PROPOSAL FOR A JUNIOR-SENIOR CLUSTER COURSE

Title: USP 425 Community and the Built Environment
When will this course be offered: Spring Term
Title of Cluster: Community Studies

A. Course Description.
Application of psychological and social concepts to understanding community and its relationship to the built environment and urban design. The use of space in interpersonal relations (personal space, territoriality, privacy); the impact of crowding and density on social relations. The functioning of social networks in the city: types of communities, creating of intentional communities.

B. Course Development. Course is a revision of a previously existing course. The revision was crafted to fit the course to the Community Studies Cluster. The revision has been approved by the Faculty Senate in its December 1995 meeting.

C. General Education Goals.
1. Inquiry and Critical Thinking. Students will be required to engage the literature in critically assessing the evidence relating to theories of “new urbanism” and “neotraditional neighborhoods.” They will explore theoretical approaches to understanding human response to density, and the implications of those theories for decision-making about urban form. They will engage in scientific inquiry, testing hypotheses through observational research on the functioning of small urban social spaces.

2. Communication. The course will require a number of written assignments, and at least one oral presentation to the class.

3. Human Experience. Explicit emphasis will be placed on group and cultural differences in the concept of community, and in how people form and respond to the built environment.

4. Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility. The relationship between privacy and community, and between individual choices and social responsibility will be an underlying theme of the course.

D. Course Outline
Note: the outline attached is adapted from my last teaching of the course, which was under the old description and outline. It will be more completely revised before teaching it under the new title and description.
USP 425: Community and The Built Environment
Dr. Nancy Chapman
Spring Term
Office: 343 UPA

Requirements: Several short assignments, most involving some field work; midterm and final exams. Grading based on these and on class participation.

TOPICS

I. Environmental psychology, environmental design, and community


A. Environmental perception and cognition


B. Territoriality and community


C. Public Spaces and Community

Film: Whyte's "Urban places, social spaces"


D. Neighborhood Design and Community

1. Neotraditional neighborhoods and the “new urbanism”
2. Evidence and critique


**E. Density and Community**

1. Social vs. spatial density
2. Cultural differences in response to density


**II. Social networks in the urban environment: what are they, how do they function?**

A. Sectors: kin, friends, neighbors, others
B. Exchanges within networks
C. Social support and social networks
D. Cities and networks: community or alienation


III. Intentional communities
   A. Balancing privacy and community
   B. Communites, coops, co-housing
   C. Options in retirement housing


