

# 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 specialist post-master 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 the individual student's final project.

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. Structure

### TIME SCALE OF STUDIES

- START OF STUDIES: November 2024
- END OF STUDIES: February 2026

Study program consists of 3 semesters, with 1st and 2nd semester conducted on site in block classes lasting 4 days with weekend included (one day online format), while 3rd semester is conducted through continuous, freely organized, work with mentors on the student's individual final project.

The study program includes one field trip organized for all students.

### CONDUCTION OF CLASSES

- 1st SEMESTER  $\approx$  4×BLOCK CLASSES  
October 2024 - February 2025

It consists of lectures, seminars and guided research of a chosen topic as a starting point for the development of the individual final project.

- 2nd SEMESTER  $\approx$  5×BLOCK CLASSES  
March 2025 - July 2025

It consists of lectures, seminars and group methodological workshops in which students are introduced to or refine their comprehension of a wide range of approaches to spatial and planning problems through practical tasks and mentored independent development of the concept of the individual final project.

- 3rd SEMESTER  $\approx$  2×BLOCK CLASSES  
October 2025 - February 2026

It consists of mentored work and intensive self-organized individual work on the final project.

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

Classes are conducted in Croatian and English language.

STUDY PROGRAM CALENDAR

2024							2025															
NOVEMBER							DECEMBER							2025								
mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun		
					START																	
				1	2	3								1								
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	3RD BLOCK CLASSES				12	
										2ND BLOCK CLASSES												
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
		1ST BLOCK CLASSES																4TH BLOCK CLASSES				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	26	27	28	29	30				
							30	31														
2025																						
FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL								
mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun		
												INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIP					6TH BLOCK CLASSES					
					1	2						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
					THESIS DEFENSE					5TH BLOCK CLASSES												
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
																	7TH BLOCK CLASSES					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
			INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIP																			
24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30						
2025																						
MAY							JUNE							JULY								
mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun		
																				SYNOPSIS DEFENSE		
			1	2	3	4								1	1	2	3	4	5	6		
										9TH BLOCK CLASSES												
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
		8TH BLOCK CLASSES																				
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31					
2025														2026								
OCTOBER							DECEMBER							FEBRUARY								
mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun		
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								1	
				1ST MIDTERM							2ND MIDTERM										FINAL PRESENTATION	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
27	28	29	30	31			29	30	31					23	24	25	26	27	28			

## 3. Curriculum

### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- ECTS  
Minimum of 90 ECTS points required to finish the study program (30 ECTS per semester)
- ACADEMIC TITLE  
University specialist in urban studies (univ. spec. stud. urb.)

### COURSES

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEXICON 2 ECTS  
prof. art. Leo Modrčin

The interdisciplinary lexicon serves as a preparation for the development of the final project that focuses on a specific area of research interest or a problem that reflects on the contemporary spatial production and activities within the space in question. Through a series of examples, both from students' own work and works of others, the students will explore concepts and terms closely related to contemporary and innovative spatial activities and agencies. The course will be conducted as a combination of theoretical lectures, seminar discussions and practical tasks.

PROJECT STUDIO 1 8 ECTS  
doc. art. Ida Križaj Leko

The aim of Project Studio is to learn to critically observe and devise steps towards the transformation of the city into the metropolis of the future. The study is dedicated to the interdisciplinary research of complex forces that shape the Anthropocene environment and propose new theories and visions. The course combines group and individual work

through classes in the form of intensive thematic workshops.

EVOLUTION OF ARCHITECTURE IN  
20TH AND 21ST CENTURY 3 ECTS  
doc. dr. sc. Maroje Mrduljaš

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 course analyzes the relations between architecture and the social context, and the ambitions and capacities of architecture with regards to shaping social reality, with the purpose of discerning the cultural, political, economic, technical and other circumstances that determine the architectural project. The goal of the course is to expand fundamental knowledge and develop skills necessary for research, interpretation and critical analysis of modern and contemporary architecture.

ARCHITECTURE & INFRASTRUCTURE 1 3 ECTS  
prof. dr. sc. Aleksandra Deluka Tibljaš

The traditional interpretation of urban infrastructure as built systems for support of human activity is changing in many ways. Infrastructure is no longer just traditional (such as roads, pipelines or waste disposal systems), but also virtual, digital or social, and in all cases, it is expected to be "sustainable". The goal of this course is to look at infrastructure not only as a general term that describes certain physical technologies, but more broadly, as a set of assumptions about the designed environment. This course studies the relationship between architecture and infrastructure simultaneously on three levels: technical, architectural and theoretical.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING 1** **6 ECTS**

doc. dr. sc. Ivana Katurić

The purpose of the course is to develop an understanding of the concept of strategic spatial planning and the evolution of planning systems in different countries, through lectures, discussions and practical work. The intention is to develop an understanding of planning systems and the relationship with other transdisciplinary fields. During the lectures, the students will acquire an extensive insight into the theories and practices of strategic planning. During the practical tasks, the students will compare strategic and spatial-planning documents from the national planning system, discuss the models for analysis of the selected area, and become acquainted with the methods of participatory planning, the method of scenario planning and the methods of producing ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of the strategic development document.

**JUSTICE IN THE CITY** **6 ECTS**

doc. dr. sc. Nebojša Zelič

The course presents, discusses and explores the relationships between different political discourses and the built environment, analyzing the foundations of urban inequality, justice and politics through close encounters with diversity of the public. The course examines the issue of the management of the development of the state and the city, with the aim of introducing the students to new, advanced models of city legislation and public-private partnership. Given that political philosophy is at the center of the course, it will provide explanations of approaches to justice in the context of spatial planning, that are different from current models that emphasize competitiveness and reducing the intervention of the government and local authorities in relation to private

investments. The focus will be on enacting the values of equality, democracy and diversity in the context of spatial planning of the city.

**PROJECT STUDIO 2** **8 ECTS**

doc. art. Ida Križaj Leko

Project Studio 2 is dedicated to researching the complex forces that shape the built environment and to envisioning new city development strategies and models. The aim of the course is a better understanding of the relationship between ideas about the city and the materialized urban reality through technology, energy, ecology and new media. Special emphasis is placed upon visiting external collaborators in order to combine the academic environment with practical activities and to promote cooperation between disciplines. Work on the given topic also navigates the concept of the final work, which aims to define alternative strategies of the cities of the future.

**METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE** **2 ECTS**

prof. art. Leo Modrčin

The course is conducted in coordination and complementarity with the Project Studio courses. The course is focused on working on the project research understood in two ways: as an intellectual problem, i.e. researching the relationship between design and theory for the purpose of knowledge production, and as a practical problem, i.e. learning how project research can influence urban development. Through course work, students will learn to recognize, interpret and use the various presented methods and approaches, situate them within different theoretical and scientific frameworks and systems, and identify their potential and limits for studying and working in complex urban environments.

PHENOMENA OF CONTEMPORANEITY 3 ECTS

doc. dr. sc. Maroje Mrduljaš

The course sets a problem framework for understanding diverse contemporary phenomena relevant to architecture. This course builds on the course Evolution of Architecture in the 20th and 21st Centuries, and, based on the premise of porous disciplinary boundaries, it expands the discussion of architecture and the development of the built environment into the areas of philosophy, sociology, theory and practice of visual arts and other disciplines. The aim is to strengthen the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for research, historical interpretation and critical analysis. Through the history and theory curriculum, students will acquire research skills and prepare for advanced academic work in Project Studio.

ARCHITECTURE & INFRASTRUCTURE 2 3 ECTS

prof. dr. sc. Aleksandra Deluka Tibljaš

Building on the course Architecture and Infrastructure 1, the goal of this course is to expand and deepen the analysis and research of infrastructure systems of cities in a changing environment. The course includes a detailed examination of the concept of a "smart city", which connects various aspects of city management: construction, energy, government, life, education and, of course, mobility. The goal is to prepare students for the changes that this concept brings and to incorporate it into solutions for complex infrastructural challenges.

STRATEGIC PLANNING 2 6 ECTS

doc. dr. sc. Ivana Katurić

The course continues on Strategic Planning 1 and expands the discussion concerning strategic planning. The special focus of the

course is on social welfare states and housing systems, but also on other topics such as spatial planning of the sea. The aim of the course is to strengthen the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for research, interpretation and critical analysis. Through the curriculum, students will acquire research skills and prepare for advanced academic work related to their final specialist thesis.

ART AND SOCIETY 6 ECTS

doc. art. Emil Jurcan

The course examines the relationship between contemporary architecture, cultural heritage and the natural environment from the perspective of maintenance and temporary occupation. The course follows the development of the relationship of art to the object, whose significance is radically changing in a consumer society, which is opposed by the methods of ephemeral actions whose goal is the cultural appropriation of space without material objectification. The purpose of the course is to develop – through discussions and practical work – a methodology for understanding art as a key imaginative discipline.

EPISTEMIC SYSTEM DESIGN 2 ECTSdoc. dr. sc. Nebojša Zelič  
dr. sc. Marko Luka Zubčić

The course deals with the fundamental theoretical principles of epistemology of complex social systems, social and institutional technologies that instantiate the key insights of epistemology of complex social systems, and the application of insights and tools of epistemology of complex social systems on a practical task in system design. 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 complex social systems and their application in the context of urban studies.

**SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND CLIMATE CHANGE** 2 ECTS

doc. dr. sc. Ivana Katuriċ

The course deals with issues of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and concepts of sustainable urban development. The aim of the course is to provide students with knowledge in the field of sustainable urban development in Europe. Students will gain knowledge about different approaches related to the use of urban spaces and the possibilities of financing sustainable urban development projects. Students will be introduced to the European Green Plan as a strategy for achieving sustainability as well as to the conceptual content of popular syntagms such as green infrastructure, nature-based solutions and brownfield regeneration, all through selected examples from practice.

**PROJECT COMMUNICATION** 2 ECTS

doc. art. Ida Križaj Leko  
dr. sc. Jana Ćulek

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...).

## 4. Theme 2024/2025

URBAN STUDIES are focused on hybridity, resilience, networks, adaptability, complexity, unpredictability and heritage in the states of crisis, with the aim of understanding and developing design-driven approaches to challenges of urban futures. While these focuses permeate all the educational contents of the study, they are crucially exemplified through the practical tasks of research and methodological testing on the specific problem through the thematic focus of the generation called WATERWORLD FUTURES.

Rijeka has recently been declared a cargo port of great economic and strategic importance in shaping the dynamics and logistics at the global level, so its improvement is currently one of the biggest investments in the country. The narrative that the urban development of a city is proportional to the development of its port is only partially correct, because the port and the city have historically developed as separate entities. In order to transform the narrative of the future urban development of Rijeka, it is necessary for this narrative to become a shared vision of those who live and work in that city and those who make decisions about the city. In order for this vision to meet the challenges of climate change and constant crises, and moreover for this vision to turn into policies, the multidisciplinary knowledge of diverse experts is necessary.

The expansion of the land part of the port by filling the extracted soil is a continuation of the land-based approach, which, beside its many limitations and its exclusive use barring alternative approaches, is also fragile in terms of (expected) risks, as

evidenced by a recent study for the Kvarner area (Institute for Spatial Planning PGC: "Analysis of the Vulnerability of the Coastal Area Primorje-Gorski Kotar County due to Sea Level Rise", 2023).

The thematic focus recognizes the territory of the port of Rijeka as a potential for the future development of the city of Rijeka. "Water perspectives" steer the focus towards the visions of the city's future from the position of the sea and the sea coast, the Rječina and the river coast, or the Dead Canal as a technical service for the land. These perspectives will serve to create new imaginaries for Rijeka 2050 - Port City or City Port Of The Future.



## 5. Application and enrollment

### A – ENROLLMENT CONDITIONS

The right to enroll in the study program is awarded to applicants who:

- have obtained (at a minimum) a master's degree, i.e. have completed a graduate degree or an integrated undergraduate and graduate degree with a minimum of 300 ECTS credits
- submit all the (below listed) application documents within the prescribed period
- were evaluated positively following their application interview
- have a good command of English language

### B – APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION

Application consists of the following documents that the applicant must submit:

- 1 – EXTENDED CV
  - in Europass CV format
  - must contain general information: the applicant's name and surname, place of residence, year of birth, and contact – e-mail address and mobile phone number
- 2 – PROOF OF IDENTITY
  - copy of identity card or passport
- 3 – PROOF OF QUALIFICATIONS
  - copy of the completed master's degree diploma - applicants who have obtained a foreign diploma must submit a copy of the decision of the competent authority concerning the recognition of the foreign higher education qualification
- 4 – PROOF OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- 5 – PORTFOLIO
  - portfolio of selected authored (or co-authored) works / projects in a format by applicant's choice (including the possibility of submitting a web link)
- 6 – MOTIVATIONAL LETTER
  - a short essay (1000 words maximum) in which the candidate should present themselves and their previous work, indicate study areas in which they situate their research and/or project interests, and state the goals they want to achieve through URBAN STUDIES.
- 7 – ONE (1) LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION
- 8 – SIGNED APPLICATION FORM

## C – APPLICATION DEADLINE

The deadline for application is October 1st 2024, until 16:00 (4 PM)

## D – APPLICATION PROCESS

- application documentation must be submitted digitally to the following e-mail address: info@deltalab.hr
- the application e-mail subject must have the following form:  
[NAME and SURNAME of the applicant > Application to Urban Studies]

## E – EVALUATION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by minimally three (3) members of the Admissions Committee.

Criteria for evaluation of an application include:

- interest in interdisciplinary work,
- clearly articulated ambition for upgrading their discipline and knowledge,
- previous work in professional, scientific or art projects.

If the application, consisting of above listed application documentation, is positively evaluated by the Admissions Committee, the applicant will be invited for an interview, either online or on site. The interview will be dedicated to the applicant's previous work, education, areas of research interest, and motivation.

All applicants will be informed of the final decision on their application eight (8) days after the interview. The final decision will be sent to the e-mail address provided in the application documentation.

Incomplete application, as well as applications received after the deadline, will not be considered. The Admissions Committee may request additions to the application.

## F – TUITION

Tuition fee for URBAN STUDIES is 3.000,00 euros (1.000,00 euros per semester).

Furthermore, the student must pay a one-time enrollment fee in accordance with the Decision of University of Rijeka Senate. The tuition fee for any student of URBAN STUDIES can also be paid by a legal entity.

## 6. Additional links

### – YUFE VIRTUAL CAMPUS

All students of the University of Rijeka have the possibility to attend, free of charge, the study courses, language courses or professional development programs at one of 10 European universities included in the YUFE network.

<https://virtualcampus.yufe.eu/p/StudentPortal>

### – COURSERA FOR CAMPUS (C4C)

All students of the University of Rijeka have the option of enrolling in any of the offered courses on the leading online learning platform, and the right to obtain one certificate per year upon successful completion of the course, free of charge.

<https://uniri.hr/en/about-university/coursea/>

### – VIZKULTURA: Kriza otvara prostor za kreativna djelovanja

<https://vizkultura.hr/kriza-otvara-prostor-za-kreativna-djelovanja/>

### – Vox Academiae: Kritičko promišljanje urbanog prostora

<https://novine.novolist.hr/vox/2024/02/4/>

### – NOVI LIST: Sveučilište u Rijeci dobilo prvu generaciju specijalista Urbanih studija

<https://www.novolist.hr/ostalo/sci-tech/znanost/sveuciliste-u-rijeci-dobilo-prvu-generaciju-specijalista-urbanih-studija/>

### – TPORTAL: VID BARIĆ intervju IDA KRIŽAJ LEKO

<https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/voditeljica-urbanih-studija-zelimo-biti-aktivni-sudionici-u-razvoju-boljih-sustava-foto-20230709>

### – NOVI LIST: Žilavi park

<https://www.novolist.hr/rijeka-regija/foto-na-trsatskom-kampusu-otvoren-zilavi-park-sportski-tereni-namijenjeni-su-svim-gradanima/>

## 7. Info / Contact

DELTALAB – Center for urban transition, architecture and urbanism

URBAN STUDIES – University specialist studies at the University of Rijeka

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1 – ADDRESS:

Delta 5, 51000 Rijeka, HR

2 – EMAIL:

[info@deltalab.hr](mailto:info@deltalab.hr)

3 – WEB:

[www.deltalab.hr](http://www.deltalab.hr)

4 – FACEBOOK:

[www.facebook.com/deltalab.rijeka](https://www.facebook.com/deltalab.rijeka)

5 – INSTAGRAM:

[www.instagram.com/deltalab\\_rijeka/](https://www.instagram.com/deltalab_rijeka/)

6 – LINKEDIN:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/deltalab-centar-za-urbanu-franziciju-arhitekturu-i-urbanizam-475119278/>

7 – VIMEO:

<https://vimeo.com/user222281719>

8 – HEAD OF URBAN STUDIES:

Doc. art. Ida Križaj Leko  
[ida.krizajleko@uniri.hr](mailto:ida.krizajleko@uniri.hr)

The deadline for application is  
October 1st 2024,  
until 16:00 (4 PM)