The Great Lakes Region is among the most heavily regimented territories of water infrastructure in the world. Historically, investments in infrastructure were designed to build a watery engine of industrial production and trade that sustains some 34-million inhabitants and generates billions of dollars in international revenue annually. However, the industrialization of the Great Lakes’ waterways, and its serious consequences, was confronted nationally when the July 1969 cover of Time Magazine showed the Cuyahoga River burning. The resulting public outcry laid the groundwork for the 1972 Clean Water Act. As Cleveland approaches its 50th anniversary of this historic event on the Cuyahoga, the city’s less recognized urban streams are in need of a renewed approach to environmental restoration and public space revitalization in order to fulfill local and national visions for the stewardship of urban natures.

Aligning with this, Liquid Planning will collaborate with LAND Studio, a non-profit organization based in Cleveland, to advance work focused on the Doan Brook watershed. Located in the eastern metropolitan area of Cleveland, OH, this watershed traverses approximately 12 square miles and is home to over 145,000 people. The Doan Brook also flows through some of the most distinctive neighborhoods in the city, and its history reveals many stories about Cleveland’s evolution over the last two centuries. Building on and learning from this rich legacy, Liquid Planning will participate in ongoing local efforts to rediscover and reimagine the beauty of Doan Brook’s urban landscapes and connecting neighborhoods.

The seminar integrates invited guest lectures, readings, discussions, software tutorials, cartography, design and a site visit to Cleveland. Assignments entail group work and facilitate collaboration across disciplines. Open to graduate students at Taubman College, the course is structured to enable a dynamic setting where interdisciplinary collaboration and disciplinary autonomy coexist. All students will gain working knowledge of ArcGIS and Rhino and students with pre-existing working knowledge will learn advanced methods of cross-platform design techniques. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to explore questions of civic infrastructure, water quality and public space. Additionally, each participant will be expected to contribute to the collective seminar while also developing specific areas of individual interest.