

SYLLABUS - HOUSING & URBANISM IN BARCELONA
UC DAVIS SUMMER ABROAD 2018
LDA 191/198 or CRD 153B/CRD 198

Professor:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Barcelona is hailed as a model of best practices for contemporary urbanism, affordable housing and neighborhood regeneration. This program examines the relationship between urbanism, housing, and community—looking at the city's urban history, its planning models, housing policies, and redevelopment plans for low-income, working-class, and immigrant neighborhoods, as well as emerging grassroots approaches. This is a unique opportunity to learn about a world-class city while experiencing its vital public spaces, architecture, cultural diversity, and its contradictions. Through daily field trips, lectures, and design projects, students will learn, synthesize, and apply their knowledge to actual public spaces and communities in this dynamic urban laboratory.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- read historical traces in existing urban development patterns;
- discuss formal and grassroots approaches to urban planning and design;
- debate the complex dynamics of housing, immigration, and economics;
- collect data, interview stakeholders, and prepare evaluations of case study projects
- propose innovative solutions to urban problems based on class experiences.

COURSE FORMAT

This course will be taught in English (knowledge of Spanish is not required). The course is committed to engaged learning. We learn through readings and lectures and activate that knowledge with site visits, reflections, and fieldwork. The course content progresses through four weekly sections:

- In **Week 1**, we cover the history of urbanism in Barcelona.
- In **Week 2**, we delve into case studies through lectures and site visits guided by locals.
- In **Week 3**, we address pressing themes of participation, gentrification, immigration and housing.
- Finally, in **Week 4**, students work in teams on a specific project, conducting interviews, using visual observation, mapping, and design analyses.

Students will also keep a **Daily Sketchbook/Journal** to record their experiences, learning, and personal reactions to the course. Entries will include written and visual records. Instructions and examples for the journals will be given in class. Journals will be collected on Wednesday of the final week and returned to you before departure.

READINGS

Readings are an essential part of this course and must be completed by the date listed. You will be asked to participate in discussions about the readings. Required readings will be drawn primarily from the **Course Reader**, which will be provided to students as an online resource.

A requirement of the class is to complete the readings and to **submit questions** about the readings for the speaker. These questions will be entered directly on the Canvas site and must be submitted before 2am the night before the lecture. No late questions accepted.

Students will also benefit from reading the following **Optional Texts** about Barcelona prior to arrival:

Tóibín, Colm. (2002). *Homage to Barcelona*. London: Picador. *This book covers much of the same territory as the Hughes book above, but in a wonderfully readable and compelling writing style. Highly recommended airplane reading.*

Hughes, Robert. (1992). *Barcelona* (1st ed.). New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House. *This book is a classic on the history, economy, culture, politics and urbanism of the city.*

Busquets, Joan (2005). *Barcelona: the urban evolution of a compact city*. Rovereto, Cambridge, MA: Nicolodi, Harvard University Graduate School of Design. *This large volume describes the overall transformation of the city from an urbanist and architect perspective; though somewhat self-congratulatory, it is a useful reference. Available at the UCD Shields Library.*

ATTENDANCE

This course condenses a great deal of material into a short four weeks. Because of this, your attendance at every class meeting is important and we will keep a log of attendance for our records. If you **arrive late** or **leave early**, your attendance grade for the day will be marked down by half. Please honor the speaker by being on time by incorporating travel time to each location. If you attend class but are falling asleep or otherwise not attentive you may be asked to leave and will not receive credit for that day. Please be alert and ready to ask your question about the previous night's reading, to the speaker.

PREREQUISITES

Course prerequisites are waived for this course; students should consult with major advisors to discuss how credits apply to their course of study.

EVALUATION / GRADING

All students will be evaluated based on the following products:

- 1) Attendance (20%)

Ongoing

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 2) Reading Questions & Participation in Discussions (15%) | Ongoing |
| 3) Journal / Sketchbook (25%) | Due date TBD |
| 4) Group Projects & Essays (40%) | Due date TBD |
| 5) Blog Posts (for the 198/199 credits) | Due date TBD |

Track One: Community & Regional Development

- CRD 153B, International Community Development: Europe, is a 4-unit, graded course. Students, however, may elect to use a *Pass/No Pass* option with notification to the instructors no later than June 20, 2016. Please note that all classes counted for your major must be *letter grading*.
- CRD 198, Directed Group Studies, is a 4-unit, independent study course and will be graded on a mandatory *Pass/No Pass* basis.

Track Two: Landscape Architecture & Environmental Design

- LDA 191, Landscape Architecture, Planning & Design Studio, is a 5-unit graded course. Students from other campuses should coordinate the transfer of credits prior to departure (LDA 191 may be taken for 6 credits for semester-based students, for example).
- LDA 198, Directed Group Studies, is a 3-unit independent study course and will be graded on a *Pass/No Pass* basis.

SKETCHBOOK/JOURNAL

Throughout the course, you will keep a journal / sketchbook. This should be a high quality (Moleskin or equal) book with blank pages (not lined). This is 1/4 of your grade, so please take it seriously. You will write entries for every day, about 3 pages a day. About two pages must be written reflections and one page must be a record of a visual observation (a sketch, a diagram, collage, or visual notes of some kind). You may do just one entry for the weekend or keep going every day. The journal may be personal and fun and make good keepsakes, but I expect them to react to the themes in the class as well. We will leave opportunities on our site tours for you to stop and sketch/write when possible. You should always bring your sketchbooks with you for this purpose. I will check your journals on Friday of the first week to make sure you're making good progress. I will collect your journals on Thursday morning of the final week and they will be returned before you leave.

GROUP PROJECTS

On the final day of the course, students working in groups of 6-8 will formally present research and design proposals for one of four projects that we have covered in class. Presentations will include a brief video; they will be made to the class and to invited guests, including representatives from the city, professionals, and neighborhood groups; they will be available online after they course as references. Students will be assigned groups during the first week of class. One Spanish-speaking student will be in each group to ease communication with local representatives. Design students will be integrated into each group depending on the composition of the class. The four projects are described below.

1. Vallcarca – Vallcarca is a hillside community in the district of Gracia, once at the periphery of the city. Over the past decades it has faced development pressure, and City efforts to demolish portions of the community for highway projects have stalled out. Community resistance has emerged in the form of alternative urban projects and proposals. In 2017 a competition was held to approve a new urban plan.

[Link to Vallcarca Project Summary Sheet, Links, Readings](#)

[Link to Vallcarca Project Ideas](#)

2. Delta de Llobregat / PDU Gran Via - At the outskirts of the metropolis of Barcelona, the government wants to transform a big piece of 1 million of m² of farming land between the city, highways and the river Llobregat into a business district with towers. However a citizen movement and some political parties oppose to this urban plan.

[Link to the Delta info sheet, readings, links](#)

3. Superilles – Cerdà's grid has stood up to the test of time as an innovative model for urban development, but it diverged from its original design and has become less friendly to pedestrians, bicyclists, while using a large amount of public space for automobile transportation. The urbanism department is now experimenting with a new model to break up the grid into super-blocks.

[Link to Superilles Project Summary Sheet, Links, Readings](#)

4. La Borda / Can Batlló – The former factory complex of Can Batlló has been the site of neighborhood conflict over development for decades, and is now an experiment in self-managed and self-built community space. We will learn about a project in the works called La Borda, an innovative model of cooperative apartment housing that his now expanding beyond this location.

[Link to La Borda Project Summary Sheet, Links, Readings](#)

For these projects, the research should go beyond what was covered in class, adding context, history, pertinent details, and first-hand observations or interviews. Students should take a critical perspective, evaluating the project's successes, challenges, limitations, and its relevance beyond the project itself. Students will present the case studies in a video format. Students must also provide a handout (and digital pdf) to audience members with summary information such as maps, statistics, dates, and references.

BLOG POSTS

Students will each contribute three blog posts to the class website (grassrootsbarcelona.wordpress.com). Your submissions will be made via canvas and posted by

the instructors (and Andy!). They should be from 300-500 words, and include an image (a photo, a drawing, a map, etc). Students will be assigned the days they are to submit these. They will be immediately posted publicly so please take care with your writing and image quality.

This paper is for credit for the 198 and 199 units.