

Course Instruction Time and Location

January 7 – April 20, 2025

Lectures: Monday + Wednesday 10:00 am – 10:50 am, EST (AUD 4 MLB)

Discussions: Friday (Times + Locations vary per GSI section)

Instructor Information

Jen Maigret, Professor (*she/her/hers*)

maigretj@umich.edu

student hours, Mondays, 11:00 am–noon (via zoom or in person by appointment)

Course Description

In a collaborative and peer-based environment, we will explore the design of the built environment from the scale of a building to cities, regions, countries, and the planet. We will examine connections between architectural and urban history, theory and practice in relationship to how these have influenced and responded to evolving ideas about sustainability. Case studies of buildings and cities and of different cultures and periods, will be presented to deepen our understanding of the environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic impacts of design and urbanism. We will consider the influential and sometimes conflicting motivations that shape contemporary, sustainable design practices including global warming, ecosystem degradation, resource scarcity, and environmental justice. We will also survey the rapidly changing realm of global responses including renewable energy, ecological resilience, resource and water conservation, transportation, high performance buildings, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. You will learn about sustainability from an interdisciplinary perspective and will be introduced to a range of opportunities for these considerations to improve the livability, mobility, equity, and vibrancy of the public realm through design.

Course Information

We will be conducting this course in person while reserving the right to utilize remote formats if circumstances change. This course is open to all undergraduate students and has no prerequisites.

Course Goals

Consider how evolving sustainability policies, and their relationship to the built environment, influence your everyday life. Expanding our understanding of the social, cultural, economic, political and scientific forces that shape these practices is vital both to architecture, urbanism and to society as a whole. Throughout the course, we will develop an understanding of history, global culture, cultural diversity and social equity as concerns that are as fundamental to sustainable design as technological literacy. You will complete the course with an expanded vocabulary of concepts and technologies, the ability to evaluate the strengths and weakness of these and an ability to identify gaps in contemporary sustainable design practices that offer opportunities for interdisciplinary innovation.