“DESIGNCONNECT”

Course Outline

Design Connect is an independent student organization at Cornell University that provides planning and design services to upstate New York communities. With the support of a board run entirely by students, working in conjunction with faculty members, student teams from departments across the campus assemble engage community partners in a wide variety of projects. Due to its integration of planning, landscape design and policy, Design Connect teams focus on research and analysis, often using participatory visioning and charrettes. The teams often create conceptual designs for subdivisions and conservation areas, and public spaces, including gardens and outdoor markets, rails-to-trails projects, parking alternatives, and façade improvements. The purpose is to assist public groups and non-profit organizations with strategies to implement these projects.

As a course, Design Connect workshop offers a unique engagement opportunity for both students and community members. These partnerships serve a dual purpose to provide planning and design services for local communities that cannot otherwise afford them, and to give students hands-on experience. Since its founding in 2008, over 400 students have completed 44 projects in 31 communities through Design Connect. Design Connect was the recipient of a 2015 Outstanding Planning Student Organization Award from the American Planning Association.

Reading:  http://blogs.cornell.edu/designconnectcornell/#.VetaEP1VhBc

Week of:

Jan 27th DC Board members collect information from the site visits to various communities. Posters are created and distributed campus-wide to recruit volunteers for the teams. GTRS is identified; review of the responsibilities of member of the Board and Team Managers.

Feb. 9th First Board meeting: Identification of the Team Managers and discussion of the community projects: Savannah, Lansing, Aurora, and Hammondsport selected for the fall, 2015. First and second open meeting describing each project and soliciting students via applications.

Feb. 16th Second Board meeting: selecting the student team members and sorting them with the Team Leaders to match the community projects. Interviewing student team members by Team Managers. Board Chair and Treasurer begin the process of establishing a budget for each project. Marketing begins for the semester’s events via social media outlets, enlisting faculty for the midterm and final reviews.

Feb. 23rd Third Board meeting: Team Managers report to the Board on the creation of their respective teams and share their prospective schedules to meeting with their respective community representatives to review the projects. Discussion of the purpose of casting a memorandum of understanding in each community, following the DesignConnect template.

Mar. 1st Fourth Board meeting: Discussion of project timelines with each Team Manager regarding the challenges that have arisen; Team meetings scheduled in the communities; discussion of the impact of the project specifics on the cash flow of the organization.

Mar. 8th Fifth Board meeting: Discussion of the research agendas of each team; adjustment of scheduling. Course add deadline, procedures for adding and dropping.

Mar. 15th Sixth Board meeting: Discussion of the research agendas of each team; field visits and adjustment of scheduling.
Mar. 22nd  Seventh Board meeting:  Mid-semester evaluation of team progress with Team Managers.

Mar. 29th  Spring Break

Apr. 5th  Eighth Board meeting:  Mid-semester evaluation of team progress with Team Managers and scheduling of the midterm presentations in Mann Library.

Apr. 12th  Ninth Board meeting:  Updated project reports from each Team Manager.  Review of presentations.

Apr. 19th  Tenth Board meeting:  Scheduling the “dry run” presentations for each team with the Team Managers.  Review of the proposed “mailing list” of contacts to be used to solicit new proposals for the Fall semester, 2016.

Apr. 26th  Eleventh Board meeting:  Nominations for the Spring semester DesignConnect Board and Team Managers; updated plans for the “dry run” presentations that will lead to the final presentations in Milstein Hall, scheduling so that Board members can participate.

May 3rd  Twelfth Board meeting:  Introduction of the prospective Spring semester DesignConnect Board and Team Managers, to field questions and get familiar with the processes.

May 10th  Thirteenth Board meeting:  Feedback regarding the “dry run” presentations from the Board to the Project Team Managers, who work with team members to make the final adjustments in the team presentations, May 11th.

May. 17th  (Study Week) Final Board Meeting:  the first assessment of the results from the Request for Proposals for the projects for spring 2016, sorting the results of the RFP process in order to schedule site visits before the new semester arrives.

General Information

Required Texts:  All assigned reading will be provided.  The research needed to fulfill the tasks assigned team members is conducted with the assistance of the project leaders and the faculty on an as-needed basis.

General Requirements:  Students are expected to attend all class meetings and project meetings as proscribed by the team leaders.  Students who wish academic credit will be monitored by the team leaders, the student graduate assistants and the faculty members.  Board members of the organization will be serving in different capacities, that is can serve as board members and project leaders.  Those who wish more than one credit will meet with the faculty and team leader to determine the nature of the assignment and the means of monitoring performance.

Attendance:  Please provide a Dean’s or doctor’s excuse if you are unable to attend a class or screening.

Assignments:  The assignments will vary according to the nature of the projects, the abilities of the students, the timing of the deliverables to the community, and the semester time frame.  Every effort should be made to be punctual and professional.

Diversity Statement:  We envision this course as a workshop, where we each play an integral and necessary part in the learning process as part of a diverse community of learners.  With this idea in mind, it is important for each of us to respect the voices, opinions, and ideas of others.  This requires active and open listening as well as the reevaluation and repositioning of your own beliefs and opinions at different points throughout the semester.  Sometimes and frequently, this produces the spark of excitement that may require you to listen and process a position that is contrary to yours or to engage in lively discussion and debate.  This is one of the goals of an effective, productive workshop, where the intellectual output of all is honored and respected.

University Policies and Regulations:  This instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination.  All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.
**Academic Integrity:** All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with Cornell’s Academic Integrity Code, which is distributed to students in the *Policy Notebook*. The code, together with a guide to *Acknowledging the Work of Others*, can be downloaded at [http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/AIAckWorkRev90620.pdf](http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/AIAckWorkRev90620.pdf). In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an “F” for the term.

**Students with Special Needs:** Students who require disability-related accommodations are encouraged to speak with the instructor about their needs as soon as possible. In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, the instructor of record is available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.