

ENST 4007B. Design Thinking for the Anthropocene  
January 9 – April 3, 2025

Instructor: John Milton, Associate Professor (Teaching)  
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Course Timetable: Thursdays, 8:35 – 11:25am

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### Course Description

Let's face it: few discussions concerning our relationship with the environment today have happy endings. We are constantly being bombarded by images of environmental disasters. It is not surprising that many people simply throw up their arms in despair. What can we do?

While these concerns are well-founded, and it is true that our actions are certainly triggering environmental catastrophes and potentially collapse, it is not all doom and gloom. The Earth is resilient; it can mend itself if given the chance. Furthermore, people are adaptable; we can change our ways and, with our creativity, help the Earth mend itself.

This is the backdrop for the course: *sustainability, itself, is not good enough*; we must do more if we are to help the Earth repair itself. For the next three months we are going to look at design thinking for the Anthropocene with a focus on regenerative design and development. Regenerative design and development demand that we all take an active part in this healing process, and not simply minimize the impacts of our actions.

You spent enough of your undergraduate lives learning about the doom-and-gloom side of life; it is now time to break free, to think of possibilities and to seek out positive solutions. This course is meant to do just that, combining fun with learning, creativity and imagination with the years of knowledge you have acquired. Through these it is hoped that you will learn that all is not doom and gloom but instead, that there are pathways to a positive and flourishing world for all living creatures.

This course is a studio-based course where you will be working in teams to design a community inspired by regenerative design and development principles. We will be looking at various designs of futurist community designs, both current and historic, and ideas connecting principles of sustainable lifestyles to theories of place to practices of regenerative design and development. Topics to be covered include: Topophilia and place; Regenerative design & development principles and practices; your places of choice to live; utopian designs and designs from science fiction. Plus our joint class with a class at O.P. Jindal Global University in India!

Deliverables for this course consist of a collective vision and a personal examination of some topic relevant to the field of design of your choice.

## Course Plan

<i>Class</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings or Something Else</i>
January 9	Introduction, Creating Design Teams, What is a Flourishing Place?	
January 16	Place & placemaking, Introducing the Community Challenge, the Campus as a community and neighbourhood	
January 23	Reconnaissance/Assessment of the Campus using the Community Challenge Petal Model	It's out you go today to begin your assessment of the campus.
January 30	Overview of Regenerative Design & Development, History of Neighbourhood Design	
February 6	You tell me: Your example of a Great Place to Live (a neighbourhood, village, alternative community), Elements of a Flourishing Place	
February 13	In-class analysis of your Reconnaissance & Assessment	Today, the teams will begin their analysis of their findings, observations and thoughts from the reconnaissance.
	Reading Week	
February 27	Spatial themes to Design: Village Green versus Community Centre versus Business Centre versus Transportation Hub and Others	
March 6	Design themes from Utopian writing and Science Fiction	
March 13	In-class Planning Studio time	Today's class will be dedicated to working on your vision.
March 20	In-class Planning Studio time	Today's class will be dedicated to working on your vision.
March 27	Joint Class with Class at O.P. Jindal Open University, Sonipat, India. Presenting your vision.	This is an exciting class where you team up with students in India to review the state of the two campuses, the issues each faces in becoming a flourishing place and your respective plans.
April 3	Final class. Becoming a Reflective & Regenerative Practitioner	

## Learning Objectives

The goal is to encourage you to explore issues creatively and positively. The pedagogical goal is to help you develop a critical and analytical 'eye'. Through the discussions, presentations, and design tasks, it is hoped that every student will acquire the ability to approach difficult questions in an objective and critical fashion, and to learn how to think "outside the box" when seeking solutions to these questions.

## Course Structure and Deliverables

This course is envisioned to be a design studio so I have tried to strike a balance between in-class presentations (by me, not you) and classes dedicated to design studio work.

### *Creating a Vision of the Campus as a Flourishing Place for Students*

The principal project in this course is to evaluate Carleton's campus based upon ILFI's Living Community Challenge Seven Petal Model and to propose a vision that transforms the campus into a flourishing place for students. This will involve each design team:

1. Conduct a reconnaissance/assessment of the campus as it exists today using the Seven Petal Model.
2. Undertaking an analysis (critique) of the campus based on the Seven Petal Model.
3. Creating a flourishing campus for students as a design exercise.

### *Paper*

As the second principal deliverable, you will be writing a paper on a subject of your choosing as long as it is design related. You will submit a proposal using the template provided in Appendix 1. I will approve it or request slight modifications but it is important that you write on something of personal interest. It will be a minimum of 15 pages of written materials in length with as many visuals – photos, diagrams, sketches – that you want to include (and many of you know how much I like visuals). This can be an element of your flourishing vision (e.g., the importance of greenspace in spatial design, the potential of urban and local food systems in urban design) or it can be an examination of a specific type of community (e.g., eco-village, eco-neighbourhood, biophilic neighbourhood, Arcosanti) or it can be something else altogether. You have an idea; run it past me.

### *Submission of Written Assignments and Late Penalties*

*Deadlines are absolute.* I am approaching this course as I always do for a fourth-year level seminar: as a professional firm in which I am the boss, and you are my employees. I want you to learn to pay strict attention to deadlines because that is what will be expected of you in the real world. When your boss tells you to have something done by a specific day (and even time), he/she expects you to meet that deadline. That's the same in this course. Get used to this now! These reflections are also the foundation for our discussions on the day each is due.

To underline the importance of this, I will be applying a 25% late penalty for the first day an assignment is late plus an additional 5% per day following that. These penalties will be assigned even if your submission is only seconds late so do not wait until the last moment to submit assignments because something can go wrong with either accessing the course site or with uploading the materials and those factors will not be taken into consideration. A late penalty of one grade level will still be assessed for late submissions accompanied by *appropriate* written documentation for a *legitimate* reason. Formal assignment extensions will be considered *only* for *documented* illnesses or *immediate* family emergencies and a late penalty of one grade level will again be assessed. Late penalties will be enforced to ensure fairness in grading among students. Assignments will *not* be accepted more than five days past the due date and the uploading function on Brightspace will be programmed accordingly.

### *Participation Marks*

These are neither automatic nor 'gimmie' marks. These marks are accumulated as follows, up to 10 marks. A mark is awarded for each class attended and in which you make a meaningful contribution. You cannot simply arrive and then 'go absent.' Note: you will also lose a mark (-1) for being absent without prior approval. Arriving late is a 0.5-mark deduction. This portion of the participation mark is 12 marks.

### *Take-home Exam*

Then finally, you will do a take-home exam. I have yet to figure this out but am leaning towards something different than a written essay. How about a video on the challenges and opportunities

of regenerative design & development? Or maybe an info poster? I am, again, open to ideas from you.

### Grading

The grading of these components is as follows:

<i>The Campus as a Flourishing Place</i>	35%
<i>Your Paper</i>	35%
<i>Participation</i>	10%
<i>Final Take-home Exam</i>	20%
Total	100%

### Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 56-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72	C- = 60-62	D- = 50-52
F = Less than 50			

WDN = Withdrawn from the course

ABS = Student absent from final exam

FND (Failed, no Deferral) = Student could not pass the course even with 100% on final exam.

Final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.

### Deferred Assignments/Grades

Only official deferrals petitioned through the Office of the Registrar will be honoured. Students who are unable to complete a final paper or write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply within five working days to the Registrarial Services Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. Permission can be granted only if the request is fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documents.

### Help in Writing Assignments

As I say in all my courses, "Writing is hard work." If you feel you need assistance in improving your writing skills, you are encouraged to get in touch early in the term with the Writing Tutorial Service (located in Room 229, Patterson Hall, <http://www.carleton.ca/wts/>). I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this service as effective writing is an invaluable in the workplace.

Some Common and not-so-Common Courtesies

1. *Communications:* Students should use their Carleton email account for all course-related correspondence, placing "ENST 4000" in the subject heading. Please note that I may not respond to emails over the weekend. Email is an acceptable medium for simple inquiries or clarifications, but not for complex questions. If you need to discuss ideas or materials, come by my office.
2. *Preparation:* Knowledge of the content of the syllabus and the Brightspace course site is the responsibility of each student. I expect everyone to have read the required readings before the course so we can engage in real discussion.
3. *Be on time:* We all have been operating under more flexible conditions this past year. With a return to the classroom, it is important to remember that the class begins at a set time. Students entering once the class has begun can be highly disruptive. Err on the side of caution. Get to campus, get a beverage, and get into class early.

## **Requests for Academic Accommodations**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

### *Pregnancy obligation*

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

### *Religious obligation*

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

### *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), mental health disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the exam.

## **Academic Standing and Conduct**

Students must familiarize themselves with the regulations concerning academic standing and conduct in the 2024-2025 Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar.

### *Drop/Withdrawal Date*

Please refer to the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar for the final day that one is permitted to withdraw from a fall term course.

### *Retain Copies of Work Submitted*

Students are strongly advised to retain a hard copy (and electronic backup) of all assignments and term papers in the event of loss for whatever reason.

### *Student Life Services*

Student Life Services, located in Room 501 of the Unicentre, offers a wide range of programs and services to assist students in adjusting to academic life, in improving their learning skills, and in making academic and career decisions

### *University Regulations Regarding Cheating and Plagiarism*

University regulations stipulate that any allegation of plagiarism, cheating or violations of examination conduct rules will be thoroughly reviewed. Each case must be reported to the Dean, who investigates each allegation. If there is no resolution following this investigation at the Dean's level, a tribunal will be appointed by the Senate to review the case and make a final decision.

A Note on Plagiarism: Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarism as stealing. Plagiarism is the submission of someone else's writing/ideas/work as your own. All ideas presented which are not your own must be properly referenced. While forms of plagiarism may vary, each involves verbatim or near verbatim presentation of the writings or ideas of others' as one's own without adequately acknowledging the original source. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) copying from a book, article, or another student, downloading material or ideas from the Internet, or otherwise submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own.

DRAFT

## Appendix 1. Template for Paper Proposal

### A Generic Outline for Preparing a Paper/Thesis/Directed Studies Proposal

The purpose of a paper proposal is to present a research problem, to provide some background as to the context of the research problem with regard to existing knowledge on the subject, to provide an overview of the current relevant literature on the topic and to outline how you propose to approach the question. Your outline should be written as a series of subsections identified by appropriate headings. Typical headings under which to organize the outline are:

- Proposed Question
- Statement of the purpose and the problem
- Background to the problem
- Your proposed approach in your paper
- References

#### **Proposed Question**

Draft a tentative question/topic that concisely describes what you are setting out to investigate. *You are encouraged to, at least, attempt to pose an answerable (and manageable) question.* Posing a question helps you focus your research and writing. A supporting hypothesis can then be also posed.

#### **Purpose/Problem** (approximate length of 0.5 to 1 page)

Here you begin by presenting your question/topic “The purpose of this propose research is to examine ... as a paper/Honours thesis/directed study. You may or may not wish to present a formal hypothesis (some research questions suit this approach while some do not).

This section then elaborates on why you wish to examine this question (as a paper, a thesis or a directed study). It should proceed to justify why the problem is worthy of being investigated and identify the tentative scope of your paper (what will be included and the limits in breadth and depth to which you intend to proceed). It should also include a statement explaining why you are interested in this topic.

#### **Background** (approximate length of 1 page)

This includes an overview of the issue. The purpose of this is to place your investigation within the context of existing ‘knowledge’ (with which you may agree or disagree). It provides readers with enough information for them to be able to see the connections between what you are investigating and related work.

#### **Literature** (between 5 to 10 references)

You must also provide a brief literature review of the academic literature you propose to use. You should include a minimum of five articles and, ideally, as many as 10, that you see as key to your paper or research. You must focus on current relevant articles (ideally 2020 or more current) on the topic or question as these will provide you with gateways to other literature through their bibliographies. All of your references must be academic in nature. You can, of course, draw upon government publications and publications of international organizations (e.g., United Nations) as sources of basic information in your actual work. Internet sites of recognized organizations, governments and academic institutions are also permitted. Do not, for any reason, cite Wikipedia or other similar web sites on pain of...

### **Your Proposed Approach to the Question** (approximate length of 1 page)

How do you plan to approach the question? Do you support a particular viewpoint, as presented in the background section? Do you propose to study the question from a particular theoretical position? Do you plan to use the work of a specific scholar in examining the question? Do you propose to use a case study as a means of exploring a particular idea or theory? What do you plan on arguing? If you are posing a hypothesis, then outline the conclusion that you are testing.

### **References** (length as necessary)

Present complete references for all publications cited in the above outline. Identify further sources from which you anticipate obtaining information and data, again with a complete bibliographic reference. Note: Beware of the uneven quality of information that is available on the Internet. If an Internet source is used, give the complete reference for calling up the site, and give the affiliation of the author if that is available. It is difficult, even for someone knowledgeable in the field to judge the credibility of information, and much (most) of the information on the Internet is unscreened for quality. Your references should be present in a complete and consistent fashion.

Refer to this citation document from the OWL at Purdue University:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html)

### **Proper Header to Your Work**

Also, do not forget to begin your work with a proper header. It should be something like this (including the line):

**Paper Proposal**  
**Submitted by (your name) (Student number)**  
**Submitted to (name of person you are submitting your proposal to)**  
**(Date of submission)**

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### **Technical Details for the Format of the Research Proposal**

The proposal is to be typed (word processed) in 1.5-space format with 2.5 cm (1 inch) margins on all sides. Type size should be 11 point and the font should be Times Roman or similar font. Your proposal should be no more than five written pages in length excluding your reference section.