Arch 506/724
Theorizing Place:
Home, Neighborhood, and Community

Meeting Time: 6:30-9:30:00, Wednesdays, Rm. 2227 (Doctoral Seminar Rm.)

Prof. Linda Groat

This seminar course—geared to a mix of MArch, MSc, MUP, MUD, PhD (Arch & UP) students—focuses on how a theory of PLACE experience can inform our understanding of the design and planning of the sites of everyday life: from home to neighborhood and community, both physical and virtual. A variety of disciplines and concepts— from place identity and attachment to the role of ritual, meaning, and embodied experience—will be explored through discussions and readings drawn from the work of practitioners, researchers, and theorists. How these perspectives (including both phenomenological and analytical) and their implications for design and planning, might be integrated into a holistic understanding of PLACE is an ongoing goal of the course.

Within this overall framework, the class will be organized into four major segments: 1) an initial overview of the major approaches to PLACE theory; and 2) a segment on each of the three major substantive foci: home, neighborhood, and community.

A major feature of the course is that students will have an opportunity to: 1) influence the range of specific course topics included for discussion; and 2) pursue individually-chosen topics for their semester’s coursework that may support or complement other COURSEWORK, proposed THESIS and/or DISSERTATION topics. In other words, the range of readings and discussions for this class will be substantially tailored to the unique interests and composition of students enrolled in the class.

This course is designed to engage a wide variety of student interests: from the smaller scale environment of the home to the broader issues of urban design and planning; from the perspective of design practice and/or consulting to the more abstract issues associated with theory-building and research; as well as many currently influential topics including: sustainability, virtual vs. embodied experience, critical and post-critical theory, space syntax, gender issues, and more.

Contact Linda Groat at: lngroat@umich.edu for more information.