

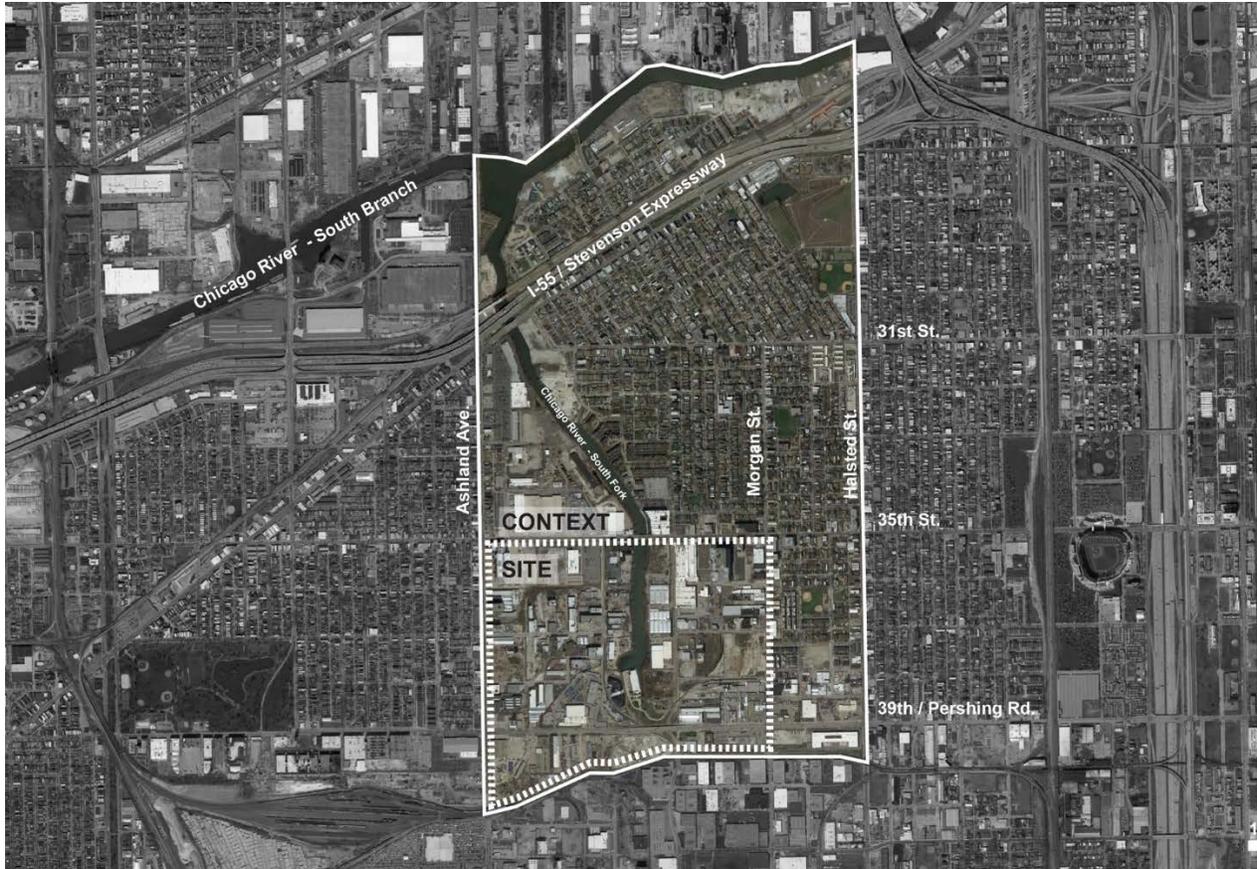
Course Outline

You know the basic genesis of this course: to demonstrate that the three TBH disciplines can productively collaborate on real urban problems, to provide students with an experience in Chicago, to demonstrate to the City Department of Planning and Development that we can be useful to them, and, hopefully, that we can collaborate with UIC.

We intend to do all these things, by keeping all our lines of communication open, by being flexible and adaptive in our collaboration with the other classes, by being creative and inventive in our research and problem formulation, and by working hard and striving to create professional level products that will be valued by our colleagues and client.

The Planning Area

Based on conversations with Eleanor Gorski, the City's Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development, we will explore possible future uses for the Central Manufacturing District. This is an area of many empty and underutilized warehouses, though with intact infrastructure and an excellent central location. The city is interested in thinking in new ways about their needs for importing and distributing goods in the 21st century, and this is a good place to focus that effort. The Manufacturing District is quite large, and the City is currently working on a planning effort with the McKinley Park neighborhood, whose residents are concerned about the part of the Manufacturing District to the south of them. We will be working to the east of that. The primary area of concern is south of 35th Street to the RR tracks just south of Pershing, and between Ashland Avenue and Morgan Street. But we are also interested in the adjacent Bridgeport neighborhood, running east to Halsted Street, and north to the South Branch of the Chicago River. The South Fork of the Chicago River is also of interest, because of continuing interest in increasing access to the improving quality of Chicago's waterways. This site could potentially involve a wide range of planning issues, and it also has a lot of potential for architectural and landscape design concepts. Because this project is driven by a request from city staff, they will be available to support our work, and they will be interested in seeing our presentations during the semester.

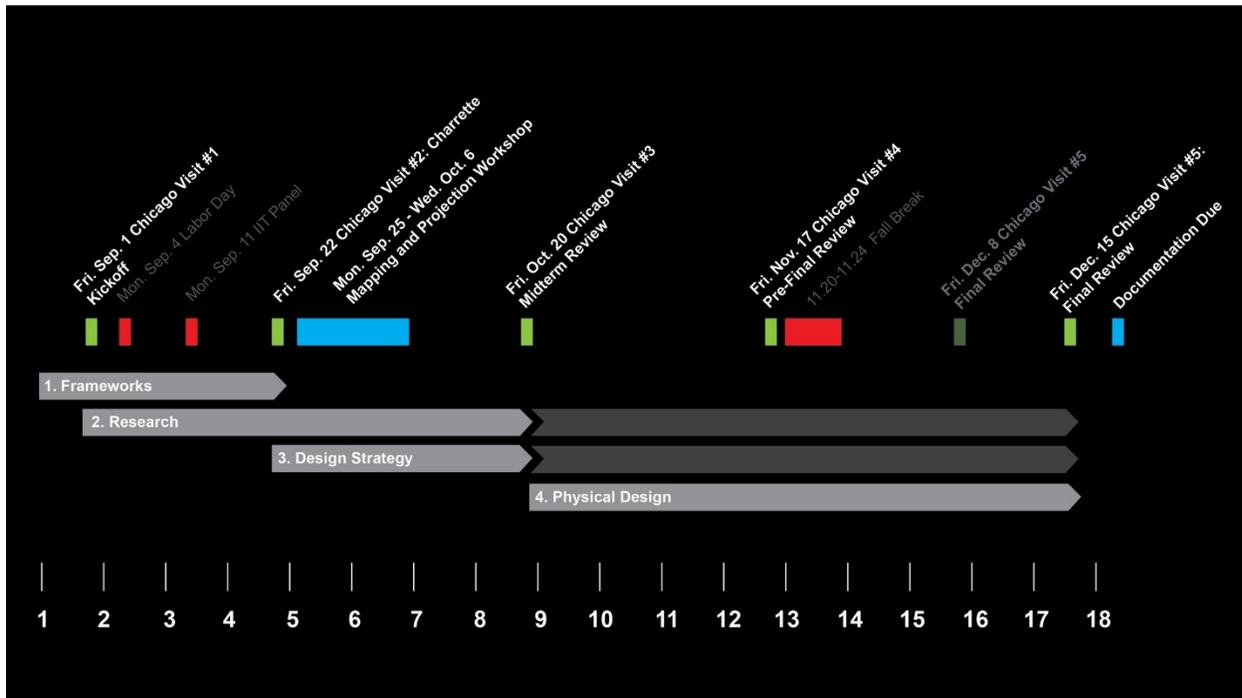


Course Structure

The details of the course will be organized as we proceed. Both instructors of the design studios have standard ways that they teach these studio courses, which are the core of their curricula. We will work with these two studios in various ways, adapting to their methods, providing social and policy perspectives, reacting to their designs, and providing planning concepts that they can visually articulate. Our job is to provide context over space, time, and topics: connections, broader urban and metropolitan issues, social and economic issues, relevant politics and policy, history, and futures. We will take the initiative where appropriate, make the case for certain broad approaches where appropriate, and react to the work of the designers where appropriate.

The first few weeks will be exploratory, as we all learn about the site and its broader physical and historic setting. We also expect to get key insights from the guests at our first class. The next phase of the course will involve more focused research. Students will self-organize into appropriate research teams based on the issues identified in the exploratory research. For the last part of the semester, we hope to organize into multidisciplinary teams to develop detailed plans and planning concepts.

Below is a diagram of what the Landscape studio expects to do. We will do only tasks 2 (Research) and 4 (Physical Design)



The Work of the Course: Working and Meeting Times

The Architecture studio will meet three afternoons per week in the 224 S. Michigan Ave studio in Chicago, on W, Th, and F. The Landscape studio meets three afternoons per week in TBH on M, W, and F, in 219 TBH. We will do most of our work independently. Expect to work about 10 hours per week. Fridays are a convenient day to do much of this. Most of the work will be on your own, and collaboratively with each other and with the Architecture and Landscape students. The instructor’s role will be as advisor, facilitator, and logistics coordinator.

We have agreed to meet each Friday at 10 am. These meetings are likely to be brief—for coordinating, progress reports, information exchange, solving problems, and raising questions—but they could occasionally last up to two hours. Dijia will participate remotely. In addition, we have been encouraged to visit the Landscape studio in TBH at 2:00 pm each Friday. (we may want to move our 10 am meeting time to the afternoon). These meetings should occur whether or not the instructor is in town.

We have scheduled five Friday field trips to Chicago: Sept 1, Sept 22, Oct 20, Nov 17, and Dec 15. We should be able to cover the transportation costs of these trips. At least one or two of these will involve spending Thursday night in Chicago; we have College funds to subsidize the costs of these overnight stays (approximately \$40 per person).

September 1st Field Day

- Meet at the Illinois Terminal at 7:00 am and take 7:15 Greyhound, along with 16 Landscape students and TA (with 5 UP students and 2 instructors, there should be 24 of us).
- Proceed to the studio from the Greyhound station, probably arriving at about 10:30 or 10:45. Pick up drinks on the way.

- General orientation and get acquainted, discuss data teams and tasks, overall organization.
- Pizza will arrive at 11:45.
- At 1:00 we will have guest speakers from Chicago Dept of Planning and Development (Benet Haller), Metro Planning Council, Great Rivers Chicago (Josh Ellis), Chicago Dept of Transportation (Jeff Shriver), and Local Initiatives Support Corp (Claudia Marchan).
- We will also be joined by some of the UIC Planning students working on the same area. We might spend some time at 2:00 exploring collaborative opportunities.
- At about 2:30 we will head off to visit the site. It takes about 30 minutes to get there via transit.
- We will probably spend 2-3 hours walking the site, and then seek a quick dinner someplace.
- We will take the 7:40 pm bus back.

First Tasks—Exploratory Research

The tasks will be determined in the class meeting before lunch. The Planning students are likely to:

- Work with and expand the GIS base that Kalyani started.
- Assemble and report on relevant census info, over time, for the study area and surrounding areas.
- Get basic infrastructure information for site and surrounding areas (sewage, stormwater, I'm not sure if anyone else is doing transportation: roads, buses, trains, bike infrastructure).
- Identify services in the area (schools, medical, groceries, etc.)

I also strongly recommend two books for historical Chicago background:

Planning Chicago, by Hunt and DeVries

Nature's Metropolis, by William Cronon (long, but an amazing award-winning book).

The first couple of weeks of the semester will be a good time to read these, if you can.

Other Coordination Issues

UIC. We will not tightly coordinate with the UIC group. Rather, we know they are working in the same area, and we will jointly seek opportunities to collaborate when possible. We would like to have them participate in the final presentation on December 15th, and so we should work backwards from there, to seek ways in which we can communicate with each other to lead up to this.

Capstone Projects. I believe that three of you plan to create capstone projects out of this--Patricia, Kalyani, and Richa. There are several ways we can do this: look at one issue or site in depth, use this project as a starting point for researching a relevant topic more broadly, etc. Realistically, we won't be able to intelligently figure this out until about the 3rd week. For the first couple of weeks, keep thinking about this, but don't expect to decide until we are a bit further along. We will set a goal of determining these by the end of September.

Dlja and Patricia. These two will play unique roles as liaisons between the Architecture and Planning groups. Their roles will evolve during the semester, but they should be able to facilitate communication between C-U and Chicago and will make it easier for us to evolve and adapt over the semester.

Final Words

This is not exactly a “syllabus,” so I have called it something else. And the name for the course could well be, “MUP2 Students’ Excellent Chicago Adventure.”

At the very least, we will all learn a lot about Chicago: its planning environment, history, current planning issues, policy and politics, and more. We will learn about the studio environment and will gain experience working collaboratively with Architects and Landscape Architects. We will gain experience working on a live planning problem in a large American city.

If all goes well, we also will demonstrate that the three TBH disciplines can work harmoniously and successfully together, show that we can collaborate with UIC planners, and demonstrate to the City of Chicago that the University of Illinois can do valuable work that helps to support their efforts.