



El Lissitzky Self-portrait, The Constructor (1924)

URBAN DESIGN RESEARCH METHODS

INSTRUCTOR

CAI, Jiaxiu

jiaxiucai@cuhk.edu.hk

TEACHING ASSISTANT

HE, Liang

lianghe@link.cuhk.edu.hk

INTRODUCTION

Why do we do research and how to study urban form and urban life? What is the significance of research to us as urban designers, architects, or simply a responsible citizen? Nowadays research seems to be easier than ever, as there is vast amount of information readily available from a wide variety of sources, yet to distinguish a causal collection of information with rigorous research is not as apparent and became more important. Urban design encompasses a vast field of interdisciplinary knowledge, the capability to navigate through available resources that inform, and support design activities is a valuable and necessary skillset for post-graduate design students.

This course reviews different methods of research in urban design (urbanism and architecture) and discusses the process of conducting qualitative and quantitative research in the area of social science. The goal is to equip students with necessary knowledge and skillset to understand and apply research in a critical, analytical, and ethical manner. Complementary to the on-going research for students in developing their thesis project and history/theory essay, this course will guide students through the research process with an active learning approach.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the process and criteria for a post-graduate level urban design research project
- Establish a research framework with a well-defined problem and objectives
- Conduct independent research activities in response to specific research question
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills for thesis and history/theory essay

ASSIGNMENTS

WORKSHOP EXERCISES (Abstract & Research Questions)

Write 300 words for your studio project and conduct the workshop exercises in class.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH NOTES (Topic and Literature Review & Fieldwork and Methodology)

Topic Area + Bibliography List

- Based on your studio project, what is the topic area you are addressing?
- Please list at least three key literatures that you find helpful to work with.
- Conduct workshop exercises in class

Fieldwork Notes

- Based on your studio project, how did you conduct the fieldwork?
- What have you been looking for?
- How did you collect the data?
- How did you analyse them?
- How did you interpret the results?
- What are your findings and conclusion?

Methodological Notes

- Based on your studio project, what is your theoretical framework? Please elaborate on it.
- What is your methodological framework? Please elaborate on it.

GROUP PRESENTATION

Study and analyse the literature. Distil and elaborate on

- Background: Where/ When/ Who

- What is the **Topic** of the research?
- List at least **3 Literature** that construct the conceptual framework
- Highlight the statement(s) of **Research Question/Aim**
- What is the **Method** this project used to address the stated research question?
- What are the main findings/results?
- How does the research contribute to the scientific field and what are the limitations?

URBAN DESIGN PROJECT ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING with SCHEMATICS (800-1000 words)

- Write a 800-1000 words essay for your studio project.

ASSESSMENT

WORKSHOP EXERCISES (Abstract & Research Questions): 10%

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH NOTES (Topic and Literature Review & Fieldwork and Methodology): 20%

GROUP PRESENTATION (Research Case Study): 20%

URBAN DESIGN PROJECT ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING with SCHEMATICS (1000 words): 40%

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND PEER DISCUSSION: 10%

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be conducted in a mixed format of weekly lectures and seminars. As a guided process to help students in developing their own thesis research project or essay, emphasis is placed on active participation and peer learning, through flipped classroom activities and workshops. Students will also conduct group exercise and make presentations to the class.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., & FitzGerald, W. T. (2016). **The craft of research** (Fourth edition.). University of Chicago Press.
- Groat, & Wang, D. (2013). **Architectural research methods** (Second Edition). Wiley.
- Cioffi, F. L. (2018). **The imaginative argument: A practical manifesto for writers**. (Second Edition). Princeton University Press

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Szuchman, & Thomlison, B. (2008). **Writing with style : APA style for social work** (3rd ed.). Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Aurini, Heath, M., & Howells, S. (2016). **The how to of qualitative research**. SAGE.
- Flyvbjerg. (2010). **Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research**. *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>
- Geertz, C., (1973). "Thick Description: Towards an interpretive theory of culture" in **The interpretation of cultures : selected essays**. Basic Books.
- Heppner, P. P., & Heppner, M. J. (2003). **Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation, and research: A guide for students in the helping professions**. Wokingham: Brooks-Cole.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). **Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches**. Thousand Oaks, Cal: Sage.
- Batty, M. (2012). **Smart cities, big data**. In *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* (Vol. 39, Issue 2, pp. 191–193). Pion Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1068/b3902ed>
- Clifton, K., Ewing, R., Knaap, G. J., & Song, Y. (2008). **Quantitative analysis of urban form: A**

multidisciplinary review. *Journal of Urbanism*, 1(1), 17–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17549170801903496>

IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS

Expectations for Professional Conduct

The motto of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is “Through learning and temperance to virtue”. This motto places equal emphasis on the intellectual and moral education of students. In addition to pursuing academic excellence, students of CUHK are expected to maintain and uphold the highest standard of integrity and honesty in their academic and personal lives, respect the rights of others and abide by the law. More information on Postgraduate studies can be found in the PG Student Handbook.
<https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/>

Attendance

Class attendance is required in all courses. For an excused absence, the instructor must be notified and presented with documentation of illness or personal matter. Please note: **Three (3)** or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Third-Party Assistance

All intellectual work essential to the thesis project must be completed by the student and cannot, under any circumstance, be outsourced to a third party (including, but not limited to a company, consultant, alumni, and/or friend).

Assistance from other students or friends for aspects of project production is only allowed if it can be considered as ‘non-intellectual work’, and if is declared and acknowledged in a written statement attached to any such work that has received assistance.

Failure to follow this code of conduct may be considered a case of academic dishonesty, to be reviewed by a disciplinary board, and possible failure of the course.

Artificial Intelligence

Unless approved by the Programme or School Director, any use of AI tools such as ChatGPT or image generation tools (Midjourney) etc. is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with university policy on academic honesty. Students may refer to the CUHK ‘Use of Artificial Intelligence tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments’ – A Guide for Students.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, images or ideas in any academic work without proper acknowledgment. Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With the final assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

SCHEDULE

Term 1: 2 September 2024 (Monday) – 27 November 2024 (Wednesday)

WEEK 01

02.09 11:15 School of Architecture Introductions and Welcome to the MSUD Programme

WEEK 02

11.09 Kick off and Why Urban Design Research? Prof. Jiaxiu CAI

WEEK 03

18.09 Public Holiday [no class]

WEEK 04

25.09 Searching for a topic. Prof. Jiaxiu CAI and Yiwei ZHANG

WEEK 05

02.10 Topic > Problem > Questions - Conceptualization of a research. Prof. Jiaxiu CAI

Workshop 1: PPS & Q

WEEK 06

09.10 To construct a topic (universe) - Literature Review. Liang HE

Workshop 2: Abstract + Research Questions

WEEK 07

16.10 Well-being and Participatory Action Design Research. Jimmy

Group Presentations: 2 groups on participatory design

Submission Assignment 1: WORKSHOP EXERCISES (Abstract & Research Questions)

WEEK 08

23.10 Morphological Mapping. Prof. Jiaxiu CAI

Group Presentations: 2 groups on morphology papers

WEEK 09

30.10 Term 1 Mid-term Review [no class]

WEEK 10

06.11 Ethnography – participation observation / interviews. Veera Fung

Group Presentations: 2 groups on Ethnography papers

WEEK 11

13.11 Case Study – archive / historical perspective. Melody

Group Presentations: 2 groups on History papers

Submission 2: INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH NOTES (Topic and Literature Review & Fieldwork and Methodology)

WEEK 12

20.11 Argumentative Writing. Prof. Jiaxiu CAI

Tutorial: outline + argumentation

WEEK 13

27.11 **Tutorial: Warrants + evidence**

WEEK 14

04.12 No class

WEEK 15

11.12 **Submission 3: URBAN DESIGN PROJECT ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING with SCHEMATICS (800-1000 words)**

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

I declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged. I also acknowledge that I am aware of the University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the website www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/

Signature

Date

Name

Student ID

Course Code

Course Title

Written Feedback to Students

Term: _____

Grade: _____

Course: _____

Date: _____

Assignment: _____

Student Name: _____

Studio Tutor: _____

Student ID: _____

Feedback from Studio Tutor:

Achievements:

Challenges: