
PLAN 3301 | The Metroplex | SPRING 2018

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Office Hours	Wednesday 3:00 – 5:00 pm or by appointment
Section Information	PLAN 6301
Time and Place of Class Meetings	Thursday ARCH 304 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm

Course Description

Explores different mediums of personal and collective engagement with the city from idiosyncratic to rational and collective, and from “*legible*” and “*ludic*” to “*soft*” and “*emancipatory*.” The point of departure in this course is to document and explore lived experiences of dealing with a palimpsest we call the Metroplex. The metro area has multiple spatial or physical and non-spatial layers or components, and can therefore be defined or characterized in many different ways. But this course focuses on exploring it on a personal level since your job in the future is to plan, design, or both which requires a deep and personal level of understanding the built environment before engaging in any type of planning or design. This personal experience involves five different yet interrelated “*episodes*” that starts with *walking* and moves on to *observation, encounter, interpretation, & perception*. Walking and encounter consist of physically negotiating the physical barriers and opportunities, the city offers or affords at the same time. Yet, the city is shaped as much by your own personal preferences and choices you make as by collective norms. Perceptions are deeply personal and idiosyncratic. Documenting and presenting the DFW Metroplex through these personal to collective experiences constitute the ultimate pedagogical goals behind this course. In the end, your personal stories and lived experiences of the Metroplex both narratively and graphically, provides much insight into how you come across understanding and experiencing the Metroplex and come to grips with its complexities and sharing with others how you decipher the messages it directly or indirectly transmits.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explore the complex phenomenon called the DFW Metroplex;
2. Apply different methods of capturing its multi-faceted components;
3. Conduct five *episodes* towards understanding those components;
4. Apply different methods of research on the constitutive elements of the Metroplex including *observation, encounter, perception or interpretation*;
5. Document findings both narratively and graphically;

Required Textbooks/Readings

While there are no required text books, the following articles or books chapters will be used in this course:

Clay, Grady. 1980. *Close-Up: How to Read the American City*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Jacobs, Allan. 1985. *Looking at Cities*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. Chapter 2

Lees, Loretta. 2004. *The Emancipatory City? Paradoxes and Possibilities*. London, Sage Publications. Chapter 8

Raban, Jonathan. 1974. *Soft City*. New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. Chapter 9

Stevens, Quentin. 2007. *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potential of Public Spaces*. London, Routledge. Chapter 5

Articles

Fraser, Danae, Tim Jay, Eamonn O'Neil, Alan Penn. 2013. My Neighborhood: Studying Perceptions of Urban Space & Neighborhood with Moblogging. *Pervasive and Mobile Computing*. 9: 722-737.

Course Requirements

This course requires five assignments that incorporates five 'episodes' covered throughout the semester. The learning experience largely depends on the level and quality of students' engagement and understanding and applying the concepts in the form of experiential learning. It is expected that students attend the entire class session every week and participate in class discussions and the project.

Course Assignments

Students must complete the assignments listed below during the semester. If you cannot submit your assignment on time due to an emergency, contact the instructor for the possibility of an extension. These five episodes reflect five fundamental questions regarding the nature of experiencing the

Metroplex: walking, observing, encountering, interpreting, perceiving. Observing reflects the 'what' you see in the Metroplex whereas encounter pertains to 'how' you might interpret what you see.

- **Assignment 1**

Walking: This assignment simply addresses the 'who' question. That is, you will select a place where you see people move in and out of different physical and social contexts, and connect with different audiences/activities. Think about "flaneur" the concept that describes how the French bourgeois walked around in Paris a century ago. Read Gary Bridge's chapter in *The Emancipatory City* (chapter 8), whereby walking is considered a form of "emancipation" rather than oppression or subjugation. According to Bridge, "flaneur is a voyeur, watching but not speaking with others" (p. 124). What you are expected to do while walking is to experience different types of communications including "indifference, involving minimized and neutral exchanges of information among strangers" (p. 129). You can also focus on other types of communications including 'use', 'act,' 'style', 'improvisations' or 'innovations'. Pay attention to pedestrians and acts such as taking shortcuts, or splicing together routes and experiences they consider in walking and transitioning from one path to another. Unlike Kevin Lynch's cognitive mapping technique, Bridge proposes "locatedness" and the idea of how freely one can move or walk from one area to another area in the city. What are some of the elements or characteristics that give you the ability to freely (or not) move around in your case study.

- **Assignment 2**

Observing: this episode reflects the 'what' question. What do you see when you walk? This is a fairly basic question, but after reading chapter 2 of *Looking at Cities*, you will use the same techniques, Jacobs recommends for the things you observe while walking. These techniques range from making direct observation (*observing*) by looking at signs, building qualities and their levels of upkeep, to making judgments (*interpreting*) based on what you see (i.e., making general guesses about the residents' ages, the types of activities they are interested, etc.). Even though Jacobs discusses observing and interpreting in the same chapter and in tandem, he makes a distinction between the two terms. Pay attention to details. Buildings, sidewalks, window frames, street furniture, etc. are all important parts of your observation. What do these details communicate to you? For example, observing the details help deduce broader conclusions about an area (i.e., when it was developed, its general level of upkeep, its current vs. past identity, etc.). Describe your observations both in photos (or maps) and in words.

- **Assignment 3**

Encountering: Reflects the 'how' question. Read chapter 5 of *The Ludic City* for this assignment. Encounter, specifically frames "the possibility of encounters between strangers" (p. 100). See how "visibility," both from a "distance" and "up close" attracts the attention of passers-by. See how or whether "intersections can make contact with the greatest diversity of people, to general friction, to stimulate debate" (p. 102). Think about the "combination of attention and inattention" and "transgression of personal boundaries" (p. 102). Think also about the role of buildings and their facades on these types of social or emotional encounters. Based on these tactics look for contrasts,

compositions, what attracts strangers who have to share a tight space for different reasons? Look for signs that guide or point you to bigger roles the shared space shapes how people 'encounter'. Again, you can use photos, maps, and words to describe your experience. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer, but good or bad. So long as you have reasons for your remarks, your viewpoints can be heard.

- **Assignment 4**

Perception: Addresses the 'why' question. For this assignment, read Raban's *Soft City*. According to Raban: "A good working definition of metropolitan life would center on its intrinsic illegibility: most people are hidden most of the time, their appearances are brief and controlled, their movements secret, the outlines of their lives obscure" (p. 218). This is a different type of interpretation compared with the other ones you have been thinking or experiencing in the previous assignments. This is certainly a deeply personal story based on your perceptions of the Metroplex. You will find Raban's thick descriptions of what he calls "soft city" useful to tell your own story of the DFW Metroplex. Describing his visit to Boston, Raban reveals how he was constantly asked "how well" he actually knew the city in Chapter 9: *One American City*. His quite compelling story illustrates not only his own mindset but also how others thought and described the city. These examples are helpful in understanding the complexities of a metropolitan city like Boston and its "soft" descriptions.

- **Assignment 5**

Interpreting: Reflects the 'how' question. For this last assignment, you have two options. You can either read Grady Clay's chapter on the *Epitome District*, or the article on "moblogging." Both of these pieces focus on interpreting the built environment although from different approaches. As you will note, Clay and Jacobs have different ways of interpreting the city even though they use the same concept (interpreting). On the other hand, if you consider moblogging, you will consider perceiving a neighborhood in the Metroplex by using your cell phone. If you choose to work on the latter (moblogging), the question you want to answer is whether the use of smart phones has really affected your perceptions toward a neighborhood of your choice? You should be precise in making distinctions with the five elements of *legibility* Lynch coined (paths, edges, landmarks, districts, and nodes). If you believe your spatial perception of a specific neighborhood has been affected by using smart phones, you should explain in what ways? Give examples of each of the five elements that you think may have changed. Either way, this assignment enriches your previous experiences and adds another layer of complexity to what it means to live in a metropolitan area.

- **Assignment 6 (Reflection Paper)**

Now is time to tie all these five discrete assignments together. What have you learned from these five episodes? In what ways do these help you to better understand a complexity we call the Metroplex? Be specific. Use examples from the previous assignments. Write about 2,500-3,000 words.

All assignments (except the reflection paper) should be printed on 11" x 17" size white paper. Every assignment includes both the graphic and text. You will also submit all your assignments (including all calculations) both in hard copy and electronically.

Key Dates

Assignments	Due Dates
Assignment 1	February 08
Assignment 2	March 01
Assignment 3	March 22
Assignment 4	April 12
Assignment 5	May 03
Reflection paper	May 08

Grading

Assignments	Percent Grade
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	15%
Assignment 4	15%
Assignment 5	15%
Reflection Paper	15%
Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	>90.6
B	>78.6 – 90.6
C	>69.6 – 78.6
D	

Course Calendar

As the instructor, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. – M. Arefi.

Week	Readings/Activities
Week 1 – 01/18/18	Discuss Syllabus and Course Overview
Week 2 – 01/25/18	<i>Gary Bridge: The Emancipatory City</i>

Week 3 - 02/01/18	Site visit: Choose an Area within the DFW Metroplex
Week 4 - 02/08/18	Assignment 1 Due
Week 5 - 02/15/18	<i>Allan Jacobs: Looking at Cities</i>
Week 6 - 02/22/18	Work on your Assignment (Desk Crit/Status Report/Discussion)
Week 7 - 03/01/18	Assignment 2 Due
Week 8 - 03/08/18	<i>Quentin Stevens: The Ludic City</i>
Week 9 - 03/15/18	Spring Vacation-No Class
Week 10 - 03/22/18	Assignment 3 Due
Week 11 - 03/29/18	<i>Jonathan Raban: Soft City</i>
Week 12 - 04/05/18	Work on Assignment (Desk Crit/Status Report/Discussion)
Week 13 - 04/12/17	Assignment 4 Due
Week 14 - 04/19/18	<i>Grady Clay: Close-Up: How to Read the American City</i>
Week 15 - 04/26/18	<i>Moblogging (Article)</i>
Week 16 - 05/03/18	Assignment 5 due
Week 17 - 05/08/18	Reflection Paper Due (During Final Exams Week)

Attendance Policy

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I expect regular class attendance. If you must miss a class due to a conflict, please let the instructor know ahead of time. Students are responsible for all course information, content, and assignments that might be missed due to absence. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a

test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos

Title IX Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>.

Student Feedback Survey

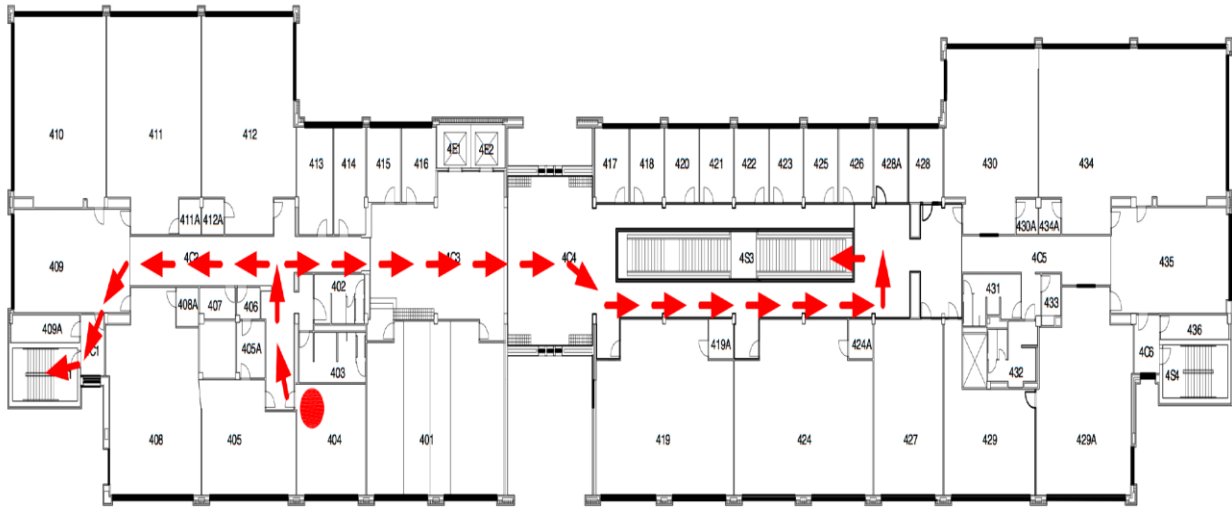
At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at the northwest corner of this building. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.



The IDEAS Center

(2nd Floor of Central Library) offers free tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR)

The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services. The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>.