual consultations and review (to be scheduled)
    Design Brief development

15. May 1 and Finals (tbd) -- Presentation of Design Briefs to Outside Reviewers

GRADING:  Class participation and written assignments 30% -- UM-TC analysis 20%
Focus Campus analysis 20% -- Design Brief 30%