

**urban** | design  
specialisation

## Information

booklet for the

**urban** | design  
specialisation

2024-2026

**urb** / bme



The specialisation focuses on the architect's role in shaping **the environment and society in urban space**. The curriculum aims to strengthen an architectural vision that can serve the community and translate the effects of changing needs into interventions. Beyond architectural shaping, the aim is to equip graduates with the tools - urban planning, urban housing, urban activism, cohousing, data analysis, green infrastructure, landscape architecture, climate thinking, and rehabilitation - that will enable them to create architecture that will contribute to the processes of environmental design.

**Freedom and experimentation** are two fundamental characteristics of work in this specialisation. Here, design studios focus not only on the buildings but also on the human environment beyond the buildings. Our aim is not to confine the horizons of architecture students to rigid boundaries but to extend them to a broader range of areas, as architectural thinking has a place at all levels of environmental design, from public spaces to the neighbourhood and landscape-scale systems.

This approach has both a spatial and a temporal dimension. In the spatial dimension, the design does not stop at the physical boundaries of the building, but it begins there: what spatial responses can we give to the social, economic, and ecological challenges of the built environment? In the temporal dimension, planning is not only about the construction of the intervention but also about its impact, the period during which everyday life takes possession of it and continues to build it.

**Architecture and the city are inseparable fields**, presented in the specialisation with an urban design orientation but with a broader spectrum than traditional architectural design, bearing in mind the importance of architectural interventions. Building on the department's urban, artistic, and scientific (PhD and DLA) traditions, we will focus on theoretical and applied tasks linked to design and scientific approaches, through which a synthesis of architectural and "urban" approaches and a culture of collaboration can be acquired.

Reference  
[www.urb.bme.hu](http://www.urb.bme.hu)

The additional knowledge created through the specialization:

- An architect's approach reflecting on the environment / dealing with urban scale and an interdisciplinary approach
- Masterplan / higher complexity and multi-scale planning (urban design).
- Preparation of urban, municipal and project scale development programmes / conceptual and strategic design skills.
- Integration of an urban researcher (PhD) and designer (DLA) attitude.

The specificities of the specialization:

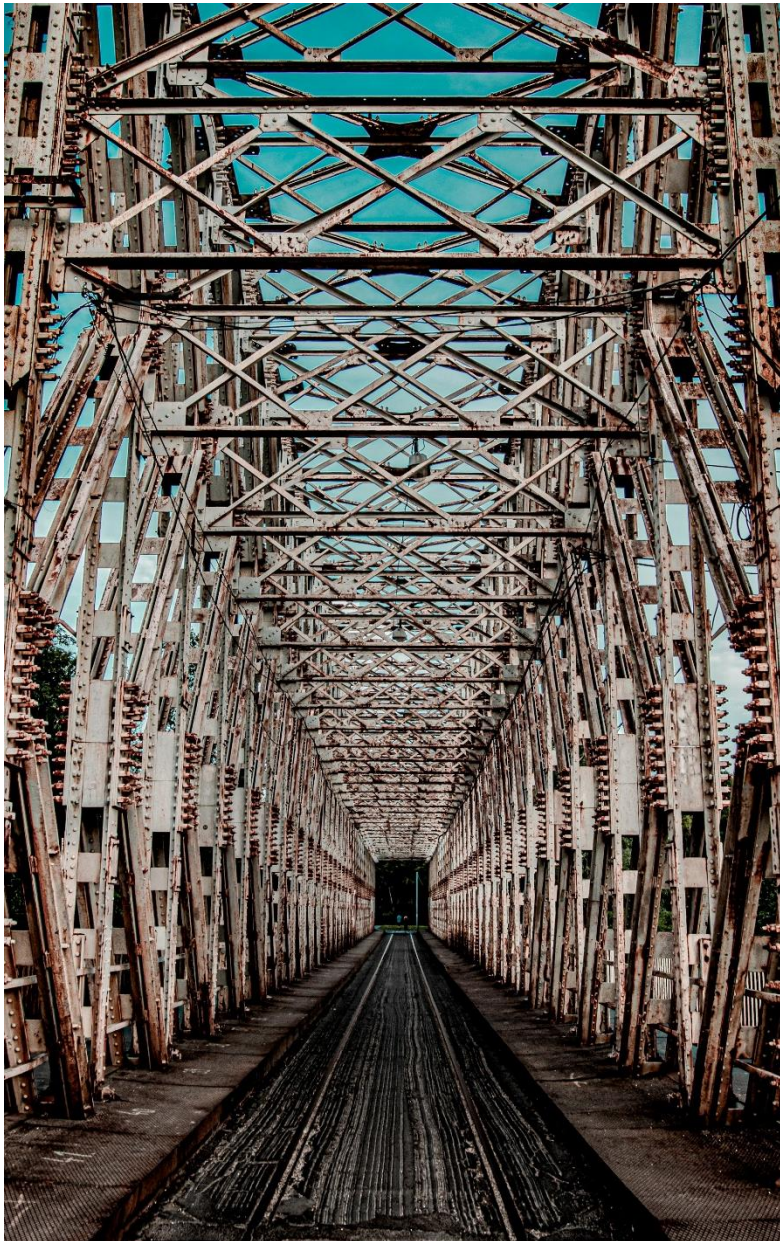
- The three compulsory subjects and a set of obligatory elective subjects provide the theoretical basis for the specialised knowledge, with practical exercises linked to the design subjects.
- The design subjects accompanying the semesters (project, complex and diploma design) are accompanied by a course on "Research and Programming", which aims to provide and consolidate the knowledge of research and analysis methodology related to design tasks.

- Design courses range from small-scale environmental design, through building scale to the scale of wider environmental interventions (urban design). A permanent part of the tasks is the research and analysis of complex urban conditions (society, culture, economy, natural and built environment), which provides the basis for the program of specific architectural interventions.
- In addition to the usual disciplines at the complex and diploma level, new human and engineering disciplines are occasionally integrated into the planning process (utility planning, transport planning, sociology) and landscape architecture is introduced as a new "discipline".
- The development of joint cooperations with other specializations, based on thematic approaches is also possible in specific cases (real estate development in urban environments, environmental awareness).

Recruitment of students:

- The specialisation does not require any additional entry requirements beyond the standard ones, but we expect a good mark in the urban design subjects!
- The maximum number of students is adapted to the scale of the common group assignments, while we reserve the right to start the specialisation only if there is a minimum number of applicants
- In case of too many applications, we will prioritize on the basis of grades in Urban Design 1, Urban Design 2 and Department Design 1, as well as the results of the other design subjects.
- If you are interested **please sign up at our registration page** to get updates about the process.





Courses	Code	Credit	
<b>Programming and design</b>			
Research and programming for design / advanced technologies	BMEEPUIQ712	4	compulsory
Specialization Design Course	BMEEPUIQ711	6	compulsory
Complex Design / (Prerequisite: Specialization Design Course)	BMEEPUIQ811	10	compulsory
Complex Design 2	BMEEPUIQ911	10	compulsory
Research methodology – diploma / (Prerequisite: Research and programming for design)	BMEEPUIQ901	3	compulsory
Diploma / (Prerequisite: Research methodology - diploma project)		26	compulsory
<b>Urban Design compulsory courses</b>			
Contemporary city, urban form and space usage	BMEEPUIQ701	3	compulsory
Sustainable and liveable city	BMEEPUIQ801	3	compulsory
City and city	BMEEPUIQ901	3	compulsory
Urban Design Global		0	compulsory
<b>Urban Design elective group „A“ (3 courses to be completed from the package)</b>			
<b>Autumn semester</b>			
Hungarian cities, urban culture and planning	BMEEPUIQ802	3	oblig. elect.
Cities of the world / Culture and society		3	oblig. elect.
<b>Spring semester</b>			
Urban development: analysis, planning, management	BMEEPUIQ702	3	oblig. elect.
Urban landscape / garden and landscape design in the perspective of architecture	BMEEPUIQ705	3	oblig. elect.
Urban activism / community-driven experiences in urban development	BMEEPUI704	3	oblig. elect.
<b>Urban Design elective group „B“ (one course to be completed from the package)</b>			
History of Architecture in Hungary	BMEEPETQ703	3	oblig. elect
Special Construction Technologies	BMEEPEKQ903	3	oblig. elect
Building Rehabilitation	BMEEPESQ902	3	oblig. elect
Sustainable conceptual design of structures	BMEEPSTQ702	3	oblig. elect
Visual Communication	BMEEPRAQ801	3	oblig. elect
Constructive CAAD CE	BMEEPAG0249	3	oblig. elect
<b>Urban Design elective group „C“ (one course to be completed from the package)</b>			
Craft/Shop – Experimental Object-making	BMEEPKOQ701	3	oblig. elect
Praxis – Architectural strategies	BMEEPIPQ703	3	oblig. elect
Competitions and a sustainable practice	BMEEPLAQ803	3	oblig. elect



7th semester 1st semester / MSc	8th semester 2nd semester / MSc	9th semester 3rd semester / MSc	10th sem. 4th sem / MSc
elective	elective	elective	elective
			Diploma
elective group „B”			
Contemporary City	Sustainable and livable city	The city & the city	Diploma
Urban Design elective group „A”	Urban Design elective group „A”	Urban Design elective group „A”	
Research and programming	Complex Design	Complex Design	
Specialization Design Course			

## SPECIALIZATION DESIGN COURSE / RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING FOR DESIGN

**ABOVE: CARE FOR THE EXISTING** - experimental techniques to appropriate hidden opportunities of the given urban fabric

The term above refers to the design principles practiced in this studio: during the course, we develop design proposals that prioritize reuse of, and building “upon” or “on the top of” the existing instead of demolition. We believe that such an approach can be only successful if it is grounded on thorough research of the physical, social, economic and political layers of the actual location. Understanding the relations among these various issues leads us towards a more sensitive understanding of our built environment and its problems. Through the design process, students are to acquire consciousness that their proposed interventions are to be embedded into this complex system affecting all of its various layers.

This course aims to find ways to improve the quality of human life in densely populated residential areas by activating untapped opportunities in the existing physical infrastructure. We will make research and develop design proposals about the possible utilization of the currently unused in- and outdoor areas and look for interventions that add significant use value with simple means.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ712 (4) / BMEEPUIQ711 (6)

**lecturer** / BENKŐ Melinda PhD, HORY Gergely PhD

**detailed infos** / [LINK](#)

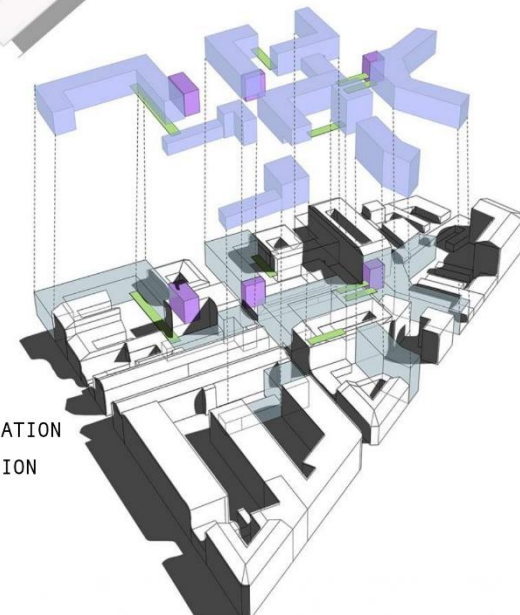
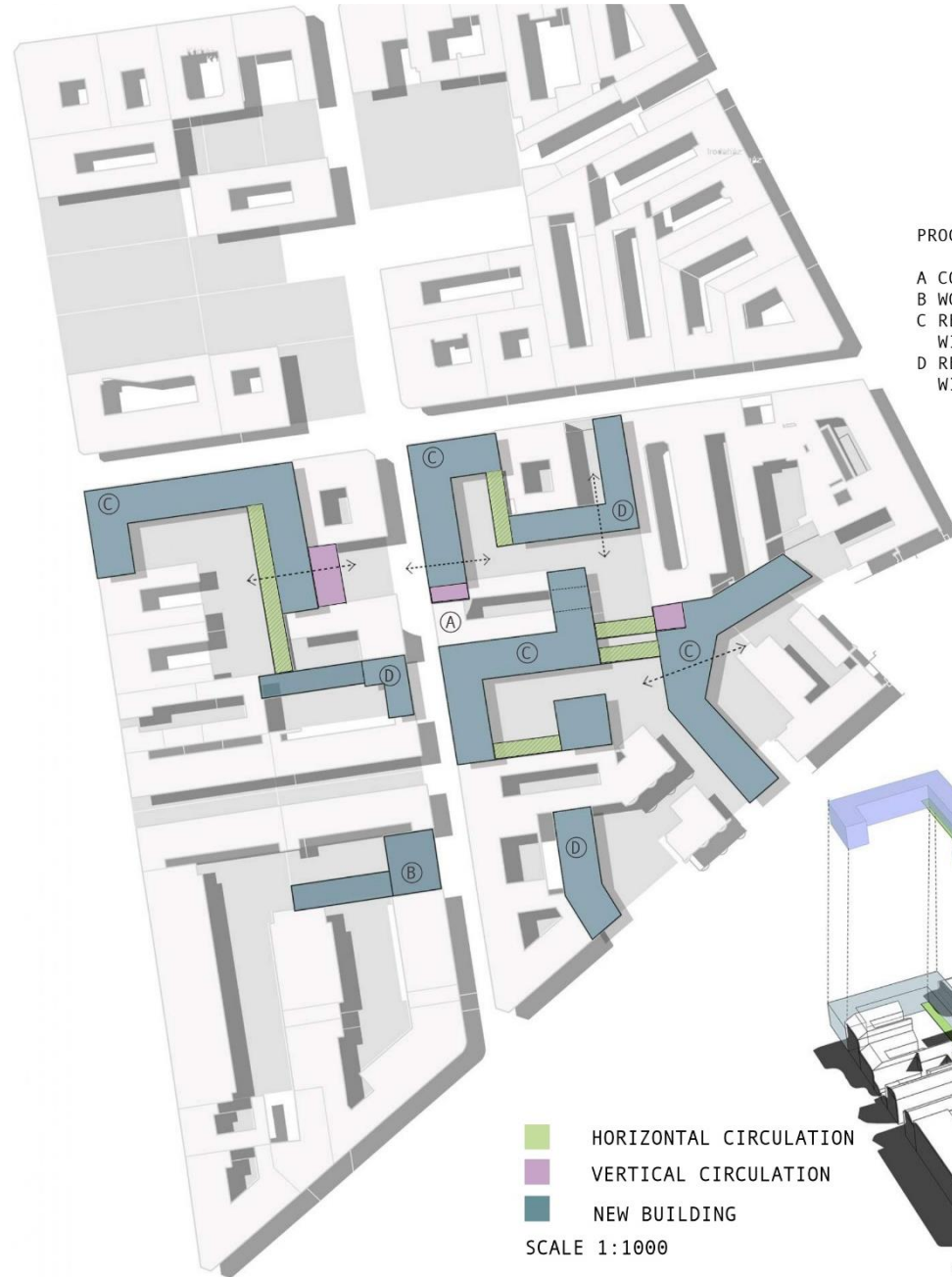


## COMPLEX DESIGN

Our COMPLEX studio is characterised by a sensitive and creative design approach that takes a complex view not only of the building, but also of the surrounding urban, landscape and social environment. We design buildings and environments where, in addition to the architectural form, the disciplinary and structural aspects are considered in an environmentally conscious and sustainable way, taking into account the wider environment.

We work in inspiring and regenerative urban settings, where we seek solutions to current and real problems in areas facing transformation through environmentally sensitive incorporation. In previous semesters, we have worked on historical heritage sites, urban enclaves in transition and urban situations surrounded by landscape, where we reassessed elements of the municipal, industrial and landscape heritage that are often not yet protected.

In addition to design methods, we also put a strong emphasis on developing collaborative working, conceptualisation, programme analysis and presentation skills - constantly listening to each other to develop the skills needed for architectural work in the most complex and personalised way possible.



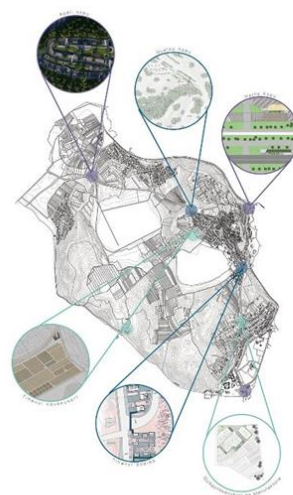
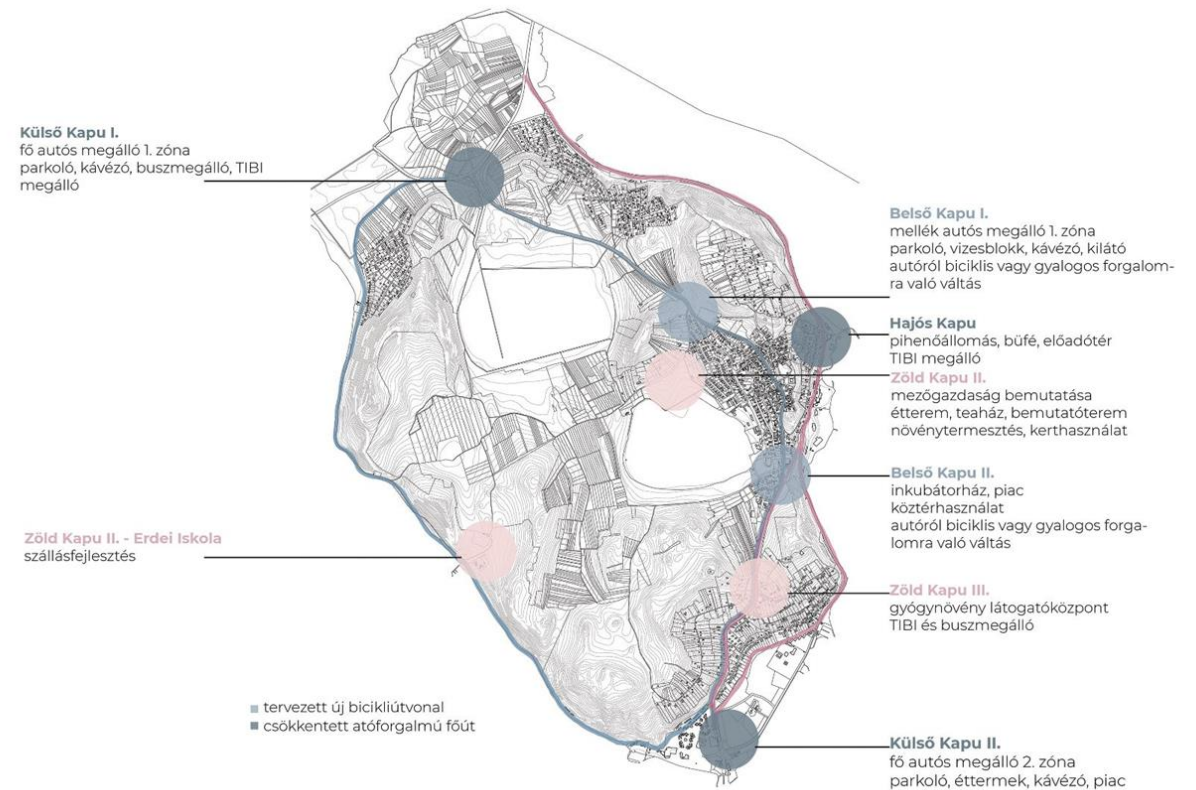


## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – DIPLOMA PROJECT

The purpose of the course is conceptualization and methodological foundation prior to the diploma semester, the development of the specialization content of the diploma subject and the design program related to it. During the semester, the students combine theoretical and practical skills and choose a topic that suits their interests and develop the specialization and planning content of the thesis with their consultants. In the first half of the semester, the emphasis is placed on getting to know the methodological tools and the possibilities of choosing a topic, until the presentation held in the middle of the semester, the outline of the topic and the description of the main methodological chapter must be reached. In connection with the specialization content, in the second half of the semester, it is also necessary to complete the program and foundational examination of the diploma plan, which prepares the planning process for the next semester. The two work parts, the specialization content and the program of the diploma plan, are closely connected, and in the presentation at the end of the semester, the two are presented together in their context.

code (credit) / BMEEPUIQ901 (3)

lecturer / WETTSTEIN Domonkos PhD



### TIBI felépítése

Tihanyi Bicikli

- 3 alapmodul
- Tibi biciklitároló
- információs tábla
- saját biciklitároló

Kiegészíthető  
buszmegálló  
nyilvános mosdó

/ a kirekesztett autós forgalom miatt a buszmegállók és biciklitak számának növelése és fejlesztése szükséges  
/ az alaprajz szabadon a helyszínekhez szabható, az információs tábla önmagában is használható



## DIPLOMA PROJECT

Design course of the tenth semester: the final course in architectural studies. The thesis is an independent, creative exercise where the presentation of the architectural knowledge acquired during the course of study - completed as part of the Diploma Design course and presented in public at the defence - demonstrates that the student has the knowledge and competences required for professional practice. The aim of the course is to demonstrate the student's ability to create individual conceptual and architectural designs.

In our specialisation, the Diploma Design course is closely linked with the course "Research Methodology - Diploma Project" and, in addition to the topics provided by the department, it is possible to develop individual topics that are also in line with the themes of the department and the specialisation. In the course of completing the Diploma Design course, the specialisation work part and the diploma project programme are closely linked, and the two are presented together at the defence.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQD01 (26)

**lecturer** / HORY Gergely PhD, SZABÓ Árpád DLA



## CONTEMPORARY CITY: URBAN FORM AND SPACES USAGE

Understanding the contemporary development of the inherited urban landscape is not about what to do, but how to think about what to do. The seminar focuses on the closed/open duality of the urban fabric because this qualitative dimension characterizes not only the physical context but is also strongly related to the social. On one hand, the degree of closeness/openness is one of the most important characteristics of every historical, modern, and contemporary urban form, and on the other hand, these physical forms influence or define the space usage within the city.

As international students have various cultural and educational backgrounds, the course uses the opportunity to learn from each other, to discover, and compare several urban case studies. The practical part facilitates this method by analyzing so-called “déjà vu” urban situations worldwide. The course introduces local and global components that shape the contemporary city and gives tools for further complex discovery related to urban design or research.

The double lessons are every second Friday afternoon.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ701 (3)

**tutor** / BENKŐ, Melinda PhD

**recommended semester** / 7th / 1st (MSc)



## SUSTAINABLE AND LIVABLE CITY

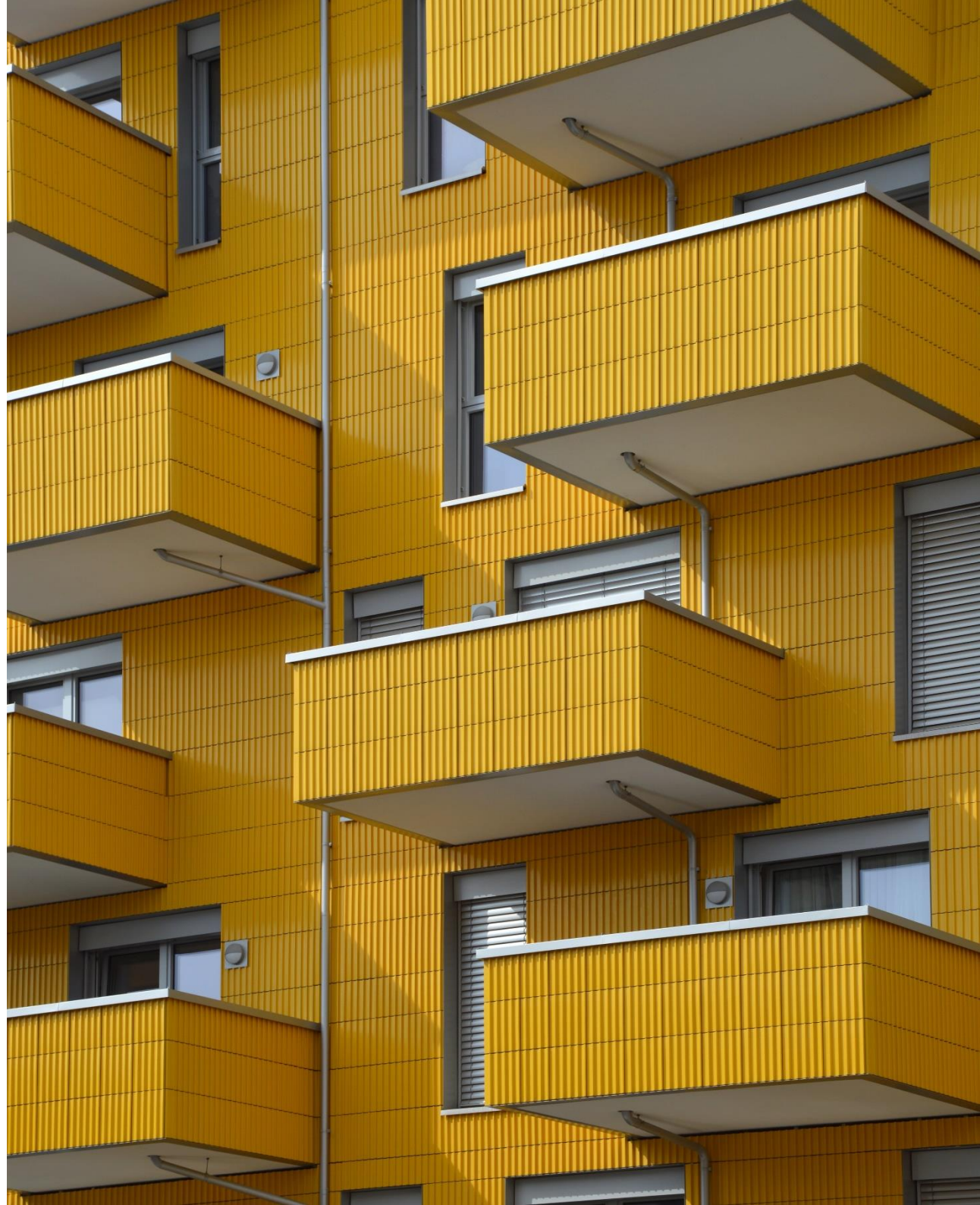
The primary aim of the course is to introduce architecture students to sustainability issues at the architectural and urban design scale, and to provide practical knowledge that will help them to apply theories to practical architectural and urban design tasks. In addition to the issues of livability and sustainability, the subject will address the holistic issues of climate change, possible strategies for addressing it and how it is reshaping our perception of cities and the built environment.

It will feature guest speakers from renowned authorities in the field. In addition to the theoretical lectures, a practical exercise will be carried out to assess a specific project (e.g. a complex plan) according to a rating system.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ801 (3)

**tutor** / SZABÓ Árpád DLA

**recommended semester** / 8th / 2nd (MSc)



## THE CITY & THE CITY

The subject summarises the urban design elements, activities, actions and tools previously learned and mastered in the department's compulsory and optional courses from the point of view of the city's inhabitants and users. "What is a city but people?" (W. Shakespeare)

The course looks at cities from the perspective of the users, the inhabitants, from a kind of internal point of view, trying to understand the nature of change and the role of local societies, how the same tool can have different effects and spatial imprints in different cities on different socio-economic grounds.

The subject examines the interaction between the physical environment and social and economic change in specific types of cities. For cities in different positions - geographic location, development, economic potential, social composition - it will examine the effects of each of these elements on change, whether identical or different, of course, not ignoring the different effects of climate change or technological development. It also attempts to capture the spirit and nature of cities by including the cultural context. In the seminar-like but interactive theoretical lessons, thematic summary analyses based on international literature are complemented by literary and film material that is representative of the cultural imprint of the cities under study.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ902

**lecturer** / ALFÖLDI György DLA

**recommended semester** / 9th / 3rd (MSc)



## HUNGARIAN CITIES, URBAN CULTURE AND PLANNING

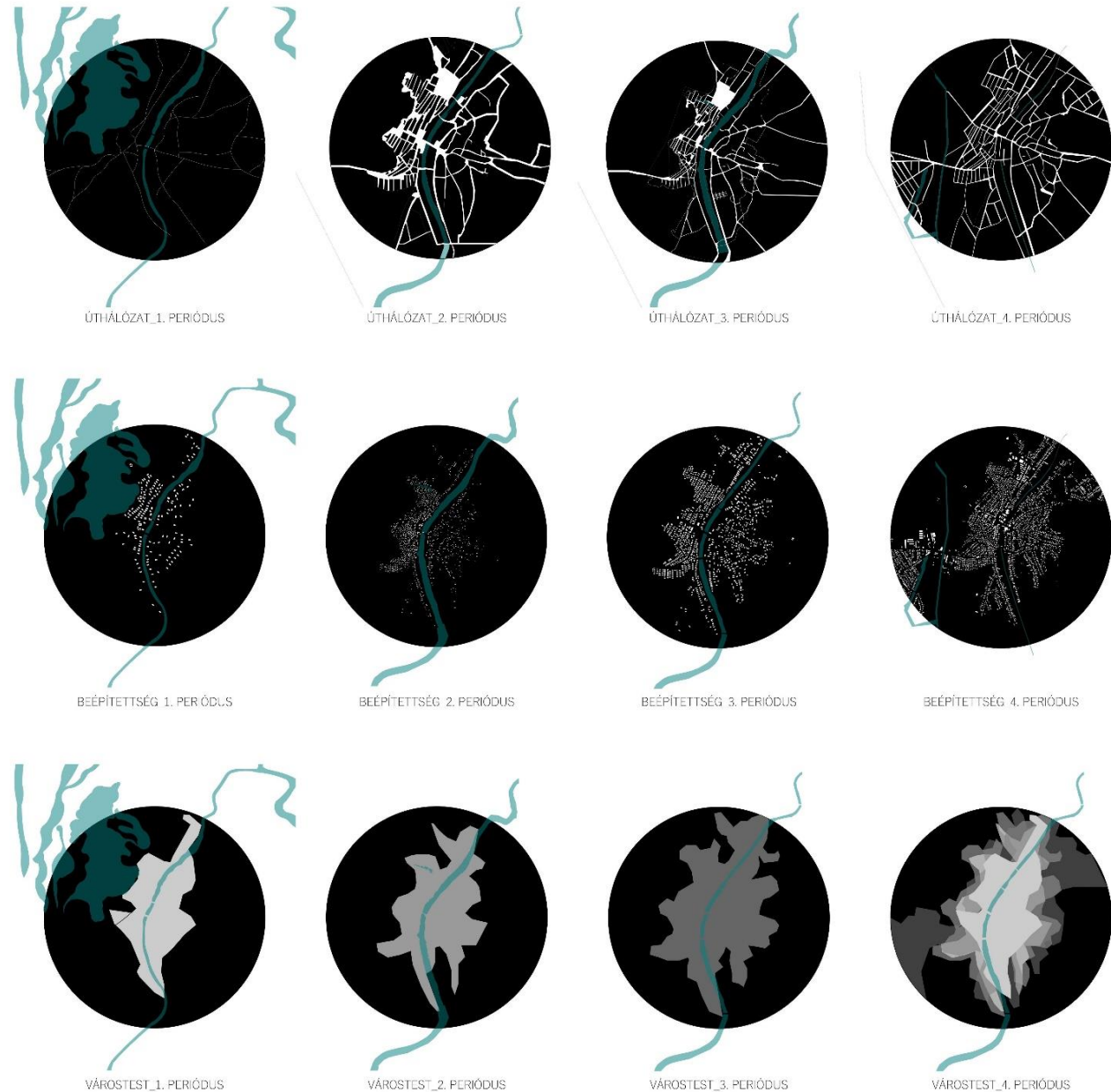
The aim of the course is to introduce students to the specific formation and development of the Hungarian settlement system through the different historical periods of urban growth.

Each era will be presented through the historical and social background, as well as the settlement establishment and development factors, such as the town-forming role of the environment, nationalities, religions and social stratification; and the Soviet influence on town planning. Among other things specific environment-forming activities and morphological, townscape and floor plan characteristics typical of Hungary will be discussed. During the semester, several (invited) lecturers will give presentations on the different topics, enriching the course.

Main topics: Geographical features of Hungary, Geography and Urban Space; Urban morphology; Modern recreational architecture on the Balaton Lakeside, Block of flats in Budapest, Urban architectural tendency during the State-socialism, Spatial patterns of urban tourism in Budapest;

code (credit) / BMEEPUIQ802 (3)

lecturer / KISSFAZEKAS Kornélia PhD



## CITIES OF THE WORLD

Course on current challenges of global urbanization with special focus on a small scale interventions in cities and suburban areas. Topics discussed: (1) how theoretical thinking on urban development changed in the context of global urbanization; (2) the impact of deindustrialization on urban development dynamics; (3) how politics and market forces drive the development of cities; (4) applying the principles of sustainability and resilience and the use of smart technologies in urban planning; (5) possible ways to enhance the overall quality of urban life with use of urban upcycling principles.

The course requires active participation of students. Self-managed research and design tasks are carried out in groups of three students (preferably from different countries and cities/settlements to facilitate transnational learning experience). Introductory tutorial is provided during the class meetings followed by work in groups. Each group prepares a research paper to be submitted on the 26th of November. The topic of the student coursework is to be selected from the following list of subjects. The exact focus and scope of the research paper shall be finalized during the course.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ703 (3)

**lecturer** / SOÓKI-TÓTH Gábor, VARGA Imre



## URBAN LANDSCAPE / GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ARCHITECTURE

The aim of the subject is the complex interpretation of the concept of the urban landscape, the search for connections between the concepts of landscape architecture, garden design and architecture. In the multi-scale methodology of the course, we examine the interpretation of the urban landscape as a community and ecological issue. We get to know contemporary horticultural and landscape architecture projects in the form of site visits and interactive presentations. At the various locations, it is possible to compare the viewpoints of architecture with the concepts of garden, open space and landscape design. The locations present different pixels of Budapest's historic urban landscape. The transformation of the historic urban landscape is examined through the concepts of reconstruction, rehabilitation, participation and conceptual landscapes. The semester assignment is also connected to this, which shows the personal interpretation of the topics.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ705 (3)

**lecturer** / WETTSTEIN Domonkos PhD





## URBAN DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS, PLANNING, MANAGEMENT

By broadening the horizons of urban design courses, „Urban development – analysis, planning, management” provides an insight into other urban sciences - urban geography, civil engineering, sociology, environmental sciences, management science, etc. - and shows their interrelationships in the urban space. Lectures in the serie are given by faculty members and invited lecturers: foreign academics, renowned experts in the given field. The topics will cover the most critical issues in urban development, such as

- urbanisation and the transformation of urban networks;
- adaptation to climate change;
- the transformation of urban mobility;
- housing issues and new forms of housing;
- water and stormwater management;
- new strategies for urban regeneration.

As a semester work, students will make a presentation analysing the state of one of the lecture topics in their home country/town and presenting an exemplary project on the field. Thus, the semester with a European focus will end with a broad international outlook: a selection of the best student presentations.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPUIQ702 (3)

**lecturer** / SZABÓ Julianna PhD



## URBAN ACTIVISM / COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EXPERIENCES IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The aim of the course is to enable students to become initiators of architectural interventions and to be capable of providing professional and practical assistance to real communities in shaping their own living environments and localities through self-initiated actions. The course presents the practice of participatory design based on community involvement, with a particular focus on the possibilities of participatory planning in urban public spaces. After analyzing relevant international examples, students will learn about the opportunities for actively involving various interest groups that use public spaces in the process of public space design. They will become familiar with international examples of community-based design and architectural activism, as well as relevant English-language literature, community financing, and the possibilities of community building. Throughout the semester, students will visit Budapest locations where activist groups, community planning, or other innovative urban activities are taking place. In the practical part of the course, students will work in groups to design and implement furniture and equipment for specific spaces and public areas used by specific communities, while simultaneously experimenting with the tools of participatory planning. The objective is to achieve interventions that have the greatest impact on a given public space using the least amount of resources.

**code (credit)** / BMEEPU1704 (3)

**lecturer** / KÁDÁR Bálint PhD



Contact:

- SZABÓ Árpád DLA – specialization / responsible  
szabo.arpad@epk.bme.hu

More infos:

- [www.urb.bme.hu](http://www.urb.bme.hu)

