"Ecological democracy is government by the people emphasizing direct, hands-on involvement. Actions are guided by understanding natural processes and social relationships within our locality and the larger environmental context. This causes us to creatively reassess individual needs, happiness, and long-term community goods in the places we inhabit. Ecological democracy can change the form that our cities take creating a new urban ecology. In turn, the form of our cities, from the shape of regional watersheds to a bench at a post office, can help build ecological democracy."
 –Randolph Hester, *Design for Ecological   Democracy*

Instructor:

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Image: Community Event at Kenilworth Aquatic Garden

Course Description: Planning Applications Courses (PLAC) are problem-solving courses that expose you to the types of challenges you will encounter in practice, and help you hone your research and design skills in applied settings with real life partners. Although the specifics of the final project(s) will emerge collaboratively through each semester's partnership, the overarching goal for the course is for you to develop an appreciation for the interconnections between equity, health, ecology, and urbanity, and an awareness of the roles planning and design can play in supporting socio-economically vulnerable communities to increase their own social and ecological resilience.

Class discussions/readings will consider a range of approaches, including tactical urbanism, civic environmentalism, greening urban infrastructure, climate change education, environmental justice, community-driven design, and guerilla urbanism. The focus of the class projects change in response to our partners' current needs, so our applied research projects can vary widely within that spectrum. This spring our community partner will be the Building Community (BC) Workshop in D.C. and the Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, as they strive to develop community-appropriate

signage that better connects this national park to its urban neighborhood.

By the end of this course you will be able to:
1. Better appreciate the linkages between social and ecological challenges in the built world
2. Conduct self-directed research that informs local community design issues
3. Collaborate in community partnerships based on mutual respect
4. Understand a range of methods communities use to increase their social and ecological resilience
5. Reflect critically on your role as a practitioner and community member

Learning Materials:
Readings will be drawn from a variety of sources and all materials will be made available on Collab.

Assessment of Learning

Class participation (20%): A major goal of this class is to help you connect seemingly disparate concepts and apply them to your local context in a meaningful and respectful way. To that end, our class discussions will be an important time for you to demonstrate your understanding of concepts from the reading, to apply them to this local project context, and translate these lessons into relevant and useful actionable points of learning with your community partner. Your participation grade will be assessed through a series of in-class activities, contribution to out-of-class collaborations with the community partner, and your role as a constructive, but not dominating contributor in class discussions. *If you attend class on a regular basis, deeply engage in class discussions, collaborate respectfully and often with our community partner, and successfully apply content from our readings to our project context you will be successful in this course.*

Weekly Reflections/Dialogue (20%): Developing the habits that lead to reflective practice in your future professional and personal realms is an important, but rarely applied skill in school. In this course you will all contribute weekly journal-style reflections to our Collab site, which will function as a space for you to express any concerns, revelations, or challenges you face along this collaborative journey with our community partner. You will not be prompted to speak about something in particular, but instead will be empowered to use this forum as a venue to consider yourself in relationship to your own limitations/assumptions/biases, to think about how you do/could process them, to decompress after a particularly interesting or challenging exchange in the field, and to reflect on your own needs/skills to move toward mindful, empathetic practice. You will be assigned a "Critical Friend" with which you will be expected to engage weekly—read their reflection posts and ask them questions for clarity, challenge them kindly when they might be missing something, support them when they are struggling with something, and celebrate their moments of deep learning or personal growth. **Please post your reflections on collab by Wednesday each week, and then engage online with your critical friend by Friday.** Each week of online discourse in the class will count as two percentage points of contribution. You will also write a final reflection piece that helps you process the experiences of community-engagement and of learning at the end of the semester.

Homework Assignments (20%): Throughout the class we will conduct a series of tasks that help you

hone your research skills through investigating case studies (10%) and documenting relevant local knowledge during a site visit (10%).

Final Research Project (30%): This semester we will partner with [bc] workshop and the Kenilworth Aquatic Garden to help develop creative, culturally-appropriate wayfinding signage outside of Kenilworth Aquatic Garden that better links this national park with its surrounding community, and vice versa. The class will include several visits to DC, and will include the opportunity to develop and lead a community engagement exercise with Kenilworth youth and adult stakeholders to co-create the signage design strategy (10%).

The class will break into four groups (10%) to focus their efforts:
1. *Policy and Planning:* Students research overall regulatory processes relevant to Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Garden planning/design and specifically related to this project's implementation
   - Research permitting / regulatory process for park planning and design (NPS and DC Government)
   - Provide an implementation policy guide for sign installation
2. *Mapping:* Students develop investigative and site design maps for wayfinding signage
   - Investigative: Through quantitative/qualitative research and site visits, develop maps that identify key site challenges and assets
   - Site Design: Develop site plans for wayfinding signage, identifying locations for signage and anticipated user traffic (pedestrian/cyclist/automobile)
3. *Signage Design:* Students, in collaboration with mapping group, develop designs for wayfinding signage
   - Develop schematic designs for creative, culturally-appropriate signage in coordination with policy and planning group
   - Create a budget for project implementation (incorporating costs for community engagement, sign fabrication, permitting, installation, and documentation)
4. *Project Coordination Proposal:* Students develop project management deliverables and compile components of a comprehensive grant proposal
   - Develop timeline for project implementation
   - Identify 3-5 specific funding opportunities that Kenilworth Aquatic Garden can utilize following completion of the course (in coordination with budget of design group)
   - Write compelling project description for grant proposal
   - Compile course outputs/deliverables into a final package for [bc]/Kenilworth

The collaborative final report (10%) will convey the best design ideas, engagement opportunities, and funding opportunities identified, including a sample grant proposal complete with a budget, timeline, and compelling project narrative.

Peer evaluation (10%): Because group work is such an important aspect of this course, you will be asked to conduct peer assessments of your fellow group members and yourself the last day of class

that detail: 1) the letter grade you would assign each group member, and 2) the reasoning for this grade— which should include a description of each persons role and/or the noteworthy contributions they made.

Class Calendar

A schedule of readings and assignment deadlines is available on Collab, but you will be expected to regularly check this as working with a community partner requires flexibility and openness to changing our collective plans if need be.

Class Policies

Technology Policy: The use of electronic devices can really affect our classroom dynamic and hinder our learning. In this class, use of electronic devices—laptops, tablets, and iphones—will not be permitted in unless explicitly requested by the instructor on specific days when they are needed for in-class work. Recording devices are exempt from this policy. Please see the following links: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html and https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/30/this-year-im-resolving-to-ban-laptops-from-my-classroom/.

Accessibility: This course is designed to be welcoming to, accessible to, and usable by everyone, including students who are English-language learners, have a variety of learning styles, have disabilities, or are new to online learning. Be sure to let me know immediately if you encounter a required element or resource in the course that is not accessible to you. Also, let me know of changes I can make to the course so that it is more welcoming to, accessible to, or usable by students who take this course in the future.

Violence Prevention: I am committed to reducing incidents of violence, harassment, bias, and hazing at UVA and in the broader community. I also believe that every person can play a part in reducing these incidents. If you are interested in becoming a more active bystander, there is training available through the Green Dot program and other organized prevention efforts underway at UVA.

Honor: By enrolling in this course, you have agreed to abide by and uphold the Honor System of the University of Virginia. For more information, go to: http://www.virginia.edu/honor/

Personal Statement from Professor: I am here to help. If you find yourself hungry, facing discrimination, depression, grief, chronic pain of any sort, or any problems that you need help with, please let me know. I know lots of campus resources, often have snacks in my office, and consider it an honor to help you through your educational process.

WEEK OF:	Phase	OBJECTIVES	DELIVERABLES	READINGS	REFLECTIONS
Jan 23	Getting Oriented	Class Introductions	Listening Exercise;	White Savior Industrial	What do I believe/value?

		& Project Overview	Assignment of Case Studies	Complex; Performative Listening; Critical Friend	What is my role? How can I help?
Jan 30		Gather our Tools of Reflective Practice	Develop MOU; Plan site visit	Implicit Bias Test/Reading; Racial Bias; Freire (Chapter 1); [bc] Race and Parks Exhibit; Gardens Brief	What are my biases and how did I come to them? How can I be an effective partner?
Feb 6	Learning from the Place/People	Begin to Contribute to Partnership	Present Case Studies; Solidify Project Teams	Hester; Cadogan	How can I be a resource ally? How can I listen well?
Feb 13		**Site Visit to DC!**	Attend stakeholder-led tour and "listening session"	Wayfinding Plan; NPS Urban Agenda; Fullilove	What do my partners value? How does that translate spatially and aesthetically and why?
Feb 20		Reflect on visit; Brainstorm Co-Design Strategies	Share notes from site visit; Draft final project outline	Hooks; Lipsitz; Abrams	What did they say? What did I hear? What does that mean?
Feb 27	TRANSLATING	Prototype Co-Design, Draft plan	Prepare for desk crits from [bc]	Agyeman et al; Spirn; Koh	How can I develop a shared vocabulary with my partner?
Spring Break					
March 13		**1st Desk Crits**	Present report outline and co-design idea for feedback	Coburn; Resilience for All; Sidewalks	What did they say? What did I hear? What does that mean?
March 20		Plan for Co-design exercise	Discuss how to ask open ended questions and to analyze data gleaned from co-design exercise	Williams; Dalton; Ogbu and Wilson	How can I ask questions in ways that are fun and engaging, but informative?
March 27		**Co-design at Kenilworth!**	Host co-design activities to refine ideas with		What did they say? What did I hear? What

			neighborhood youth		does that mean?
April 3	DESIGNING	Reflect on co-design experience	Analyze data; apply to final project content; prep for desk crits		How can many bits of data be translated into a few points of insight?
April 10		**2nd Desk Crits with [bc]**			
April 17	REFINING		Finalize concepts, identify action items for competition of final projects		What did they say? What did I hear? What does that mean?
April 24			Peer review of projects; continue refining work		
May 1	REFLECTING	Course debrief	Finish reports and plan for final review		Were we good partners? What did we contribute? What did we learn?
May TBD	Final Reviews!				