Urban Design Africa

About

Urban Design Africa is a short course run over 1 x block week *in-person on campus*, linked to the Master of Urban Design (MUD) post-graduate programme at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

The course considers the application of urban design and spatial southern theory in African cities. The course involves analysis, mappings and design related to an emerging socio-spatial agenda of the contemporary and dynamic, **everyday African City**.

21 to 25 July 2025

CPD
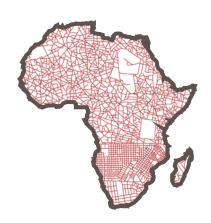CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UCT school of architecture, planning & geomatics

How can urban design advance progressive spatial practices in the global south that celebrates cultural expression and social well-being, whilst addressing strategic, positive change in a world of uncertainty?

Content

The course forms PART 1 *urban[design]* **AFRICA** of an Urban Design Theory II course linked to the Master of Urban Design Programme at UCT. In Part 1, African cities are explored through a series of interactive seminars and workshops. The cities are based on themes related to critical readings, multi-media inputs and discussions that arise from them. This is guided by the convenor.

We will be understanding and questioning urban transformation in 2 x African cities, but the application and lessons are intended to extend to other cities in Africa and beyond to the global south.

These cities offer a brief overview of:

- **Urban morphology** revealing differences and similarities and illustrating the impact of colonial city-making, historical influences & current trends, investment and impact on the evolution of space.
- **Politics of space** of African cities and the overground policies of planning vs the underground networks of informality, migration, all resulting in transformation.
- **Practice of place-making** through case studies and projects in the different African cities.

*Time dependent on externals / guests / practitioners.

OBJECTIVES:

- **To understand and map urban (informal) neighbourhood transformation & and patterns of urban morphology** going beyond the public real, questioning the influence of informality, migration, economic instability impact on spatial change; understanding real time changes through the urban form. This fundamentally questions the role of urban design and the ***production of space in conflict and uncertainty***: *characteristic, causes, effects, hidden agendas, biases, contradictions and failures in African cities.*
- **To work across scales from city to neighbourhood to street** but realising the local neighbourhood area scale is where contextual issues can be fully understood and acknowledged.
- **To encourage interdisciplinary collaborations** with others around intersecting themes with design and spatial understandings as the core discipline that integrates the findings.

OUTCOMES & LEARNINGS:

- Students will understand **Southern theory and urban design approaches** in complex African cities, with the insight to use lessons to inform or critique design practice;
- Students will gain a competency in **gathering, analyzing and interpreting (written / drawn) spatial information on African cities** (based on 2 chosen cities in Africa) based on themes.
- A base understanding in GIS is necessary as we will be mapping 2 x cities during the block week.

PARTICIPATION & ASSESSMENT:

The course is conducted over 1 block week (5 days in person) + 1 day if students are presenting for completion. i.e. 6 days in total.

- **PRE-ACTIVITIES:** Pre-activities are provided before the seminars for review provided online through Amathuba.
- **PARTICIPATION - DAYS 1 to 5:** In session activities encourage students to actively participate face-to-face on campus in the seminars and workshops. Group work will take place in the block week. Discussions will be conducted with students, lecturers and guest practitioners* in key sessions in the block week to expand the learnings.
- **POST-ACTIVITIES - DAY 6:** A final class discussion will be held on day 6 to conclude the short course (in the week after the block week). This may be in person or online on day 6.
- *Digital Certificates* are provided.

How is the course structured?

Programme

DAY 1:	Seminar 1: The practice of urban design in Africa **THEORY: Questioning spatial justice and the role of UD**
	Seminar 2: The context of urban design in Africa **SCALE: base mapping and investigation urban patterns**
DAY 2:	Seminar 3: CITY 1** **CONTEXT: Informality & patterns of growth + movement**
	Seminar 4: CITY 2** **CONTEXT: Informality & social infrastructure + access**
	FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSION: working time on project
DAY 3:	Seminar 5: Transformation of space in urban Africa **TOOLS: UD game/tool for analysis & design intent**
	Seminar 6: Strategies for transformation **TOOLS: UD Action plan for implementation**
DAY 4:	Seminar 7: CITY 1 **DESIGN: Spaces of transformation**
	Seminar 8: CITY 2 **DESIGN: Spaces of transformation**
	FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSION: working time on project
DAY 5:	Group Presentations **REPRESENTATION: group presentations & social event**
DAY 6:	Individual Presentations **REPRESENATION: Toolkit presentations (hybrid mode)**

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

on-line knowledge platform	facilitated group learning	personal reflections	individual / group project
A supportive virtual space will be accessible to share resources and to access a variety of learning materials such as readings, web links, films and other creative works and aerial maps and case studies.	Group engagement is seen as an important aspect of the course and collective group leaning sessions will be encouraged. This also allows for peer-to-peer learning opportunities.	Each participant is encouraged to reflect on their thoughts throughout the course.	Participants will complete an e-portfolio using their choice of representation (visual, written, audio, film/video etc.).
We will use the UCT AMATHUBA platform.	We will use the on-line MIRO platform & GIS mapping on laptops in class sessions.	An e-portfolio enables individual contribution & a platform to spark debate and discussion in sessions. Preparatory reading and review will be necessary prior to the course.	

**African cities & themes are subject to change, guest reviews etc.

Who is the course for & when?

The course will benefit students, built environment practitioners, government officials and interested parties who are involved in the development and design of the changing urban environment in the African context.

Date of course: 6 days
1 x block week, 5 days (for attendance): **21 to 25 July 2025**
1 x day presentation (for completion): **30 July 2025** (hybrid option)

Application deadline:
1 week prior to the start of the course e.g. by **14 July 2025**

Registration

ON-CAMPUS LEARNING
The course is presented in-person. You will require a laptop computer. The 5-day block week is held on UCT campus, APG Centlivres, 5th floor. Day 6 can be attended online or on-campus.

Registration

Register online.

Registration covers attendance of all sessions of the course and on-line course material.

Registrations close 1 week before the start of the course.

Cancellations must be received one week before the start of the course, or the full course fee will be charged.

Assessment

Group interaction is encouraged in seminar and workshops face-to-face on campus at UCT in the 5 day session.

An e-Portfolio will be presented on the final day 6 of the course hybrid i.e. either in person or online. The day will also be a reflection of the course discussed in the week.

CPD validated.

Certificates

Certificate of attendance will be awarded to CPD participants who attend all 5 days of the block week.

Certificate of completion will be awarded to participants who attend all of the seminars and workshops, and present their individual e-portfolio on day 6.

Fees

The fee for the total course will be:

Standard delegate course completion: R8500.00

Standard student*/staff** completion: R6500.00

* all students
** UCT staff

NOTE: Catering is not part of the course fee.

All students must bring their own laptop with downloaded programmes.

Postgraduate Students

- Urban design students must complete PART 1 & PART 2 as part of the Master of Urban Design (MUD) degree at UCT.
- PART 1 is open to interested students engaged in other built environment courses / degrees.

Built Environment Professionals

- Continuing professional development (CPD) for spatial professionals (urban designers, architects, landscape architects, planners).
- Other built environment professionals including engineers, land surveyors, geographers, heritage and environmental practitioners.

Government / Municipal officials

- Interested government officials / employees who engage with urban design professionals and development projects at the local neighbourhood scale.
- Policy-makers and strategic leadership within municipal government.

An understanding in basic mapping / GIS is essential prior to starting the course.

Details

COURSE CONVENOR:
The convenor and lecturer of the course, **Dr Kathryn Ewing** is an urban designer, architect, city planner, an academic and a practitioner. She will be assisted by design practitioners and researchers / academics. The intention, however, is to make the course as interactive as possible, learning from each other.

e. kathryn.ewing@uct.ac.za

COMMUNICATION *(subject to change):*
Online UCT Amathuba for information, communication + submissions
Face-to-face interaction, based in Cape Town, UCT, Centlivres Building
Miro for interactive learning
Whats app group for information
GIS for mapping

INFORMATION:
For more information on application and registration procedures, please visit our website: on http://www.cpd.uct.ac.za/cpd/register

Register now!