Revitalizing Urban Communities is an advanced design course focused on urban retrofitting in downtown New Braunfels, Texas. Building on core urban theories and skills in hand drawing, 2D and 3D illustration, the course introduces in-depth research and analysis into design process. Throughout the course, storytelling and user experiences was emphasized focusing on urban sustainability and resilience.

Above: Design Module development, Nightscape rendering, and site analysis. Far Right: Still from Lumion, 3D model / animation. Right: Exploded axonometric

Open Air Market by Afsana Sharmin, graduate student.
Downtown Revitalization
Advanced Urban Design Studio
Process

Clockwise from Left:
Student collaboration in traditional design process, video conferencing with key partners for final presentation, studio-wise discussion for design framework development. Typical team work process.

Right: Student project Creek Greenway System Design. Michael Ross. Photo-rendered image with design programs and transverse section/elevations. First Place, Texas Tech Graduate Research Poster Competition
Urban Design Studio of 2016 comprised of 14 fourth year undergraduate and 5 graduate students examined “River East District”, the east side of downtown San Antonio, Texas, which has underserved low-income communities. The overall goal of the project was to revitalize the urban district with design measures and solutions that are creative, innovative, and proactive to address current challenges of lack of connectivity, flooding, and social segregation. The project began with understanding a broad context of the study area and went through a thorough research and in-depth analysis to identify the issues and opportunities inherent to the River East District. The projects emphasized the triple bottom line (TBL) framework for strategic redevelopment with the themes of connectivity, sustainability, and integration. Student design proposals encompass various concepts including urban agriculture, waterscape, landscape justice, economic revitalization, sense of public, open space reactivation, and Low Impact Development under the unified vision of rejuvenating the River East District.

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Salado Creek Timeline

- 1978: Creek needed to be deepened to allow for floodplain
- 1995: Creek reoriented to be flood-proof
- 2016: Creek restored to natural state

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Salado Creek mitigation and ecological rehabilitation

- Salado Creek is a major tributary of the San Antonio River that is degraded by flood control structures and downstream impoundment.

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Creating Economic Hub Through Urban Revitalization

- Hank Oliver.
Envisioning Community of Ecological and Social Sustainability
Urban Design Studio
History + Food + Art

Below:
Promoting Neighborhood Identity by Celebrate the Community’s History. Corridor Development Plan. Idalia Vera

Right:
Let It Grow: Willow Park Coliseum Neighborhood Food Revitalization and Community Building.
Final proposal poster by Natalie Campbell

Project Description
East San Antonio has had its share of neglect for communities. This project focuses on the Food Desert concept with considerations on the most isolated and lowest income neighborhoods in the city area.

Goals & Objectives
1. Envisioning Community of Ecological and Social Sustainability
   Urban Design Studio
   History + Food + Art

Pedestrian Shed Study
Using the average pedestrian shed of 1.5 miles, urban streets can be reconstructed on the basis of current and potential future development. The goal is to expand the shed to the most isolated and lowest income neighborhoods in the city area.

Conceptual Ideas

Food Establishment Distribution
The city has many vacant and underutilized properties in the Food Desert. This use goes against zoning laws and commercial regulations designed to encourage new commercial and food establishments that are protected benefits.

Ground Store - Community Center - Gardens by Idalia

Linkage: A new link is an hope that the low-income property to develop will not be permitted to develop the Food Desert. This use goes against zoning laws, and commercial regulations designed to encourage new commercial and food establishments that are protected benefits.

Ground Store - Community Center - Gardens by Idalia

Texas Ranger Company
7 Mart
Elmendorf Food Mart

Corridor - Food Desert

- Poor pedestrian shed
- Largest open spaces in Willow Park
- Entrance to Willow Park
- Most centrally located
- Entrance to Willow Park
- Entrance over 12 Willow Park
- Entrance to the focus area

- Community to a Food Shed (Can be relocated)
- Has multiple on-site buildings
- Enhances the food access of the neighborhood
- Large area connection to other areas outside of the neighborhood
- Walkable area of Willow Park
- Entrance to Willow Park
- Entrance outside the focus area
Back from the Grave: Reanimating the River East District through Cemetery Tourism. Jared Horsford

Above: Analyzing the Urban Fabric - infrastructure, physical texture, street grid, TIRZ district, vacancies, economic catalyst sites. Integrated axonometric analysis diagram.

Left: Still from Lumion 3D model

Below: Hand sketches + marker painting

Urban Design Studio
Tradition // Transition

Envisioning Community of Ecological and Social Sustainability

Junction Park. Evan Cuyler

Below: Site Plan for junction park as a connecting point for adjacent neighborhoods, downtown, the River Walk, and commercial districts

Right: Stills from Lumion 3D model
Urban Connectivity
Regional Planning and Design Studio
Sixth Semester Core

Connection study focused on three main areas: green space, parks, outdoor social areas, public recreation, tracks, gyms, sports fields, healthy food providers, grocery stores.

Far Right: Healthy Proximity. Providing Green Space, Recreational Facilities, and Healthy Food within Walking Distance. GIS Analysis by Blane Potts
While new urbanism is largely programmed to create a contemporary living environment, it is important to remember to contextualize these developments to fit the landscape and serve a practical, responsible, civil purpose. Addressing the needs of a development must be done with careful consideration given to the social needs of the region. It is crucial to preserve the natural beauty and environmental context of a site while effectively retrofitting the new with the existing. Dissecting Albuquerque’s environmental, ecological, economic, social, and aesthetic needs was paramount in creating The Sawmill District Master Plan, and making it the municipal and regional destination that contrives an experience unlike any other.
Hopeful Homeless Housing
Regional Planning and Design Studio

Merit Award
Texas ASLA 2018 Student Design Competition

The homeless population within the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico is a hidden distress. There are limited amounts of resources available to people and families suffering from homelessness within the city of Santa Fe and state of New Mexico. In the traditional way of thinking, homeless people are given a job, but nowhere to live. While the sentiment is there, this idea is flawed. It is very difficult for a homeless person to keep a job without a place to live. They cannot wash their work uniform, get a driver’s license or any other important paperwork, or even take a shower without a residence. This program encourages a newer concept called housing first. This provides stability in the form of housing from the start. Once these people have that stability, they can find work, get a driver’s license, and take care of many needs they would otherwise not be able to fulfill. We are proposing a series of staged living and mixed income communities within a location that provides basic amenities and close proximity to city transportation. This staged living will allow members of the homeless community to work their way through three housing types with the option to buy or transition back into the city of Santa Fe once they have a steady income and greater stability. The general public will be allowed to live in the community as well to encourage interaction and growth between the homeless and non-homeless. The overarching goal is to not create permanent housing, but to encourage and allow for homeless people to get back on their feet. Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales said in an interview that HE “envisions a campus where those in need of housing can receive an array of care — from temporary housing to medical or substance abuse treatment — through a partnership of community programs.”
Sustainable Future of Border Environment
Urban Design
New BLA 4-Year Curriculum: Fourth Semester Core

FOLLOWING FLOWS //
Framing Urban Ecology and Social Connections

ARROYO
STREETSCAPE
CARVING
Following Flows: Framing Urban Ecology and Social Connections. Grant Huber

Master plan (left), perspective images (bottom left), 3D illustrations on hydrological revivals (above).
TECHLLANO: Design for Campus Storm Water Management
2018 EPA Campus RainWorks Challenge Quarterfinalist Entry
Interdisciplinary Team: Olivia Ross, Leah Kimberly, Afsana Sharmin, Thanh Tran, McKenzie Aubuchon, Brennon Holbrook
Role: Lead Faculty Advisor