

URBAN STUDIES: SPATIAL AND STRATEGIC DESIGN IN TIMES OF POLITICAL, ECOLOGICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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1. Urban Studies

URBAN STUDIES are an interdisciplinary university specialist study program of spatial and strategic design of complex urban systems, phenomena and transformations. The study program is developed and led by DELTALAB — Center for Urban Transition, Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Rijeka.

The innovative curriculum of URBAN STUDIES brings together experts from a wide spectrum of scientific and artistic disciplines in a dynamic educational process that combines lectures and workshops program, research and methodology practice based on a thematic focus of the generation, a rich program of guest lectures, and mentored development of individual student projects.

Intended for everybody whose research or practice influences the built and programmed environment, strategic planning, infrastructural capacities or collective imaginaries, URBAN STUDIES offer a comprehensive interdisciplinary education necessary for a meaningful contribution to the development of open, inclusive and resilient urban systems in the context of contemporary political, ecological and technological crises.

2. Program Content

URBAN STUDIES are focused on hybridity, resilience, networks, adaptability, complexity, unpredictability and the states of crisis, with the aim of understanding and developing design-driven approaches to challenges of urban futures.

While the aforementioned focuses permeate through all the educational contents of the study, they are crucially exemplified through the practical tasks of research and methodological testing on the specific problem of thematic focus of the generation called "Resilient Campus". The Campus of the University of Rijeka is both unfinished and now conceptually outdated, a monofunctional enclave, whose development is burdened by the rector's four-year mandates, the constant changes in the needs of students and its locational and topographical limitations such as strong wind surges of "bura", large terrain slopes and coastal karst. This ostensible state of continuous crisis that characterizes the Campus makes it an extremely fertile field for reflection on and investigation of the contemporary city, whose zero state is always defined precisely by the dynamics of contradictions and continuous crisis, by anthropocenic permeations that test all inherited, inevitably modernist, architectural skills. In such an environment, only the resistant architecture and territories survive.

Beyond the practical education through the thematic focus, the URBAN STUDIES curriculum includes a program of multidisciplinary lectures and seminars, mentored independent development of the students' individual projects, and a series of guest lectures, according to the following structure.

THE FIRST SEMESTER CONSISTS OF

A — lectures and seminars which introduce participants to relevant insights, research and dilemmas in the fields of urbanism and architecture, strategic planning and infrastructure design, political philosophy and epistemology of social systems, cultural and artistic practices in the context of ecological crisis and technological changes, project development and the project communication in public and professional contexts through a variety of media

B — guided research as a starting point for the development of an individual final thesis over the next two semesters, through which participants directly learn about the architectural, strategic, administrative, political, ecological, technological and social layers of spatial and planning problems

THE SECOND SEMESTER CONSISTS OF

A — lectures and seminars

B — methodological workshops, in which students through practical tasks (related to the thematic focus of generation) get to know or refine a wide range of approaches to spatial and planning problems, in order to develop an adaptable analytical and design apparatus and capacities for a comprehensive and innovative approach to problems

C — mentored independent development of the individual final project

THE THIRD SEMESTER CONSISTS OF

Mentored work on the individual final project, with the DELTALAB spaces open for students to use.

Throughout all three semesters, DELTALAB organizes guest lectures with experts from a range of disciplines and professions, which provide participants with an insight into the contemporary advances in research and practices related to various aspects of urban systems, phenomena and transformations.

Lastly, the study program includes one field work trip.

The possibility of program and schedule changes, due to better coordination with the needs of the students or in case of force majeure, remains at the discretion of Center for Urban Transition, Architecture and Urbanism.

URBAN STUDIES CURRICULUM INCLUDES COURSES FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

– STUDIO - DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-BASED DESIGN

The goal of the Studio is to develop a design strategy for complex urban areas. Working in interdisciplinary groups, students analyze existing documentation during the semester, adopt different creative, research, analytical and design methods, and test and analyze them through already developed individual thematic frameworks. The outcome of the Studio is an innovative product that differs from a formal spatial-planning strategy insofar as it does not only entail the elaboration and establishment of a series of formal-legal guidelines for future spatial plans and documents, but it proposes, within the framework of the design strategy, concrete approaches and solutions based on interdisciplinary knowledge and methods. The outcome also differs from the one produced through the format of a traditional design studio insofar as the work in interdisciplinary groups represents a process of work and research closer to reality, and enables and encourages sharing of knowledge, skills and approaches from different disciplines.

– CONSTRUCTING AND DECONSTRUCTING THE THESAURUS

The course is focused on creating an interdisciplinary glossary of urban phenomena. The selection of certain terms and concepts enables a deeper insight into specific phenomena or constitutive

elements of contemporary urbanism and architecture, for the purpose of developing a targeted fund of terms which, with its singular character, supports the conceptual elaboration of the final project.

– EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURE IN 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY

The course follows the evolution of 20th and 21st century architecture, from historical avant-gardes to the contemporary moment, with a focus on radical and experimental tendencies. The interrelationships between architecture and the social context, and the ambitions and capacities of architecture with regards to shaping social reality, are analyzed, with the purpose of discerning the cultural, political, economic, technical and other circumstances that determine the architectural project.

– PHENOMENA OF CONTEMPORANEITY

The course introduces the selected texts from the fields of architecture, art and social sciences that expand the understanding of architecture and the relationship between architecture and the wider cultural and social context. The selection of texts and discussions is organized around the central themes of architectural research: contemporaneity, city, environment, object, experience and critical perspectives. The texts furthermore serve to introduce conflicting opinions and positions, and the course encourages the recognition of these differences and the cultivation of one's own critical attitude. The knowledge and insights gained by reading the texts are applied to independent research of contemporaneity as a part of the course.

– Theory of MainTENANCE ARCHITECTURE

The course examines the relationship between contemporary architecture and cultural heritage, summed up in the concept of allegory. Following the development of conservation as a specific modern discipline, the course looks at the methodological assumptions that form the discipline, the basic concepts of conservation theory, the philosophical ideas that stand in the background of methodological practices, and the relevant examples of maintenance architecture, while examining the critical potential of this type of work.

– THEORY OF TEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

The course builds on the examination of the relationship between contemporary architecture and cultural heritage, and expands on the research of the allegorical relationship of temporality to the occupation of the environment. The course follows the development of the relationship between art and the object, the meaning of which is radically changing in the consumer society. Furthermore, the course describes the methods of temporary action, the goal of which is the cultural overtaking of space without material objectification. In the final part, the course explores the geographical view of space, from political-economic to cultural-social and symbolic.

– STRATEGIC PLANNING

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the theory and methodology of strategic planning in the EU and Croatia, covering legal frameworks, methodology and practice of strategic planning, development principles and goals, and the activities necessary for the realization of strategies in order to implement certain priorities to ensure the development of society and territory.

– ARCHITECTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The course explains and discusses historical-theoretical models of the interaction between architecture and infrastructure, connecting these concepts with the research on the traditional and contemporary models of sustainable urban road networks and analyzing the differences between mobility and accessibility in the context of the city. In addition, the course presents the main principles of planning and designing the renewal of the urban road network and the main concepts of sustainable water management in urban areas.

– JUSTICE IN THE CITY

The course deals with certain topics from political philosophy that are related to urbanism and urban planning. The focus of the course is on realizing the values of equality, democracy and diversity in the context of urban planning, and on introducing approaches to justice in the context of urbanism that are in conflict with the currently dominant models that emphasize competitiveness and the reduction of the government's and local authorities' interventions with respect to the private investments.

– DESIGN OF EPISTEMIC SYSTEMS

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the conceptual foundations and institutional technologies in the field of fundamental and applied epistemology of social systems and their application in the context of urban systems. The course includes theoretical lectures and a methodological workshop, introducing students to the basic theoretical premises of epistemology of social systems (complexity, fundamental ignorance, typology of epistemic reliability, pluralism, independence of individual and collective

epistemic virtues, distinction between concentrated and distributed expertise, subsidiarity and polycentric systems, institutional learning, redundancy...) and to the application of these insights in real-world contexts of complex social systems.

– PROJECT COMMUNICATION

Given that one of the basic requirements in the creation of a project is its clear communication – both in terms of communicating ideas and approaches within the project team itself and with professional collaborators, and in terms of communicating project ideas to the wider community and users – knowledge and understanding of various approaches, methods and media of communication is one of the basic tools for everyone involved in spatial and strategic design. Students are introduced to the three types of media for project communication: textual communication (blurb, short description of the project, essay, manifesto, scientific paper...), graphic/visual communication (sketch, diagram, spatial representations, collages and montages) and hybrid media (film, animation, combinations of text and drawings, sound...).

3. Program Structure

CLASSES

- begin on October 14, 2023 and
- end on October 14, 2024.

The study program lasts for 3 semesters. In the 1st and 2nd semesters classes are held during the weekend with two exceptions of classes in blocks lasting 4 days. The 3rd semester takes place in 2 weeks of contact classes with continuous, freely organized work with mentors on the students' individual final work.

The students are allowed to use the residence space and coworking space without additional financial compensation. The study program includes one field trip.

THE STUDY PROGRAM IS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS

– Semester 1
from October 2023 to January 2024

– Semester 2
from March to June 2024

– Semester 3
from July to October 2024

The study program is conducted in Croatian and English.

Upon completion of the study program, the participants obtain 90 ECTS points and the title of spec. urb. stud.

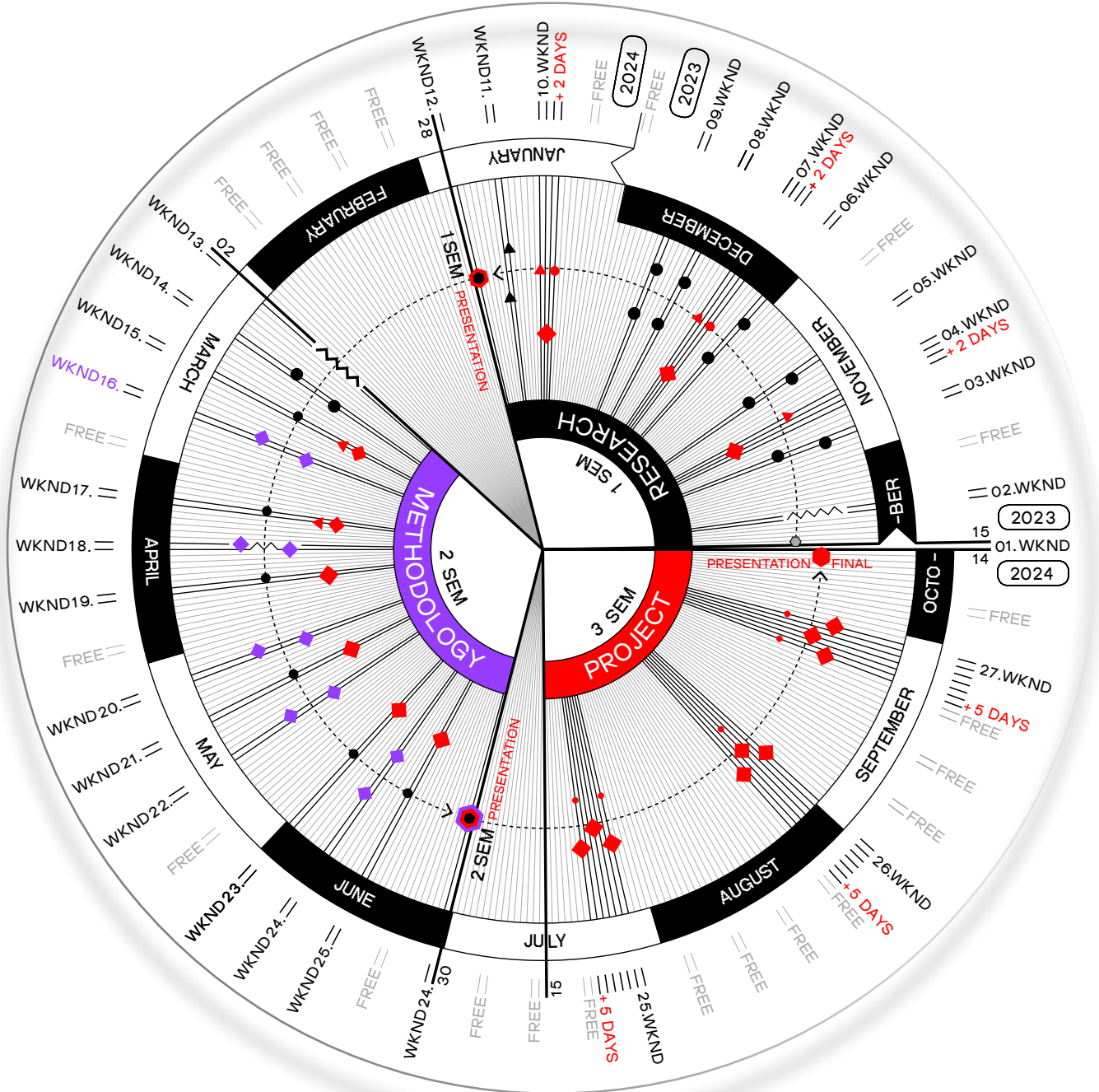
4. Tuition

The total tuition fee for the study program is 3,000 EUR.

The enrollment fee for all three semesters is included in the tuition fee.

The tuition fee can also be paid by a legal entity for a student of the study program.

STUDY PROGRAM CALENDAR



- STUDIO
- LECTURES & SEMINARS
- ◆ METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOP
- LECTURE
- △ SEMINAR
- ◇ WORKSHOP
- PRESENTATION
- 〰 FIELD WORK TRIP

5. How to Apply

The study program is designed for people who have a tendency towards interdisciplinary, research and project-based work, are proficient in the English language, and who:

- stand out for their expertise in the following disciplines: architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, and related disciplines such as construction, visual communication and product design, urban sociology, urban geography, art history, philosophy, cultural studies, ecology, visual arts etc.,
- have obtained at least a master's degree (in the Croatian education system by completing undergraduate and graduate university studies or integrated undergraduate and graduate university studies, while the foreign diploma must correspond to the Croatian master's degree) in the main subjects closely related to the postgraduate program (programs in urbanism and architecture, philosophy and geopolitics, construction, landscape, urban geography, history of art, visual arts, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, traffic and other relevant disciplines).
- Exceptions will be considered individually.

The application consists of the following documents that must be attached:

- ¹ — INTRODUCTORY LETTER
(in free form — up to half a card of text, must contain mandatory information: name and surname of the candidate, place of residence of the candidate, year of birth of the candidate, contact — e-mail address and mobile phone number of the candidate and a list of documents submitted in the application)
- ² — PROOF OF IDENTITY
(copy of identity card or passport)
- ³ — PROOF OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
(copy of the diploma on completed master's degree — applicants who have obtained a foreign diploma submit a copy of the decision of the competent authority on the recognition of the foreign higher education qualification)
- ⁴ — PROOF OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(proof of passing the English language exam)
- ⁵ — EXTENDED RESUME
- ⁶ — PORTFOLIO
(possible to attach via online link)
- ⁷ — MOTIVATIONAL ESSAY IN ENGLISH
 - approximately 1000 words long
 - the candidate should present themselves and their previous work, study areas of their research interest, topics from the previous diploma thesis, and state the goals they want to achieve with their studies
 - the motivational essay serves to evaluate the candidate's areas of interest, interest in studies, and their writing and critical thinking skills
- ⁸ — 2 LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Candidates submit the application, together with all mandatory attachments, via electronic mail to the address: info@deltalab.hr

In the subject of the e-mail, it is necessary to write: candidate's FIRST and LAST name > Application for Urban Studies.

6. Deadline

The deadline for submitting the application is August 1st 2023.

Incomplete and untimely applications will not be considered.

The Admissions Committee may request additions to the application.

Applications will be evaluated by at least two expert members of the Admissions Committee. Based on the provided written information and submitted materials in the application, the members of the Admissions Committee will decide whether the candidate meets the requirements for admission.

If the candidate is evaluated positively, they will be invited to an interview, which will be held via video call or live in Rijeka if possible. The interview will be devoted to the candidate's previous work, education, areas of interest and motivation.

All candidates will be informed about the success of the application by August 15th 2023 at the contact address given in the application.

If the application is successful, when enrolling in the study program, participants are required to submit the originals of the documents that they submitted in the application by email for review.

For additional information on URBAN STUDIES, contact us via email: info@deltalab.hr

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