



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE

Spring 2026

Course Number	ARCH 675	Classroom	In Zurich and Zoom
Course Name	Urban Systems (SAPL Zurich)		
Pre/Co-Requisites			
Instructor	Francisco Alaniz Uribe	Office Hours/Location	By appointment
	Email: falanizu@ucalgary.ca		Phone: 403.399.4920
Class Dates	May 4 – May 15, Zoom: Mo,We 9-10:30 May 18 – June 18, In Zurich: Mo,We,Fr		
Instructor Email Policy	Please note that all course communications must occur through your @ucalgary email, and I will respond to emails sent via student's @ucalgary emails within 48 hours.		
Name and Email of Teaching Assistant(s)			

Course Description:

This course provides a general overview of urban history, development and planning traditions. Lectures and field studies give a chronological overview of urban, architectural and design history and the inter-relation to political programs, economic and strategic planning as well as cultural nationalism. Extracts a number of more general issues about contemporary cities for debate.

<https://calendar.ucalgary.ca/courses/1648381>

This course will explore the different structural components that make the City of Zurich one of the most livable cities in the world. It examines hard infrastructure systems, including water treatment, waste management, transportation and public transit, but also soft infrastructure, including the quality of the public realm, park and open space systems, and urban agriculture.

The course is centred around experiential learning with a combination of site visits, invited lecturers and a research project. The class will use a set of different formats to visit the different sites, walking the city's different neighbourhoods from the historic to the contemporary. It will focus on understanding the public realm at different scales with different programs and in different contexts.

Students will develop an understanding of the different elements that contribute to the quality of a public space, a neighbourhood, and a city. They will learn to use different spatial analysis tools to study the quality of the built form that impacts people's experience of the public realm. They will develop skills in observing, documenting, and analyzing human behaviour in urban settings. They will learn the

complex interactions between agencies that provide the necessary services that support a high-quality standard of living in Zurich and its region.

Course Hours: 3 units

Online Delivery (If applicable – can take this section out and delete this note)

The first two weeks of this course, from Monday, May 4th, to Friday, May 15th, will be held on Zoom in real time. The remaining weeks will be on-site in Zurich, Switzerland. Students are required to attend and participate in both online and in-person sessions. Sessions will not be recorded.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will know and be able to:

1. Build an understanding of the different infrastructure systems that are involved in the delivery of high-quality services for the City of Zurich
2. Analyze and understand the diversity of high-quality public spaces across the city at different scales and in different contexts
3. Develop an understanding of how the public spaces are used by people and how certain elements of the built form influence the success of these spaces
4. Gain experience in the analysis of public spaces and the methods utilized in studying and analyzing their use.

Learning Resources:

Recommended readings, materials and data sources will be provided on site. Reference books:

Gehl, Jan, and Birgitte Svarre (2013). *How to study public life*. Island press

Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, D.C., Conservation Foundation.

Technology requirements:

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates
- A current and updated web browser
- Webcam (built-in or external)
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled
- Broadband internet connection

Students should bring their hardware and software to Zurich. This will be needed to complete the course assignments.

Additional Classroom Conduct and Related Information

Guidelines for Zoom Sessions in Online Classes

Students are expected to participate actively in all Zoom sessions and to turn on their webcam. Please join our class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in the Zoom sessions. Students must behave in a professional manner during the session. Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment

Assessment Components:

Evaluation will be based on two assignments. The work will be completed individually and in groups. To pass the course students need to pass all assignments. Class participation will not be evaluated directly but it is a key component of the grade for each deliverable. Participation in all virtual site visits, lectures and studio work is expected. Any anticipated absence should be communicated to the instructor as soon as possible.

Assessment Method	Date of Assessment	Description	Weight	Aligned Course Learning Outcome
Dissection of a City - Neighbourhood Morphology (3-week group assignment)	May 21	This first assignment is intended to explore and critically analyze the different elements that form the built environment of the city. Students will focus on a study site that could represent a sample of general conditions of Zurich. This analysis will take into consideration the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the neighbourhood's physical form and sociodemographic composition.	45%	1,2,3 and 4
Public Life Study - Analysis of Use (4-week individual assignment)	June 17	This second assignment is intended to document and analyze the use of public spaces by people. The public realm is where we spend most of our public lives and where we interact with other people. The study of public life is intended to help us understand behavioural patterns and the actual use of space by the users. It is called public life study by Jan Gehl and had many different methodologies. It helps us to understand how the built form impacts the lives of people in the public realm.	55%	1,2, and 4

Assessment and Evaluation Information

Attendance and Participation Expectations:

- Students are expected to attend and come **prepared to meaningfully engage** in **all** class sessions. This includes producing or preparing content necessary for discussion and contributing to individual and class-wide discussions and/or conversations/assessments with the Course Instructor.

- **Excused Absences:** In the event of an exceptional circumstance (e.g., illness, bereavement, etc.) or an exceptional opportunity (e.g., varsity athletic competition, national conference or awards ceremony, pow wow, etc.) up to one excused absence is allowable per semester before jeopardizing one's own course grade and ability to pass the course. However, any such accommodations must be approved by the Instructor **with advance notice** by the student.
- **Unexcused Absences:** Attendance at all class sessions and participation in all assessments is mandatory. Unexcused absences in excess of one per semester are grounds for a grade reduction or failure in the course at the discretion of the instructor. Excess absences will generally constitute a grade reduction of 5% in the overall course grade.

Additional University Policies are detailed here [G.2.3 Absence from In Course Assessments](#)

Guidelines for Submitting Assignments:

Assignment guidelines and requirements will be included on each assignment brief to be handed during the class.

Final Examinations:

There won't be a final examination

Expectations for Writing ([E.2 Writing Across the Curriculum | UCalgary Calendar](#))::

All writing included in the assignments should be original work of the student and include references when appropriate (see subsection on Academic Misconduct).

Late Assignments:

Grades will be deducted for work submitted later than the deadline specified in the assignment brief or as discussed in class. One grade will be deducted per late day for example an A will be downgraded to A-.

Criteria that must be met to pass

In order to pass the course students are required to complete and pass all assignments and achieve a combined passing grade.

Additional University Policies are detailed here [G.2.3 Absence from In Course Assessments](#).

Grading Scale:

Grade	Grade Point Value	4-Point Range	Percent	Description
A+	4.00	4.00	95-100	Outstanding - evaluated by instructor
A	4.00	3.85-4.00	90-94.99	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	3.50-3.84	85-89.99	Very good performance

B+	3.30	3.15-3.49	80-84.99	Good performance
B	3.00	2.85-3.14	75-79.99	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	2.50-2.84	70-74.99	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	2.15-2.49	65-69.99	All final grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	1.85-2.14	60-64.99	
C-	1.70	1.50-1.84	55-59.99	
D+	1.30	1.15-1.49	50-54.99	
D	1.00	0.50-1.14	45-49.99	
F	0.00	0-0.49	0-44.99	

A student who receives a "C+" or lower in any one course will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average (GPA) unless the program recommends otherwise. If the program permits the student to retake a failed course, the second grade will replace the initial grade in the calculation of the GPA, and both grades will appear on the transcript

The School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape will not permit the Flexible Grade Option (CG Grade) for any course offered by the School.

<https://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/991cecbda70f42dc9ce24929c1219e38>

Topic Areas & Detailed Class Schedule

Course Schedule Date	Topic	Assignments/Due Dates
May 4 - 8	Urban systems and Swiss cultural context	
May 11 - 15	Approaches to public life studies	
May 18 - 22	Neighbourhood scale infrastructure systems	
May 21		Assignment 1 Presentations
May 26 - 30	High-quality public spaces	
June 1 - 5	Urban systems and sustainability	
June 8 - 12	Public life data gathering and analysis	
June 17		Assignment 2 Presentations

CACB Student Performance Criteria

The following CACB Student Performance Criteria will be covered in this course at a primary level: A6. Urban Design; B3. Architectural Theory; B5. Ecological Systems; and on a secondary level: A1. Design Theories and Precedents; A5. Site Context and Design; B1. Critical Thinking; B2. Architectural History; B4. Cultural Diversity.

University of Calgary Policies and Supports

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The student accommodation policy can be found at: [Accommodation Policy | Student Accessibility Services | University of Calgary](#)

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: [Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, Procedure for](#)

Students needing an accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor (contact information on first page above).

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [Student Accessibility Services | University of Calgary](#)

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit: [Student Academic Misconduct Policy | University Legal Services | University of Calgary](#)

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at [Academic Integrity | Chancellor Cuthbertson Student Success Centre | University of Calgary](#)

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION:

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright ([Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright Policy | University Legal](#)

[Services | University of Calgary](#)) and requirements of the copyright act ([Copyright Act](#)) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

The University of Calgary (University) respects your privacy and is committed to ensuring the privacy of all students, staff, and community members. UCalgary's collection, use, and disclosure of your personal information is authorized under section 4(c) of the Alberta [Protection of Privacy Act](#) (POPA). It will be collected, used and disclosed as permitted under POPA and in accordance with the University's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Notice of Collection, Use and Disclosure of Student Personal Information](#). All student assignments and personal information provided to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. It will not be disclosed to anyone else without your permission unless permitted under POPA.

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE POLICY

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy | University Legal Services | University of Calgary](#)

UNIVERSITY STUDENT APPEALS OFFICE

If a student has a concern about a grade that they have received, they should refer to Section I of the University of Calgary Calendar ([I.1 General Principles | UCalgary Calendar](#)) which describes how to have a grade reappraised. For further information Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, student can find information outlined in section [I.2 Reappraisal of Graded Term Work](#). For reappraisal of Final Grades, students can find information outlined in section [I.3 Reappraisal of Final Grades \(Final Academic Assessments\)](#).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please visit the Registrar's website at: [Course Outlines](#) | [Office of the Registrar](#) | [University of Calgary](#) for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk