

ENVST-UA 9495 or SCA-UA 9650  
**Urban Greening Lab: Washington, DC**  
Spring 2020

## Instructor Information

- , Architect and LEED AP; Faculty, Global Environmental Politics Program, School of International Service, American University
- Email:
- Telephone:
- Office hours: before or after class and upon request, in person or by Skype

## Course Information

- Tuesdays, 9 am to 12 noon, location TBD

## Course Overview and Goals

### Course Description

This field-intensive course explores the concept of urban “greening” by seeking to understand how built form, environment, culture, and politics intersect in cities, and how to activate this understanding for social and ecological good. The primary outcome of our learning will be a collaboratively-developed proposal for a specific green project for local implementation in Washington, DC. Our emphasis is on practice, and secondarily, theory as it serves practice.

Several questions are at the heart of our work. As we look at comparative global case studies, we will ask, “What does it mean to *green* a city?” In the course of our local field work, we will ask, “What does it mean to *green* Washington, DC? How can we respond effectively to the changing ecology, culture, and politics of *this* place and time?” In workshops and fieldwork, we will explore and apply tools of analysis from the fields of urban planning, policy, sustainable design, and the social and environmental sciences during the course of the semester.

### Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Know and practice principles and theories of urban ecology.
- Create and implement research, policy, and actions for improving urban ecological health.
- Apply skills learned to the problems of cities and their human and non-human inhabitants.

## Course Requirements

### Class Participation

Please thoughtfully add your voice to class discussions. **Meaningful participation** in class is defined as **(1) weekly evidence of familiarity, in discussion, with the readings and concepts underlying them; (2) evidence of contributions to collaborative projects.**

Do not use your laptops in class, unless for in-class assignments or group exercises. **Unnecessary, persistent use of laptops or other devices will reduce your grade by one whole letter grade.**

### Assignment 1

Case study development and presentation, urban greening.

### Assignment 2

Collaborative work in small groups, to result in project proposal.

### Culminating Assignment

Collaborative development of final greening project and presentation.

### Assigned Readings

All readings will be available as hyperlinks or as PDFs as posted to Classes.

### Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class participation and in-class exercises	20%
Individual case study creation and presentation	20%
Small group work and project proposal	20%
Development of greening project	20%
Final presentation	20%

### Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Percent
A	4.00	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.00	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.00	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.00	65-66
F	.00	Below 65

### View Grades

Midterm and final grades will be posted through Albert.

### Primary Sources

Please note the following: (1) all readings will either be posted as PDFs to our Classes site, or available through hyperlinks in the “Topics and Assignments” table of this syllabus; (2) the Topics and Assignments table lists these readings in abbreviated form, by author and title, for the sake of concision. Sources include the following books:

- Beatley, T. *Biophilic Cities: Integrating Nature into Urban Design and Planning*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011.
- Farr, D. *Sustainable Urbanism*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2009.
- Gehl, J. and B. Svarre. *How to Study Urban Life*. Washington: Island Press, 2013.
- Hagan, S. *Ecological Urbanism: The Nature of the City*. New Jersey: Routledge, 2015.
- LeGates and Stout, eds. *The City Reader*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Routledge, 2015.
- Mostafavi, M., ed. *Ecological Urbanism*. Cambridge: Harvard Press, 2011.
- Oakes and Price, eds. *The Cultural Geography Reader*. Oxford: Routledge, 2008.
- Pickett, Cadenasso, and McGrath. *Resilience in Ecology and Urban Design: Linking Theory and Practice for Sustainable Cities*. New York: Springer, 2013.

### Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](http://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)

- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](http://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](http://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](http://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

## Course Schedule

**Topics and Assignments** (note: green highlights indicate offsite sessions / **field workshops**)

Week/Date	Topic	Readings
Session 1 4-Feb-20	Introduction to urban form and ecology 1. Cities for people a. The elements of urban form b. The human scale c. The social and political power of urban form 2. Cities for other species a. Corridors and fragmentation b. The elements of biodiversity c. Climate change and resilience	1. Pickett, "Ecology of the City as a Bridge to Urban Design," <i>Resilience in Ecology</i> , pp. 1-28. 2. Mostafavi, "Introduction," <i>Ecological Urbanism</i> . 3. Beatley, "The Nature Of (In) Cities," Chapter 2, <i>Biophilic Cities</i> . 4. Kevin Lynch, "The City Image and its Elements," from <i>The Image of the City</i> (1960), pp. 576 ff. in <i>The City Reader</i> , 6 <sup>th</sup> ed., 2015. 5. Yusef R. Jabareen, "Sustainable Urban Forms: Their Typologies, Models, and Concepts," <i>Journal of Planning Education and Research</i> 26: 38 (2006). 6. Eric Klinenberg, " <a href="#">Adaptation: How Can Cities Be 'Climate-Proofed'?</a> " <i>The New Yorker</i> , January 7, 2013.
Session 2 11-Feb-20	When and where to green: tools of urban diagnosis 1. Observation 2. Data and where to find it 3. Places to intervene in a system	1. Gehl, excerpts from <i>How to Study Public Life</i> , posted to Classes. 2. Pickett, "Three Tides," from <i>Resilience in Ecology</i> , pp. 29-46. 3. Donella Meadows, "Leverage Points: Place to Intervene in a System," <a href="http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/">http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/</a>
Session 3 18-Feb-20	<b>Field workshop</b> on modes of analysis 1. Mapping and scalar analysis and planning	1. Kevin Lynch essay, "The Waste of Place," <i>Places</i> 6: 2 (1990), posted to Classes. 2. Excerpts from Farr's <i>Sustainable Urbanism</i> , posted to Classes.
Session 4 25-Feb-20	How to green: global and local theories and models 1. Biophilia	1. Hagen, "Three Models: The Garden, The Boundary, The Continuum," Part 2 of <i>Ecological Urbanism: The Nature of the City</i> .

Week/Date	Topic	Readings
	2. Social equity and the climate gap 3. Equity across the species 4. First brief collaborative	2. Beatley, "Biophilic Cities: What Are They?" Chapter 3, <i>Biophilic Cities</i> . 3. Erik Swyngedouw and Maria Kaika, "Urban Political Ecology. Great Promises, Deadlock... and New Beginnings?" <i>Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica</i> vol. 60/3, 2014. 4. Rachel Morello Frosch et. al., <a href="#">The Climate Gap: Inequalities in How Climate Change Hurts Americans &amp; How to Close the Gap</a> , University of Southern California, 2009.
Session 5 3-Mar-20	<b>Field workshop</b> on urban biodiversity and green indicators	1. Beatley, "Biophilic Urban Design and Planning," Chapter 4, <i>Biophilic Cities</i> . 2. UN General Assembly's post-2015 development agenda, "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Scroll down to the section on Sustainable Development Goals and read from there: <a href="https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld">https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld</a>
Session 6 10-Mar-20	Making cities work like nature: green and blue infrastructure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The concept of "ecosystem services"</li> <li>2. Guest speaker from DC Department of Energy and Environment OR Casey trees</li> <li>3. Second brief collaborative</li> </ol>	1. Andersson, E. et al. "Reconnecting Cities to the Biosphere: Stewardship of Green Infrastructure and Urban Ecosystem Services," <i>AMBIO</i> (2014) 43: 445. 2. Beatley, Timothy, excerpts from <i>Blue Biophilic Cities</i> , 2018. 3. The Center for Neighborhood Technology, <a href="#">The Value of Green Infrastructure</a> , 2010. 4. Russell Shorto, " <a href="#">How to Think Like the Dutch in a Post-Sandy World</a> ," <i>New York Times</i> , April 4, 2014.
17-Mar-20	Spring Break - No Class	
Session 7 24-Mar-20	Collaboration week: project ideation.	Stanford d.school <a href="#">Design Thinking</a> Bootleg deck, and as posted to Classes.
Session 8 31-Mar-20	Presentations of small group collaborative work. Decision point on	No readings.

Week/Date	Topic	Readings
	final direction of whole class collaborative project.	
Session 9 7-Apr-20	<b>Field workshop</b> on greening ecological and public health <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remediation of soil, air, and water</li> <li>2. The physical and mental greening of urban humans</li> <li>3. Endangered urban species</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Excerpts from Farr's <i>Sustainable Urbanism</i>, posted to Classes.</li> <li>2. Frank Snowden, "Sanitary Anxieties," from <i>Naples in the Time of Cholera: 1884-1911</i> (2010).</li> <li>3. Anthony McMichael, "<a href="#">The urban environment and health in a world of increasing globalization: issues for developing countries.</a>" World Health Organization Bulletin, n.d.</li> <li>4. DC Wildlife Action Plan: <a href="https://doee.dc.gov/service/2015-district-columbia-wildlife-action-plan">https://doee.dc.gov/service/2015-district-columbia-wildlife-action-plan</a></li> <li>5. DC Health People 2020 Leading Health Indicator (LHI) Dashboard <a href="https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1294361">https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1294361</a></li> </ol>
Session 10 14-Apr-20	Democratic greening: activism, ethics, and urban policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Donovan Finn, "DIY urbanism: implications for cities," <i>Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability</i>, 7:4 (2014).</li> <li>2. David Webb, "Tactical Urbanism: Delineating a Critical Praxis," <i>Planning Theory &amp; Practice</i>, 19:1 (2018).</li> <li>3. Beatley, "New Tools and Institutions to Foster Biophilic Cities," Chapter 5, <i>Biophilic Cities</i>.</li> </ol>
Session 11 21-Apr-20	Case study presentations	No readings.
Session 12 28-Apr-20	<b>Field workshop</b> on urban buildings in the context of climate change <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Green building principles and rating systems</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eva Horn, "<a href="#">Air Conditioning: Taming the Climate as A Dream of Civilization.</a>" The Avery Review, Issue 16, May 2016.</li> <li>2. P. Creutzig et.al., "Typology of urban energy use and potentials for an urbanization mitigation wedge," PNAS vol.112, no. 20, May 19, 2015.</li> <li>3. Living Building Challenge (LBC) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) materials as uploaded to Classes.</li> </ol>
Session 13 5-May-20	The future: design for urban climate resilience across the species	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lawrence Vale, "Resilient Cities: Clarifying Concept or Catch-All Cliché?,"</li> </ol>

Week/Date	Topic	Readings
		<p><i>The City Reader</i>, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2015, pp. 618 ff.</p> <p>2. Cassim Shepard, excerpts from <i>Citymakers: The Culture and Craft of Practical Urbanism</i>, Monacelli Press, 2017.</p> <p>3. Manzini, Ezio, “Innovation, toward a New Civilization,” <i>Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015.</p>
Session 14 12-May-20	Collaboration week	No readings.
Session 15 19-May-20	Presentation to guest reviewers	

## Course Policies

### Attendance and Tardiness

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. **To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades.** Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure. At all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade (for courses that meet once per week; for courses that meet twice per week, it is a one percent reduction per missed class).

To seek an excused absence for medical reasons, students must use the online absence reporting form within 24 hours of their first missed class. Students may be required to produce a doctor's note with that day's date, especially if the student has missed any classes already that semester or if exams/presentations/papers occurred in the missed class.

Non-medical absences must be discussed with the Academic Staff at least 7 days before the missed date(s) in question. If faculty members do not receive notification of an excused absence, the student has not procured an excused absence.

NYU Washington, DC expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks), to be attentive, and to remain for the duration of the class. If full class attendance and participation becomes a problem, it is the prerogative of each lecturer to apply

the rule for unexcused absences, which may include a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. This means they should initiate email and/ or office hour discussions to discuss any missed lectures and assignments and arrange a timeline for submitting missed work.

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave Washington, DC before the end of the finals week.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion. Staff members may always be reached by cell phone for advice regarding public transportation.

### **Late Assignment**

- 1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
- 2) Late work should be emailed to the faculty as soon as it is completed.
- 3) Late work will be reduced for a fraction of a letter grade (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for every day it is late, including weekends.
- 4) Written work during the semester that is submitted 5 days after the submission date (including weekends) without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.
- 5) Students who arrive to class late for an exam do not have automatic approval to take extra time to complete the exam.
- 6) Students who miss an exam (including the final) without previously arranged permission will receive a zero on that exam.
- 7) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

An "incomplete" is a temporary grade that indicates that the student has, for good reason, not completed all of the course work. This grade is not awarded automatically nor is it guaranteed; rather, the student must ask the instructor for a grade of "incomplete," present documented evidence of illness, an emergency, or other compelling circumstances, and clarify the remaining course requirements with the instructor.

In order for a grade of "incomplete" to be registered on the transcript, the student must fill out a form, in collaboration with the course instructor and the academic administration at the site; it should then be submitted to the site's academic office. The submitted form must include a deadline by which the missing work will be completed. This deadline may not be later than the end of the following semester.

### **Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." **Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.**

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

NYU Washington, DC takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the lecturer. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

### **Disability Disclosure Statement**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

### **Religious Observances**

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday.

Students must notify their professor and the Washington, DC Academics team in writing via email at least 7 days before being absent for this purpose.