

European Master of Science

Transforming City Regions

Semester Handbook

Winter Semester 2026/2027

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Foto: Michel-Kitenge

Dear Reader,

Launched in the winter semester 2019/20, the English-taught Master's programme TRANSFORMING CITY REGIONS (TCR) at RWTH Aachen University continues to be highly sought after by students from Germany, Europe and around the world. This reflects the programme's well-chosen focus on international transformation processes. Students from various disciplines—architecture, urban planning, landscape planning, civil engineering, geography, and cultural studies, among others—have been successful in addressing the challenges of urban design and regional development. These achievements are particularly noteworthy given the programme's emphasis on an international, multidisciplinary and practical environment, which has been consistently praised for its ability to prepare students for the complexities of contemporary urban change.

The programme has actively engaged with the major challenges of urbanization, such as re-urbanization, suburbanization and the restructuring of entire regions, including the lignite mining region of the Rhineland. It has become clear that, on the one hand, these transformative processes are best addressed through the application of well-designed instruments, concepts and strategies, and, on the other hand, that many of the future challenges cannot be addressed solely in a local context. Instead, an international exchange of experience, as facilitated by TCR, is essential.

In today's globalized and increasingly interconnected world, the knowledge gained from understanding international transformation processes is invaluable. It not only opens new career opportunities for graduates but also thoroughly prepares them for future challenges in urban and regional planning. The programme's ongoing commitment to improving its curriculum—integrating international perspectives, promoting interdisciplinarity and emphasizing practical applications—ensures that its graduates are well equipped to make a meaningful contribution to the field.

The course offers presented here show how students will engage with processes of transformation at different spatial scales—from neighbourhoods to cities to entire regions—and how they will successfully link spatial and strategic levels in their work.

I hope you enjoy exploring this semester's handbook.

Prof. Christa Reicher

Head of the international TCR programme





People

The international teaching and research network Transforming City Regions is based at RWTH Aachen University and led by Prof. Christa Reicher, head of the Chair and Institute of Urban Design at the Faculty of Architecture. The network includes partners from academia and practice and aims to advance the level of knowledge of regional transformation processes in post-industrial areas within the framework of an international comparative action.

Coordination

Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Christa Reicher

Programme Director
reicher@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de



Foto: Michel-Kitenge

Dr. Fabio Bayro Kaiser

Programme Coordination and Departmental Advisor
bayrokaiser@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de



Dr. Stefano Cozzolino

Lecturer
stefano.cozzolino@ils-forschung.de



Dr. Javier Ostos Prieto

Lecturer
javier.ostos.prieto@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de



Elif Ertemiz

Research Assistant
ertemiz@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de



Teaching Core



Prof. Dr. Jakob Beetz

Chair for Design Computation (DC)
Module(s): Territorial analysis and digital tools

j.beetz@caad.arch.rwth-aachen.de



Prof. Dr. Stefan Böschen

Chair of Society and Technology (SoTec)
Module(s): Changing Societies and Economies

stefan.boeschen@humtec.rwth-aachen.de



Foto: Sirtoli

Prof. em. Dr.-Ing. Andrea Haase

Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism
Module(s): Urban Transformation I & II, Elective courses

a.haase@raumstruktur.de



Prof. Dr. Agnes Förster

Chair for Planning Theory (PT)
Module(s): Multiple scales of urban planning and design, Elective courses, Impromptu courses

foerster@pt.rwth-aachen.de



Prof. Dr. Tobias Kuhnimhof

Chair and Institute of Urban and Transport Planning (ISB)
Module(s): Research Module in urban and regional transformation

kuhnimhof@isb.rwth-aachen.de

Prof. Dr. Michael Leuchner

Physical Geography and Climatology (GEO)
Module(s): Elective courses

michael.leuchner@geo.rwth-aachen.de



Prof. Dr. Frank Lohrberg

Chair for Landscape Planning (LA)
Module(s): Evolving environment. Transforming landscapes

lohrberg@la.rwth-aachen.de



i Transforming City Regions

is a European master programme that integrates many disciplines in order to educate professionals being able to respond to the challenges of evolving European territories of different scales with respect for the environment, using the technical excellence and a solution-oriented approach, understanding the economic efficiency and respecting social needs.

General Information

Transforming City Regions (TCR) is a unique, multidisciplinary master programme with a strong focus on the European dimension of territorial development. The degree programme is taught in English and is designed to respond to the environmental, social, technological, and economic challenges which European cities and regions are facing. TCR takes a technically advanced and solution-oriented approach so that you can understand economic efficiency and identify societal needs.

The TCR programme is one of the few programmes that have been newly designed at RWTH Aachen University to respond to European territorial challenges. The special focus is on a project and design-oriented education that equips graduates not only with up-to-date and solid knowledge, but also with the tools and methods to help them tackle the problems of Europe's changing cities and regions. Despite its clear multidisciplinary orientation, the engineering and design-oriented profile of the graduates is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Faculty of Architecture at RWTH Aachen University and also gives the programme a strong identity.

Key Facts

Degree:
Master of Science RWTH

Start of Studies:
Winter Semester

Standard Period of Studies:
4 semesters

ECTS Credits:
120

Language:
English

Goals and Competences



Profound multidisciplinary knowledge



Scientific and solution-oriented attitude



Analysis of complex urban problems and systems



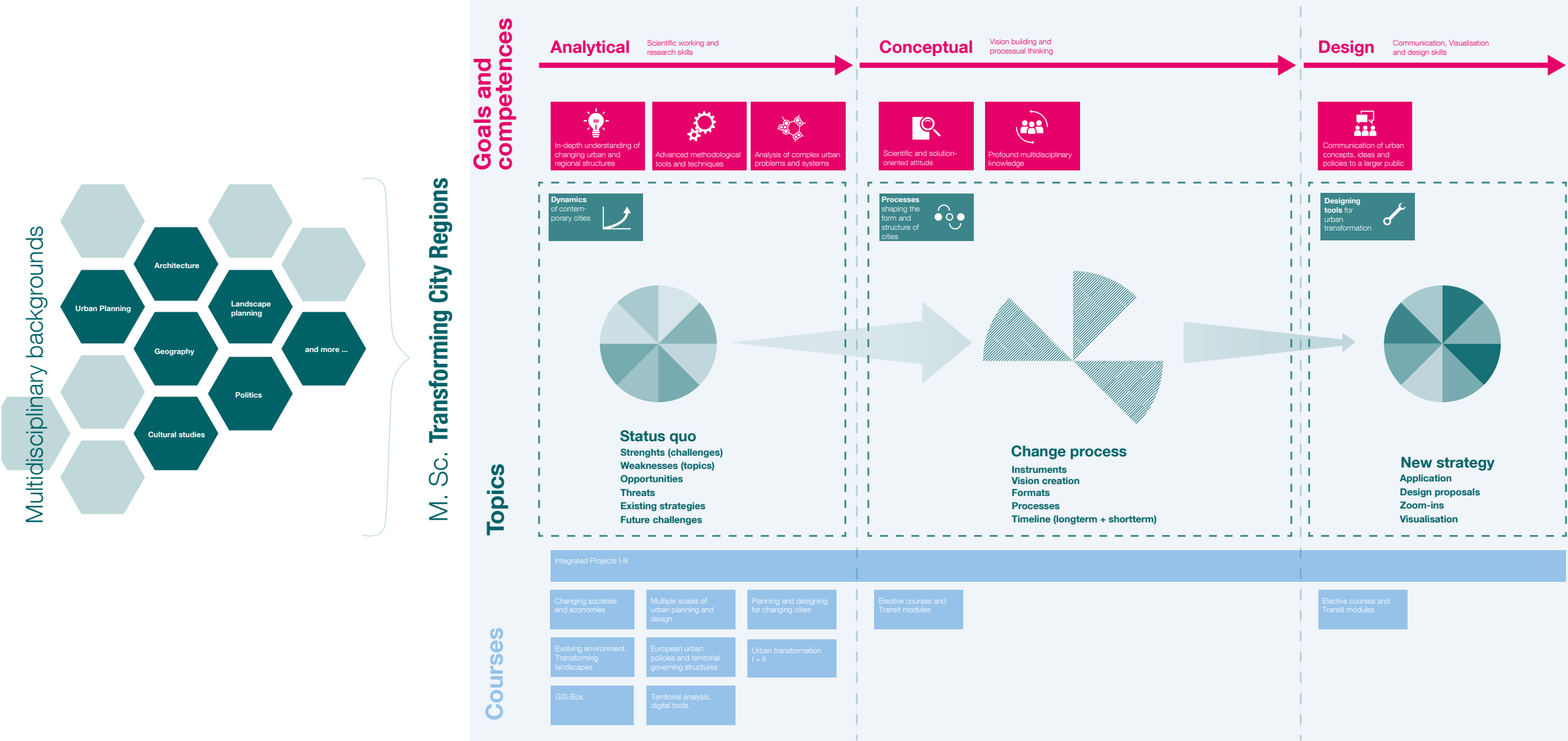
In-depth understanding of changing urban and regional structures

Programme Structure

The degree programme is structured in 4 semesters, with the last semester being dedicated to the Master thesis. The core of the master programme is formed by three major integrated project works during the first three semester. The increasing territorial complexity and issues with different structural and content-related priorities and the link with the foundations of other disciplines should lead to integrative and conceptual thinking.

These projects are characterised by a broad spectrum of methodological, procedural, morphological, landscape architectural, ecological, legal, and economic aspects. The remaining ECTS are available through compulsory modules, elective courses, research modules, field trips/impromptu courses and transit courses.

If you have a degree in urban design, urban planning, urban studies, spatial planning, regional planning, landscape architecture, architecture, transport planning, environmental engineering, urban geography, urban ecology or urban governance, this degree programme is particularly suitable for you.



Curriculum Framework

The programme consists of a wide range of courses covering current topics of urban planning and design. Within four semesters the students learn theoretical backgrounds and methodological skills. The knowledge is applied in three different integrated projects, as well as the master thesis. There are several elective courses to be chosen from within the faculty and the further pool of RWTH wide courses.

Core Courses

Elective Compulsory Courses

Elective Courses

Semester 1

Winter Semester

Urban Transformation I

2SWS / 3CP

Planning & Design for
Changing Cities

2SWS / 3CP

Evolving Environment.
Transforming Landscapes

2SWS / 3CP

Impromptu
Courses

0,5SWS / 1,5CP

Impromptu
Courses

0,5SWS / 1,5CP

Field Trip

2SWS / 3CP

Integrated Project I:
Transforming Urban Structure

4SWS / 15CP

Semester 2

Summer Semester

Urban Transformation II

2SWS / 3CP

Changing Societies & Economies

2SWS / 3CP

Territorial Analysis, Digital Tools

2SWS / 3CP

European Urban Policies &
Territorial Governing Structures

2SWS / 3CP

Research Module in Urban and Regional Transformation*

2SWS / 6CP

Integrated Project II:
Evolution of Functional
Urban Areas

4SWS / 15CP

Semester 3

Winter Semester

Multiple Scales of
Urban Planning & Design

2SWS / 3CP

Elective Courses

2SWS / 3CP

Elective Courses

2SWS / 3CP

Transit

0SWS / 3CP

Integrated Project III:
Networked Urban Systems
in Europe

4SWS / 15CP

Semester 4

Summer Semester

Master Thesis
Project Work & Presentation
of the Thesis

0,5SWS / 30CP

*This field of study may last 1 or 2 semesters. In any case, it is worth 6 CP.



Compulsory Modules

The compulsory modules or core courses focus on dynamics of contemporary cities, the processes shaping the form and structure of cities, and designing tools for urban transformation. The knowledge provided by a multidisciplinary teaching staff provides knowledge, tools, and methodologies to respond to challenges of evolving European territories while being aware of different spatial aspects such as social, economic, and ecological ones.



Urban Transformation I

City Portraits

Module Responsible

Prof Christa Reicher,
Chair of Urban Design and Institute for
Urban Design and European Urbanism

Faculty

Prof. em Dr. Andrea Haase

Dates

Thursdays, 11:00 - 12:30, SG 301

Examination Date

04.02.2027

Examination Format

Exercise (Map analysis/ text) and digi-
tal/oral presentation

3 ECTS Points	30
2 SWS	12

Course Content

This course introduces by lectures and related steps of the exercise basic understandings of „Cultural urban Landscapes“ and their „Spaces“. It considers “Urban Changes” relative to major periods of urban growth in their international historical classification. It defines “Urban Structures” relative to the local conditions of topography, geography, economy and to the politics and socio-cultural influences on guiding Urban Development and Urban Transformation per time and place. It distinguishes classically different categories for types of “Urban Structure”, their growth patterns, their structural characteristics and long-term values.

It invites to understand present conditions for urban transformation different from preceding industrial conditions of urban development - since the upcoming philosophies of the Club of Rome after the second industrial crisis in Europe (1973). It opens up the critical view onto “modernity” relative to the historically inherent conditions and philosophies in the “making professions” (architecture, urban and landscape design, product design and arts), relative to the main three periods of “Modern Movement”, aiming to overcome the respectively historical ways of “modern” (re-)production per period. It founds a basic understandings of structural conditions for qualitative urban growth by urban transformation on the philosophies of Henri Lefebvre and Bill Hillier (space) and Jacques Ranciere (arts), based on the “aesthetics of use and form” as values of usability, changeability, readability and robustness in everyday working and living condition.

Adaptive reuse is introduced as the late industrial perspective in architecture, urban design, transport innovations, (green and de-central) infrastructure and in innovative conservation policies, replacing industrial patterns of quantitative urban growth. “Landscape urbanism” is regarded as a historical movement in consequence of the manifestos of the Club of Rome with major focus on the continuous update of a maturing “Practice of Urban Design”, allowing for the socio-cultural meaning of space instead of functional

values. This outlook includes a continued consideration of “sustainability” as “re-generative cultures”. “Common ground” is distinguished from “sacred spaces”, giving respect to the differentiated context of the urban fabric with a range of spatial categories with respective needs for the preservation and conservation of the tangible and intangible heritage and inherited monuments.

Learning Objectives

The students’ home-town in the surrounding region is the object of a case-study about urban growth patterns by map-analysis and notes from personal memories. Major steps of the task: Time-line of origin and historical influences; Definition of type of urban structure and major characteristics of morphologies. Identification and localization of historical and contemporary urban changes (massive/ small spatial/ lack of ...). Principle sketches illustrating ongoing processes of the land-market (case of a selected morphology) and needs for counter-balancing the exploitation of natural and man-made resources (scales of morphology/ whole town). The understanding of „structural frameworks“ for urban transformation over time, assuring the continuity of the characteristics of a city with „generic“ quality (see Rem Koolhaas, „The Generic City“) is introduced as a valid strategy, bound to the understanding of a “Third landscape” (see Gilles Clement), preparing for healthy living and working conditions by appropriate frameworks for inter-connecting mankind including economy and culture with soil, climate, flora and fauna.



© Prof Dr Andrea Haase

Planning and Design for Changing Cities (Complex Cities, Self-organisation and Planning)

Module Responsible
Prof Christa Reicher,
Chair of Urban Design and Institute for
Urban Design and European Urbanism

Faculty
Dr. Stefano Cozzolino (ISL)

Dates
Friday, 14:00-16:00, SG 301
First meeting: 23.10.2026

Examination Date
Written exam (individual): 04.12.2026
Case study report submission:
19.02.2027

Examination Format
Written exam (individual)
Short report

Course Capacity
35

3 ECTS Points 30

2 SWS 2

Course Content
Cities are complex living systems. They change and adapt due to both planned interventions and spontaneous dynamics. Such dynamics are the product of place-based actions and global changes occurring outside the reach of planning intentions. Jane Jacobs labelled this phenomenon “a problem of organised complexity,” emphasising the role of self-coordinating patterns in urban realm mechanisms.

Spontaneous configurations are unavoidable in cities. Sometimes, they give rise to dynamics that planners try to mitigate; at other times, they generate beneficial dynamics that enable the use of polycentric creative forces. How can planners relate to these dynamics?

Innovative studies stress the role of flexible and adaptive approaches in dealing with uncertain development scenarios and open-ended evolution of cities and neighbourhoods. In this new light, planning implications require ad hoc considerations and an understanding of multiple “conditions.”

This course will untangle some of the key conditions informing the interplay between planning and emergent socio-spatial configurations. It focuses on fundamental concepts such as action, self-organisation, property, rules, adaptability, urban beauty and masterplanning (with and for urban complexity).

In this module, students will engage with:

- Complexity theories of cities and the main principles of urban change (Why is the city a complex system? What are the main driving forces of urban emergent configurations?)

- The interplay between planning and spontaneity (Why do cities evolve in largely unintentional ways? Why are certain urban areas more spontaneous than others?)
- The main ethical and technical aspects connected to these issues (When is a spontaneous configuration just or unjust? How can planners design and regulate an open-ended and uncertain future?)

- Learning Objectives**
The main objectives of the course are to:
- Introduce an understanding of complexity thinking in the analysis and design of the urban realm.
 - Explore different planning and design conditions that shape the long-term evolution of urban areas.
 - Explore methodological design and planning approaches that consider the challenges of adaptability and self-organisation.
 - Understand the nature of certain spontaneous transformation processes (e.g., distribution of uses, population clustering, self-regeneration processes).
 - Discuss critical ethical questions concerning the interplay between planning and spontaneity.

Reading recommendations
Cozzolino & Moroni (2024) Action, Property and Beauty: Planning with and for Emergent Urban Complexity. Routledge, London.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003454304/action-property-beauty-stefano-cozzolino-stefano-moroni>



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Multiple Scales of Urban Planning and Design

Module Responsible

Prof Dr Agnes Förster,
Chair of Planning Theory and Urban
Development

3 ECTS Points

30

2 SWS

12

Faculty

Nina Berding

Dates

Wednesday, 14.10.2026, 14:00-15:30,
online
GIS Tutorial:
Wednesday, 04.11.2026, 13:00-17:00,
online
Interim presentations:
Thursday, 17.12.2026, 13:00-18:00,
online

Course Content

The GIS-Box collects and provides knowledge, resources and tools to visualize and analyze spatial data. In this module, students will acquire and apply knowledge and skills in mapping specific issues on different spatial scales. What rhythms do neighborhoods, cities, or regions follow? Mapping physical, functional and procedural dimensions of space will help students to visualize and analyze spatial rhythms and processes of transformation. The Euregio Maas-Rhine will serve as a common spatial point of reference. While much of the content will be for self-study, there will be opportunities to engage in a discourse with peers and scholars. In the end, students will present maps and complete an online exam to showcase both their technical abilities and their theoretical knowledge of spatial analysis.

Examination Date

Final exam:
17.02.2027, 13:00-14:00, Dynexite

Learning Objectives

- Understanding processes of transformation on multiple scales
- Finding and managing spatial data
- Using basic functions of the software QGIS



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Elective compulsory modules

The increasing territorial complexity and issues with different structural and content-related priorities and the link with the foundations of other disciplines should lead to integrative and conceptual thinking. The elective compulsory courses are characterised by a broad spectrum of methodological, procedural, morphological, landscape architectural, ecological, legal, and economic aspects.



Integrated Project I

Transforming Urban Structure (Universities as social infrastructure for climate resilience and action)

Module Responsible	15 ECTS Points	30
Prof Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism	4 SWS	12

Faculty	Course Content
Marc Maurer Nicole Maurer Lemmens	

Dates
Mondays, 13:00-17:00, (Heerlen)

Examination date
TBA

Examination format
Oral presentations, and research & design report

This design studio is part of the ongoing Trans Regio Express research, which investigates railway stations as strategic hubs within a cross-border Daily Urban System in South Limburg and the wider Meuse-Rhine region. The project builds on Limburg Centraal, which places Limburg’s major railway stations at the centre of integrated strategies for mobility, housing and urban development.

This semester focuses on Heerlen Central Station. As one of the key stations within Limburg Centraal and Trans Regio Express, Heerlen Central provides a unique testing ground for connecting regional ambitions with local urban transformation.

Students will investigate how the station area can become a stronger spatial and programmatic connector between Heerlen city centre and Heerlen-Noord. The assignment addresses pedestrian and cycling connections, public space, housing, mixed-use development, landscape, knowledge functions and the relationship between mobility infrastructure and urban life – developing a healthy neighbourhood.

The former CBS building, a prominent Brutalist structure north of the railway, forms a strategic element within the study area. Students will explore its potential for transformation and adaptive reuse and its possible role in strengthening the connection between the station Heerlen Centraal, the Citycenter and Heerlen-Noord.

Through regional analysis, fieldwork, mapping, stakeholder exchange and design-based research, students will develop spatial strategies connecting the ambitions of Limburg Centraal, Trans Regio Express, Heerlen Kennisstad and Heerlen-Noord at the scale of the station area.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- understand the relationship between Limburg Centraal, Trans Regio Express and the cross-border Daily Urban System;
 - zooming in and zooming out: analyse a station area simultaneously at regional, urban and architectural scales;
 - identify spatial barriers and opportunities between Heerlen Central, the city centre and Heerlen-Noord;
 - develop integrated strategies for mobility, housing, mixed-use development, public space and healthy urban connections;
 - understand how knowledge institutions and employment can contribute to station-area development and Heerlen Kennisstad;
 - evaluate the transformation and adaptive reuse potential of existing structures, including the Brutalist CBS building;
 - use mapping, scenarios and spatial design as research tools;
 - incorporate local conditions and stakeholder perspectives into design strategies;
 - connect site-specific interventions to broader urban, regional and cross-border development objectives.
- Conceptual design
 - Storytelling



Integrated Project III

The Danube Limes. Frontier, territory and spatial organisation in Europe.

Module Responsible Prof Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism	15 ECTS Points	30
Faculty Dr. F. Javier Ostos Prieto	4 SWS	12
Dates Mondays, 14.00-18.00, SG 301		
Examination Date 01.03.2027 (subject to change)		
Examination Format Oral presentations		
Capacity 30 students		

Course Content

What happens when a frontier that once divided an empire becomes a landscape that connects Europe?

The project aims to reinterpret the Limes as a linear cultural landscape and territorial structure that still influences spatial organization today. Students will explore how this historic border system can be understood as a framework for contemporary territorial thinking—connecting archaeology, landscape, infrastructure, and cross-regional identity. By examining the Limes as both a historic boundary and a shared European heritage landscape, the course will address questions of borders, territory, and cultural continuity. From a regional perspective, the project investigates how the Limes corridor can be understood as a sequence of nodes and landscapes, linking archaeological sites, towns, natural areas, and cultural institutions. Students will explore how these elements form a spatial narrative across the territory and how the historic border can be reinterpreted through contemporary design and planning strategies.

Learning Objectives

The goal of the project is to develop a vision for the Danube Limes. Students will explore how a former roman imperial border can be reimaged as a contemporary framework for cultural heritage, landscape development, or regional connectivity. The course will encourage participants to think critically about the meaning of borders—historically as instruments of control and today as spaces of encounter, memory, and cooperation.

Working from a regional scale, students will analyse the spatial structure of the Limes and identify strategic nodes. The course encourages students

to think across scales and disciplines, using design as a tool to reveal the Limes as a shared European territory and to articulate new relationships between countries, territory, and contemporary life.

Reading recommendations

Chokhachian, A., Santucci, D., Auer, T. (2017) A Human-Centered Approach to Enhance Urban Resilience, Implications and Application to Improve Outdoor Comfort in Dense Urban Spaces. Buildings 2017/7, p. 113. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings7040113>

ICCROM / ICOMOS / IUCN (2013). Managing cultural world heritage. World Heritage Resource Manual. Paris: UNESCO <https://whc.unesco.org/document/125839>

Karavas, J., & Hanscam, E. (2023). Introduction: The Lower Danube Limes: Recentring a Roman Frontier Province. In J. Karavas & E. Hanscam (Eds.), The Roman Lower Danube Frontier: Innovations in Theory and Practice (pp. 1–12). Archaeopress. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.15136061.5>

Loorbach, D. (2010). Transition Management for Sustainable Development: A Prescriptive, Complexity-Based Governance Framework. Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, 23(2), 161-183. <https://acortar.link/aHBXkJ>

Mrđić, N. & Golubović, S. (2013) Danube Limes as a Unesco World Heritage Site. Arheologija i prirodne nauke, 9, 101-118. https://doi.org/10.18485/arhe_apn.2013.9.9

Turvey, K. (ed.) (2016) Understanding World Heritage in Europe and North America. In World Heritage reports, 43. Paris.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre, documentation for Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Lower German Limes / Danube Limes (Germany). <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7959/>



Danube in Belgrade ©Javier Ostos Prieto

Integrated Project III

Stitching the Urban Fabric Beyond Borders: Towards a Liveable Cohesive Region through Sustainable Regional Development

Module Responsible	15 ECTS Points	30
Prof Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism	4 SWS	12

Faculty
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maram Tawil
Diana Enab

Dates
Mondays, 10.00-14.00, SG 301

Examination Date
22.02.2027

Course Content
The EUREGIO Meuse-Rhein Region is one of the densest regions with provinces meeting across borders in Europe. The region embraces the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Liège, the Dutch region of South Limburg including the city of Maastricht and the German districts at the triangle including mainly the city of Aachen. It covers a total area of 10,470 km² and has a population of 3.8 million and approximately 250,000 businesses. Around half of the population lives in Belgium, one-third in Germany, and one-fifth in the Netherlands.

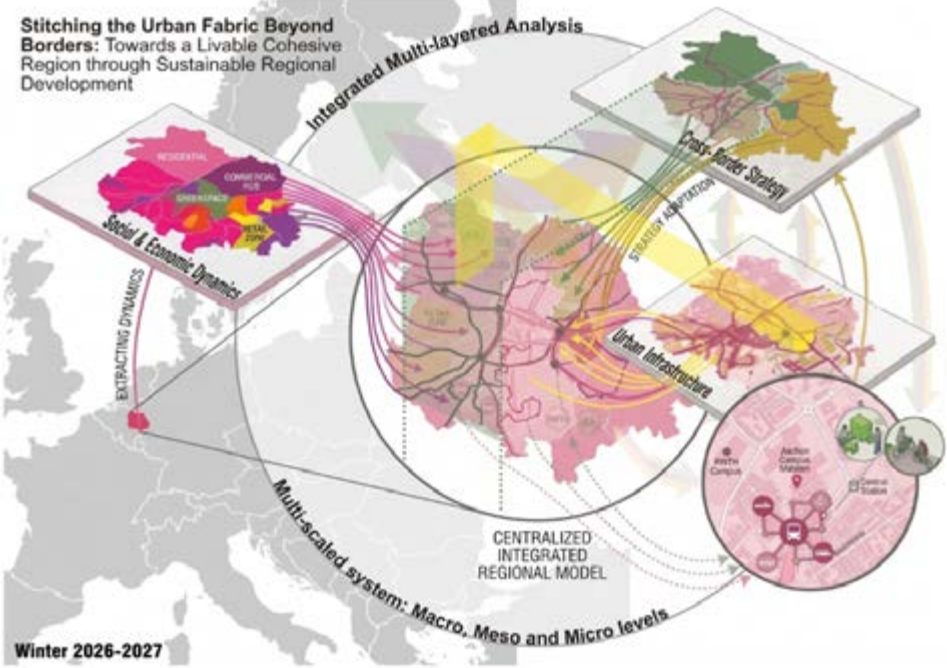
The region enjoys potential ingredients starting with the rich landscape of educational resources and institutions to enjoying a high level of interregional collaboration that enables flow of businesses and mobility networks. One of the main pillars of richness of the region is the adjacency of its cities to surrounding empowering structures such as the continuity from Aachen to the Rheinische's Revier for instance. This increases the centrality of the region and anchors its importance in the economic flow between the countries Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium.

The goal of the project is to create a vision of a “Stitched Meuse Rhein region” between the Netherland, Germany and Belgium. Due to certain persistent challenges whether economic, cultural or legal, the region still is not developed to it full integration. To this end, the participants will be urged to work strategically towards social, economic and cultural nodes and zones, while thinking about the meaning of borders and its impact on public space within a liveable cohesive environment. From the macro scale, the network, the project will focus on the creation of thematically appropriate systems within an all-connecting multilayered developments. The work will further

its impact on mesa level, the interface between the borders and its impact down to the micro level, were, focal points will be detailed, providing zoom-in spots for a better understanding of the structure.

Learning Objectives
At the end of the course students would be able to develop and manage a design and solution-oriented project of a multiregional scale. The students will achieve to understand transformation processes from a city scale to cross border content and its economic and social impact for a cohesive liveable environment. The students will demonstrate that they can work in groups and are able to analyse current situations, develop visions and scenarios to make a full project proposal on a defined challenge and vision. The students will work in teams to develop their soft skills in communication, design thinking and public presentation and discussion.

Reading recommendations
<https://www.drielandenpark.info/en/gebiet/>
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10657-010-9192-9>
<https://nrb.rwth-aachen.de>
<https://www.urban-initiative.eu/ia-cities/heerlen/about-projects>
<https://regionaachen.de/euregio/grenzueberschreitende-foerderung/inter-reg-maas-rhein/>



Research Module

Cities of the Past. UNESCO perspectives

Module Responsible
Prof Christa Reicher,
Chair of Urban Design and Institute for
Urban Design and European Urbanism

6 ECTS Points	30
2 SWS	12

Faculty
Dr F. Javier Ostos Prieto

Dates
Wednesdays, 16:00-18:00, SG 301

Examination Date
10.02.2027 (subject to change)

Examination Format
Oral presentation

Capacity
6-12 students

Course Content
This course explores how UNESCO World Heritage influences the planning and development of historic cities. Using Córdoba and Granada, in Spain, as key case studies, we will examine their rich Islamic heritage and the challenges of protecting historic urban landscapes while responding to contemporary needs. Particular attention will be given to Buffer Zones, urban regulations, and the tensions between conservation, modernization, sustainability, and development. Through these examples, students will discover how heritage can contribute to creating resilient and sustainable cities. The course invites students to explore a central question: How can we preserve the past while designing better cities for the future?

Learning Objectives
The main objective of this course is to equip students with the knowledge, tools, and methodologies needed to analyse, manage, and protect urban heritage through urban planning. By studying the morphology, historical development, and urban and heritage characteristics of cities, students will develop their own critical criteria for assessing historic urban environments. The course will also enable students to apply these skills in a professional context by developing heritage protection and management strategies that respond to contemporary urban needs. Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding buildings within their wider urban context and developing proposals that balance heritage conservation, urban development, and sustainable transformation.

Reading recommendations

ICCROM / ICOMOS / IUCN (2013). Managing cultural world heritage. World Heritage Resource Manual. Paris: UNESCO <https://whc.unesco.org/document/125839>

Martin, O. & Piatti, G. (ed.) (2009) World Heritage and Buffer Zones. In World Heritage papers, 25. Davos. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/series/25>

Ostos-Prieto, F.-J., et al. (2026). Urban Heritage After War Destruction: Heritage Dynamics in the Buffer Zone of Aachen Cathedral. Architecture, 6(3), <https://doi.org/10.3390/architecture6030114>

Rey Pérez, J. et al. (2025) The identification of heritage attributes and values in World Heritage: the Tajo de San Pedro in the context of the Alhambra, Generalife and Albayzín (Spain). Built Heritage, 9 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43238-025-00182-3>

Turvey, K. (ed.) (2016) Understanding World Heritage in Europe and North America. In World Heritage reports, 43. Paris. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244421>



Mosque-Cathedral in Córdoba (left) and Alhambra in Granada (right) ©Javier Ostos Prieto

Research Module

Swimmable Cities

Module Responsible

Prof Christa Reicher,
Chair of Urban Design and Institute for
Urban Design and European Urbanism

6 ECTS Points	30
2 SWS	12

Faculty

Dr. Fabio Bayro Kaiser
Dr. Stefano Cozzolino (ILS)

Dates

Key session on Friday, 10:30–12:30,
SG301

23.10.2026: Introduction, course over-
view and tutorial

30.10.2026: (Online lecture 1) What is
swimmability? Benefits and challenges

06.11.2026: Full-day excursion to Essen
and Duisburg (TBC)

13.11.2026: Work session: towards the
atlas

20.11.2026: Presentation and discussion
(group deliverable)

04.12.2026: (Online lecture 2) Best prac-
tice/cases

11.12.2026: Site selection and ideation

22.01.2027: Revision

29.01.2027: Presentation and discussion
(individual deliverable)

19.02.2027: Examination

Examination Date

19.02.2027, 10:30–12:30

Examination Format

Oral examination

Course Content

Cities around the world are rediscovering rivers, canals, lakes, and harbors as spaces for urban life. Urban swimming is part of this transformation, connecting blue infrastructure with ecological regeneration, climate adaptation, recreation, and public space, as recent examples from Paris, Copenhagen, and Rotterdam demonstrate. Yet making urban waters swimmable involves more than access: environmental conditions, safety, infrastructure, existing uses, and regulation all shape what is possible. The research module, therefore, asks: where, under what conditions, and through which barriers can urban swimming become possible?

The Ruhr Region serves as the case through which this question is explored. Its extensive network of rivers, canals, lakes, and industrial harbors is undergoing profound ecological and spatial transformation. At the same time, some waters are already used informally for swimming despite safety risks and legal restrictions, while others are temporarily opened for organized events. This tension between existing use, restrictions, and latent potential makes the Ruhr a compelling laboratory for investigating urban swimmability.

Participants will collaboratively develop a Swimmability Atlas for the Ruhr Region, mapping existing conditions and practices, identifying high-potential locations, and investigating selected sites in greater depth. The course combines precedent analysis, GIS and spatial analysis, fieldwork, site documentation, and policy and governance analysis, while allowing methodological specialization, including through design research. Supported by expert inputs, workshops, excursions, fieldwork, and tutorials, participants develop their own research approaches to explore where urban swimming could become possible in the Ruhr Region—and what it would take to get there.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of the seminar, students will:
- Understand what makes urban waters swimmable and what prevents it.
 - Apply spatial and qualitative research methods to investigate swimmability.
 - Compare sites, identify potential, and derive transformation strategies.



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Research Module

Inclusive and Diverse Public Spaces as Catalysts for Urban Life

Module Responsible	6 ECTS Points	30
Prof Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism	2 SWS	12

Faculty

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maram Tawil

Dates

Fridays, 12:30-14:00, SG301

Examination Date

19.02.2027

Examination Format

Oral presentation

Course Content

Through diverse societies within cities and regions, the public space has won a new dimension, and its notion was shifted from purely functional areas to socially meaningful environments that reflect culture, identity and realization of cities. Diversity will be an integral part of this research and course. It encompasses differences in culture, ethnicity, income and lifestyle. Diversity implies different aspects and it impacts cities in differentiated manner. It is inevitable and valuable as it holds within its measures many values and triggers for more resilient development. Therefore, public space should play a role of a mediator that transforms diversity into a shared urban asset. This course will aim at researching public space and diversity towards inclusive and community-driven public space layouts that foster attachment and livelihood within the city. The students will investigate diversity and public space and will be performing needed strategic frameworks to inform sustainable resilient development.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course students would be able to develop a strategic framework for the development of public spaces. The students will achieve to understand how public spaces function and introduce workable strategies basing on finding of what ingredients of success are in a holistic perspective. They will be able to analyse realities and produce concepts with economic and social impact for a better public urban life. The students will demonstrate that they can work in groups and are able to analyse current situations, develop findings and strategies correlating theoretical concepts with realities.





Elective Courses

The elective courses supported by a multidisciplinary teaching staff are characterised by a broad spectrum of methodological, procedural, morphological, landscape architectural, ecological, legal, and economic aspects.



Elective Course

The Future Is Passive: Exploring Passive Strategies for Thermal Comfort in Historical Architecture

Module Responsible Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christian Raabe	3 ECTS Points	30
Faculty Dr. Mina Hajian	2 SWS	12

Dates
Thursdays, 10:00 (Reiff Museum R 10)

Examination Date
Final Project Submission: Thursday, 21.01.2027, 23:59
Final Project Presentation: Thursday, 28.01.2027, 10:00

Examination Format
Final Design Project Presentation + Digital Sheet(s)

Course Content
This seminar offers master students of architecture and TCR a unique opportunity to explore sustainable design strategies in the context of historical architecture. The focus is on passive approaches to achieving thermal comfort, without reliance on energy-intensive mechanical systems. Students will analyze case studies of historical buildings from different climatic regions, identifying principles such as natural ventilation, shading, insulation, and thermal mass. In each session, a specific climatic context will be discussed, followed by student presentations on examples of historical architecture from that region. Building upon these insights, students will develop a final design project: reimagining their own homes by applying passive strategies. Through lectures, discussions, case studies, and design work, the seminar fosters both conceptual knowledge and practical skills. It encourages students to critically assess the role of passive design in preserving architectural heritage while addressing present-day challenges of sustainability and climate adaptation.

- Learning Objectives**
By the end of the seminar, students will:
- Understand key passive strategies for thermal comfort in historical architecture.
 - Analyze case studies from different climates to identify effective design principles.
 - Translate historical strategies into contemporary sustainable design approaches.
 - Develop skills in integrating passive solutions into their own design projects.
 - Strengthen their ability to balance heritage conservation with environmental performance.

The seminar equips students with theoretical foundations and practical skills to design energy-efficient and climate-responsive buildings, while deepening their appreciation for the lessons embedded in historical architecture.

Reading recommendations
Lechner, Norbert: Heating, Cooling, Lighting: Sustainable Design Methods for Architects.
Butti, Ken; Perlin, John: A Golden Thread: 2500 Years of Solar Architecture and Technology.
Feilden, Bernard M.: Conservation of Historical Buildings.



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Elective Course

Research Methods- Master Planning

Module Responsible	3 ECTS Points	30
Prof Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism	2 SWS	12

Faculty
Prof em Dr-Ing Andrea Haase

Dates
Thursday, 14:00 -16:00, SG 301

Examination Date
04.02.2027

Examination Format
Text/ Illustrations – Selected Topic/ Area
(max 5 pages)

Capacity
15 students

Course Content

The course introduces and trains the skills of “Research Methods” and “Scientific Writing” as a competence in developing knowledge. It aims to focus on MASTERPLANNING as a major field of applying this competence for different patterns of urban growth (and decline). It supports any kind of research interest relative to a selected theme to be derived from evident fields of qualifying the environment in times of uncertainty and of risk recognition and management. It specifically prepares the selection of thesis subjects and enables graduates from different scientific backgrounds to structure research for testing a hypothesis spatially under socio-cultural, ecological and economic aspects. It will teach to apply system-thinking (based on system-, innovation- and modernization theories) in order to overcome obsolete framework conditions from history and present. The course helps finding appropriate sources of information by starting from existing knowledge (What do I know for certain: literature, images, practices?) and making the process of developing knowledge (What do I want to find out how?) transparent as well as plausible in its course of an argument to be carried out by qualitative and - partially completing - quantitative methods. The argument is ideally oriented on finding a constructive perspective (hypothesis = vision for strategy + measurements) for qualifying the environment and its elements sustainably as well as for enhancing the guiding processes by regenerative cultures of intervention. This will lead to a formulation by text and/ or integrated parts of digital mapping/design in order to develop the existing stage of knowledge (memories/ documented practice/ literature review) systematically. The students will learn to identify general stages of scientific research and will build up their individual position towards theme/ research interest in a wider structure of research (such as a problem statement by objective/ subjective reasoning).

Searching for the appropriate material and content will lead to finding/ applying/ combining/ evaluating valid sources of information, appropriate for developing knowledge in order to resolve the stated problems by means of secondary and primary data collection (deductive: general knowledge/ inductive: case-studies), data analysis and data evaluation. The analysis, to be assumed here as the most important part of the thesis structure, is about building up the main content of research/ design, testing the hypothesis as an answer to the problem statement by a perspective for a strategy/ concepts/ measurements (conceptual framework), by the discussion of factual values (factual framework) and derived criteria (theoretical framework). The conclusion finally takes reasons from the analysis for confirming and highlighting the hypothesis spatially.

Learning Objectives

The course consists of input (by lectures and presentations as well as by literature, appropriate for self-studying) and immediate appliance of the input. The appliance is related to an exercise, working on a self-selected theme of MASTERPLANNING: training to set up a content structure and thematically oriented method for the needed investigation, evaluation and conceptfinding of such a task. The content structure works like an open framework for selecting the right methodical approach: THEME DEFINITION/ DEFINITION OF RESEARCH INTEREST (PROBLEM STATEMENT/ RESEARCH QUESTION/ HYPOTHESIS)/ METHODOLOGY/ ANALYSIS-DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSION - finding a valid answer to a valid question about qualifying existing environments by multi-scalar and multi-disciplinary consideration.



Semester-end exhibitions in the Main Hall, School of Architecture/ College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland; Foto: Haase, A., 2010

Elective Course

Think the City

Module Responsible

Prof. Christa Reicher, Chair of Urban Design and Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism

3 ECTS Points	30
2 SWS	12

Faculty

Dr. Fabio Bayro Kaiser

Dates

Key session on Wednesday, 12:30–15:30, SG 301

14.10.2026: What is a city?

21.10.2026: Why are there cities?

04.11.2026: What can space actually do?

11.11.2026: How do we know why?

02.12.2026: Why do cities change, and why do they stay the same?

08.12.2026: What city should we make?

15.12.2026: Consultation—Improve and refine the argument.

13.01.2027: Consultation—Strengthen the final proposition and defence.

03.02.2027: Examination—Make your case

Examination Date

03.02.2026, 12:30–15:30

Examination Format

Oral examination

Course capacity

24

Course Content

Cities are familiar, yet surprisingly difficult to explain. Why do cities exist at all? Why can similar densities produce entirely different places? Why do cities change—and why do cities stay the same? Such questions matter for Urban Design, because every spatial proposition involves choices about what to change, what to preserve, and what to leave open.

Think the City explores these relationships through deceptively simple questions. Participants investigate why people and activities concentrate; how urban form and density create different spatial conditions; and what space can—and cannot—influence. By comparing places, they explore why similar conditions can lead to different outcomes and draw on observation, knowledge, and evidence to develop possible explanations. Yet understanding the city does not provide ready-made solutions. It creates a basis for interpretation, judgment, and creative exploration.

Throughout the course, participants develop an inquiry from urban puzzle to spatial proposition. Starting with something about the city that sparks curiosity, they formulate a question, explore possible explanations, and translate their insights into their own spatial proposition. The process remains deliberately open: drawing, mapping, photography, models, field observation, data, film, text, or other means can become part of the inquiry. Think critically. Explore creatively. Make a proposition.

Learning Objectives

- Formulate meaningful questions about cities and urban space.
- Understand and compare urban conditions through observation, knowledge, and evidence.

- Connect analysis and creative exploration to develop and defend spatial propositions.

Reading recommendations

Alexander, C. (1965) ‘A city is not a tree’, *Architectural Forum*, 122(1), pp. 58–62 and 122(2), pp. 58–61. Available at: <https://christopher-alexander-ces-archive.org/article/a-city-is-not-a-tree-part-1/>

Bertaud, A. (2018) ‘Formation of urban spatial structures: Markets versus design’, In: *Order without Design: How Markets Shape Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/10671.001.0001>

Hillier, B. (1996) ‘Cities as movement economies’, *Urban Design International*, 1(1), pp. 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1057/udi.1996.5>

Jacobs, J. (1961) ‘The kind of problem a city is’, In: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.

Lynch, K. (1960) ‘The city image and its elements’, In: *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Moroni, S. (2015) ‘Complexity and the inherent limits of explanation and prediction: Urban codes for self-organising cities’, *Planning Theory*, 14(3), pp. 248–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095214521104>

Scott, A.J. and Storper, M. (2014) ‘The nature of cities: The scope and limits of urban theory’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39(1), pp. 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12134>

Sennett, R. (2017) ‘The open city’, in Haas, T. and Westlund, H. (eds.) *In the Post-Urban World: Emergent Transformation of Cities and Regions in the Innovative Global Economy*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 97–106. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672168>



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Field Trip/

(re)cycle Limburg 11

Module Responsible

Prof Christa Reicher,
Chair of Urban Design and Institute for
Urban Design and European Urbanism

Contact

Diana Enab
(diana.enab@rwth-aachen.de)

Dates

16.11.2026-20.11.2026

Deadline of the application

23.10.2026

Capacity

5 students

Organization

The workshop is organized by the Smart
Urban Redesign Research Center. This
edition brought together as part of
Limburg Centraal in collaboration with
Province Limburg, partner municipalities,
universities, and organisations.

Accommodation and meals during
the workshop, except dinner, will be
covered.

3 ECTS Points	30
2 SWS	12

Setup

The 11th edition of (re)cycle Limburg – International Design Week, “Learning
Landscapes: From Stations to a Shared Territory,” explores how local place-
making interventions and urban strategies can collectively contribute to the
territorial transformation of Limburg.

The workshop focuses on six station cities: Heerlen, Maastricht, Sittard-Ge-
leen, Roermond, Weert and Venlo, with Heerlen serving as the collective
base. Key themes include housing, wellbeing and climate adaptation.

Workshop Goals & Activities

Students will develop placemaking interventions at the local scale and stra-
tegic visions and scenarios at the urban scale, while continuously exploring
how these actions connect to challenges and opportunities that extend be-
yond individual cities.

During the workshop, participants will travel across Limburg to visit, observe,
and compare the six station cities and their different urban conditions.

Application & Selection

Candidates will be selected based on their portfolio. Participation is subject
to a limited number of places. Interested students are kindly asked to apply
by submitting the required documents via email to Diana Enab by **Friday,
23th of October**. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Select-
ed participants will be requested to fill in a registration form after they receive
an email of selection.

For further information, please visit [the \(re\)cycle Limburg 11 website](#).

(re)cycle LIMBURG

Learning Landscapes: From Stations to a Shared Territory

Part of Limburg Centraal

Location(s)	Date
Heerlen, Maastricht, Sittard-Geleen, Roermond, Weert, Venlo	16-20 November 2026

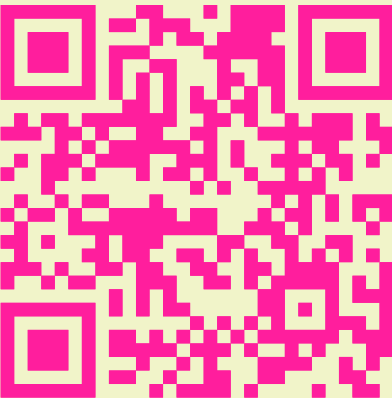
International Design Workshop

Across six station cities, we explores how local interventions and urban
strategies can collectively shape the territorial transformation of Limburg.

Interested?

Visit our website and register at
recyclelimburg.nl or scanning
the QR-Code

for more information contact
poorya.eghtesadi@zuyl.nl



Organized by
Smart Urban Redesign Research Center

Impromptu Course

Pt.Talks: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Discourses Methods

Module Responsible Prof Dr Agnes Förster, Chair of Planning Theory and Urban Development	1,5 ECTS Points	30
	0,5 SWS	12

Faculty
Nina Berding

Important dates of the course
Introduction session: 14.10.2026, 17:30-18:30 (on Zoom)
04.11.2026, 17:30-18:30 (on Zoom)
25.11.2026, 17:30-18:30 (on Zoom)
Written assignment: 02.12.2026, upload by 11:59 pm (Moodle)

Examination date
18.12.2026

Examination format
Written assignment

Course content
The aim of this Stegreif is to engage in meaningful conversations about various topics in the area of planning theory and urban development with young scholars from a range of international institutions and disciplines. Participants will be invited to attend three Pt.talks, an established event series by Pt with the aim to foster a scientific and public discourse about current and emerging critical topics in urbanism. Within the guiding theme of global challenges for sustainable urban development, we see this format as an opportunity to explore new areas of research from different perspectives.

Each talk will feature a young researcher giving a talk on a specific topic and provide for informal, open discussion among all guests. The format can give students an opportunity to network across thematic and geographical boundaries, exchange feedback, and be inspired by new inputs and discussions.

Students attending this Stegreif will produce summaries of each talk, supplementing their own conclusions by relating them to each other and to general topics of planning theory.

Learning Objectives
An understanding of current and emerging topics in urbanism
An opportunity to develop own ideas, contribute and network with researchers.



Master Thesis Suggested Topic

Sponge Landscapes Senserbach/ Selzerbeek: developing nature-based solutions for water resilience in a cross- border catchment basin

Module Responsible

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Axel Timpe,
Institute of Landscape Architecture and
Prof. Dr. Agnes Förster,
Chair of Planning Theory and Urban Devel-
opment

30 ECTS Points 30

0,5 SWS 12

Important dates

Release of the assignment: 09.09.2026
Kick-Off Meeting: 14.09.2026
First Colloquium: 12.10.2026 - 13.10.2026
Second Colloquium: 24.11.2026
Third Colloquium: 13.01.2027
Digital thesis submission: 09.02.2027
Oral presentations week: 15.02.2027 -
18.02.2027

Examination format

Master Thesis: plans, written report, oral
presentation

Course Content

Climate change presents us with major challenges. To build resilience to these changes, managing water in our cities and landscapes is a key issue. With the aim of building resilience to extreme events and periods, we must adapt our systems so that they can cope both with the challenge of high rainfall over a short period and with water shortages during long periods of drought. Five years after the summer floods in the Ahr Valley, the drought of summer 2026 has made the consequences particularly clear in terms of crop losses in agriculture, drying-up streams and rivers, and forest and moorland fires. One solution for greater resilience in the water sector lies in the creation of ‘sponge landscapes’ that can absorb and store extreme rainfall, thereby both preventing or mitigating flooding and ensuring water remains available during periods of drought.

Sponge landscapes do not consist solely of the bodies of water visible to us, but must encompass the entire catchment area of watercourses including their vegetation, soils and groundwater bodies, but also the existing land use and how it can be transformed. Catchment areas are defined in topographical and hydrological terms and extend beyond municipal, regional and national boundaries. The Aachen region is part of the Maas/Meuse river watershed which spans across France, Luxemburg, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. The Euregio Meuse-Rhine Three-Countries Park has therefore taken up this issue and, as part of the Interreg SPONGE project, is developing cross-border sponge landscapes using so-called nature-based solutions. These are intended to prevent flooding and maintain the stability of ecosystems and agriculture during periods of drought.

In your thesis you are asked to develop a concept and masterplan for sponge landscapes in an upstream catchment of the watershed, using the Senserbach/Selzerbeek as a case study. The stream rises near the Vaalser-quartier in Aachen and forms the border between Germany and the Netherlands for several kilometres. This part of its catchment area comprises both urban areas – particularly in the Dutch municipality of Vaals – and various types of land use, including woodland and agricultural land. The catchment area underlies different planning legislations and cultures as well as different land use traditions on both sides of the Dutch-German border which need to be taken into account. Developing sponge landscapes for Senserbach/Selzerbeek can thus serve as a model the be replicated within the Three-Countries Park.

The thesis assignment asks to deepen your work beyond the mandatory concept and masterplan for the entire planning area in a specific focus area or focus subject of your own choice. This can mean to focus on sponge NBS for specific land use types (urban, agricultural, etc.), designing a specific water-related landscape architectural intervention, developing and comparing feasibility and planning processes for sponge landscapes in the two national contexts, activating landowners and stakeholders for implementing sponge landscape NBS or other topics to be developed during your work.



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ENHANCE

„ENHANCE, the European Universities of Technology Alliance, brings together ten research-intensive universities with the common goal of making the European Education Area a thriving space for excellent education and open exchange. “
(RWTH, 2023)



ENHANCE

European Education Pathways

Partner Universities

RWTH Aachen University
 Chalmers University of Technology
 ETH Zürich
 Gdańsk University of Technology
 Norwegian University of Science and Technology
 Politecnico di Milano
 Technische Universität Berlin
 Technische Universiteit Delft
 Universitat Politècnica de València
 Warsaw University of Technology

Facts & Figures

10 Partner Universities
 Simplified recognition through pre-approved courses
 Physical mobilities funded through ERASMUS+ programme
 Summer & Winter Schools
 Research Stays & Master Thesis abroad
 Micro Credentials & Certificate Programmes
 Regular Online Courses

„What are the European Education Pathways?

ENHANCE offers a wide range of different exchange opportunities that are united in the so-called European Education Pathways (EEP program): from classic semester exchange with ERASMUS+ funding; to short-term exchanges (such as Summer/Winter Schools); research stays and thesis abroad; or completely virtual formats. All courses offered within the European Education Pathways are pre-approved and the recognition of ECTS credits is guaranteed.

Advantages of the EEP Program

- Simplified recognition through pre-approved courses
- Scholarships for Summer & Winter Schools (except ETH)
- Scholarships for Research Stays & Thesis abroad (except ETH)
- Support in preparing for an exchange:
 - » Pre-Departure Seminar for Outgoing Students
 - » ENHANCE Language Tandems
 - » Workshops on Diversity and Equality

What's behind it:

- Deep dive into a specific topic
- Set of Courses (min. 20 ECTS): complementary to TCR Courses
- Carefully selected and recommended by TCR and ENHANCE colleagues

Our service for you:

- 1 extra spot per partner university (except ETH + TU Delft)
- Close guidance/support:
 - » Secured places at ENHANCE Partner University
 - » Guaranteed recognition for TCR study plan
- Possibility of achieving an ENHANCE Degree Label (Certificate)

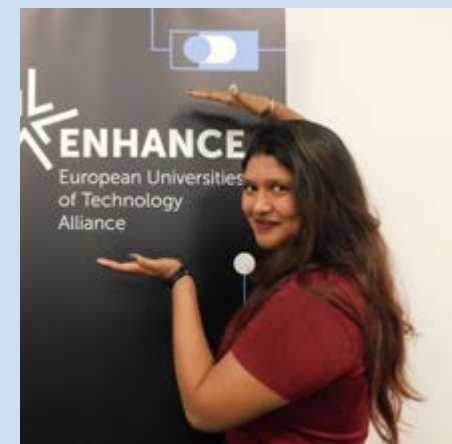


Deadlines and event notes

- Next application Deadline (only for classic semester mobilities through Erasmus+) in the Academic Year 2026/2027: **January 31st 2027**
- Save-the-Date --> Event notes:
 - » **TCR Info Session:** 28.09.2026; at 09:00, Online
 - » **RWTH Go Abroad Fair** 09.11.2026; 13:00-16:30, Super C, 6th floor (<https://www.rwth-aachen.de/cms/root/studium/im-studium/outgoing/~ggav/rwth-go-abroad-week/>)
 - » **Go Abroad Talk - Europe Edition:** 11.11.2026, at 12:30-13:30, Humboldt Haus (preliminary information – tbc)

Voices about ENHANCE

„Attending the ENHANCE Summer School in Warszawa was a game-changer! Warm people, enriching experiences, and nourishing knowledge made it unforgettable. I tackled problems in new ways and hit exciting milestones. Plus, the cultural exchange with classmates and locals opened up fresh perspectives and endless possibilities. Best decision ever!“
 (Nitisha Sai Kiran Srikurmam, TCR student at the ENHANCE Summer School on Climate Action @Warsaw University of Technology, 2024)



Check this for further information!



Stay up-to-date with our offers and follow us on Instagram: @enhancealliance

Master Thesis

Everyday Experiences at Campus-City Interfaces

Encounters between University Life and City Life



Before Starting to the Thesis

Information

Dates Application for admission of external second examiners: Deadline 19.02.2027 (Contact: bayrokaiser@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de)	30 ECTS Points
Application for admission (ZPA): Deadline 04.03.2027 (Contact: marion.matheis@zhv.rwth-aachen.de)	0,5 SWS
Requirements - At least 81 credits completed - Module Scientific Integrity completed - Free or suggested topics are possible - Theoretical scientific work or a design project are possible - English or German language is possible - It is an individual work, but materials and research/design questions can be prepared as a team - Two examiners: The first must be from the faculty. The second can be from the faculty, university, or external. Both supervisors must be full professors. - Single right of return - Online submission via CMS DIVA: Tutorial - Max. 80 pages - Citation style to be discussed with the examiner - If applicable, 2 Reiff-Walls for design posters + maquette(s) - Joint (public) examinations	
Resources RWTH Examination Regulations TCR Examination Regulations TCR Moodle Room Applications, deadlines, timetables	
Submission Master's thesis must be submitted via CMS by 11:59 PM.	

Note: Some information may change, please check the relevant links.

Thesis Dates and Deadlines

Summer Semester 2027

Free Topic		Suggested Topic	
NOW	Work on the topic and task Contact a chair/institute for supervision. Clarify requirements and conditions for supervision. Also dates and deadlines.	NOW	Work on the topic and task Explore chairs/institutes and their topics.
05.01.2027–15.01.2027	Declaration of intent for the thesis in RWTH online Selection of free topic	05.01.2027–15.01.2027	Declaration of intent for the thesis in RWTH online Selection of suggested topic
by 19.02.2027	Request for approval of external supervisors	by 19.02.2027	
by 04.03.2027	Submission of “Application for Admission” at the ZPA (incl. confirmation of supervision)	by 04.03.2027	Submission of “Application for Admission” at the ZPA (incl. confirmation of supervision)
16.03.2027	Start of Master Thesis 5 months of independent work With colloquia and individual consultations if necessary	16.03.2027	Start of Master Thesis 5 months of independent work With colloquia and individual consultations if necessary
16.04.2027	Single right of withdrawal	16.04.2027	Single right of withdrawal
16.08.2027	Online submission of thesis	16.08.2027	Online submission of thesis
20.08.2027	Hanging of posters and maquettes	20.08.2027	Hanging of posters and maquettes
23.08.2027–26.08.2027	Master examinations	23.08.2027–26.08.2027	Master examinations

✓ Events & Activities

A series of lectures, discussions and informal events will take place throughout the semester. These activities offer students opportunities to exchange ideas, engage with current topics in urban transformation and connect with the wider academic and professional community.



Upcoming Events

Practical Information & Key Dates

Key dates and practical information to help you prepare for the upcoming semester. Please take note of the registration period and important activities at the start of the semester.



Course registration

1

Course registration opens on 15 September and closes on 5 October.

You will need to be enrolled and have access to RWTH Online in order to register for courses.



RWTH Online

<https://online.rwth-aachen.de/RWTHonline/>

2

Enrolment is open until 31 October.

If you do not yet have access to RWTH Online, please contact us to let us know which courses you would like to take. We will then put you on a waiting list.

Online participation is not possible.



TCR Website

<https://tcr.rwth-aachen.de/>

3

This is a Semester Handbook listing all course offerings and updates for the semester.

Consultation Hour Every Tuesday · 14:00–15:00

For questions regarding the TCR programme, courses or your studies, you are welcome to join Dr. Fabio Bayro Kaiser's consultation hour.



No appointment is required!

You can either join via Zoom or visit the office in person.



Whenever possible, please bring your questions to the consultation hour, as this is the quickest way to receive support.

Location

Online via Zoom

<https://rwth.zoom-x.de/j/99488595469?pwd=dUtsSjlOSDRpS1RYcm1LYUVwRVBMTQT09>

Office

Wüllnerstr. 5b, SG 308

Please note

Future communications will be through official RWTH channels only.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Summer Semester 2027

**28
SEP
2026**

09:00–12:00

Online Q&A Session

Course presentation and Q&A
Online via Zoom

**28
SEP
2026**

14:00–17:00

TCR Walks

Walking tour of Aachen
Meeting point: Wüllnerstr. 5b

**01
OCT
2026**

14:00–17:00

RWTH Freshers' Fair

Meet the TCR team
Audimax



More Welcome Week activities

For further activities and information check the [website!](#)

**07
OCT
2026**

17:00

International Perspectives – ASSET- Book Launch

Skylounge RWTH Aachen University

**12
OCT
2026**

First Day of Lectures

**14
OCT
2026**

17:00

**Welcome Party –
New Regional Bauhaus (NRB), Heerlen**

**10
NOV
2026**

18:00

Städtebauliches Kolloquium

Foyer Reiff Museum

**23-24
NOV
2026**

International Conference- FUTURE CITYREGIONS

City of Aachen Town Hall- SuperC, RWTH Aachen University, Faculty of Architecture

**08
DEC
2026**

18:00

Städtebauliches Kolloquium

Foyer Reiff Museum

**19
JAN
2027**

18:00

Städtebauliches Kolloquium

Foyer Reiff Museum

KICKOFF PARTY
14. OCT 2026 / 7.PM



Promenade 14
6411 JK Heerlen, NL

RWTH AACHEN UNIVERSITY x MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

NEW REGIONAL PARTY

LET'S MEET IN HEERLEN!

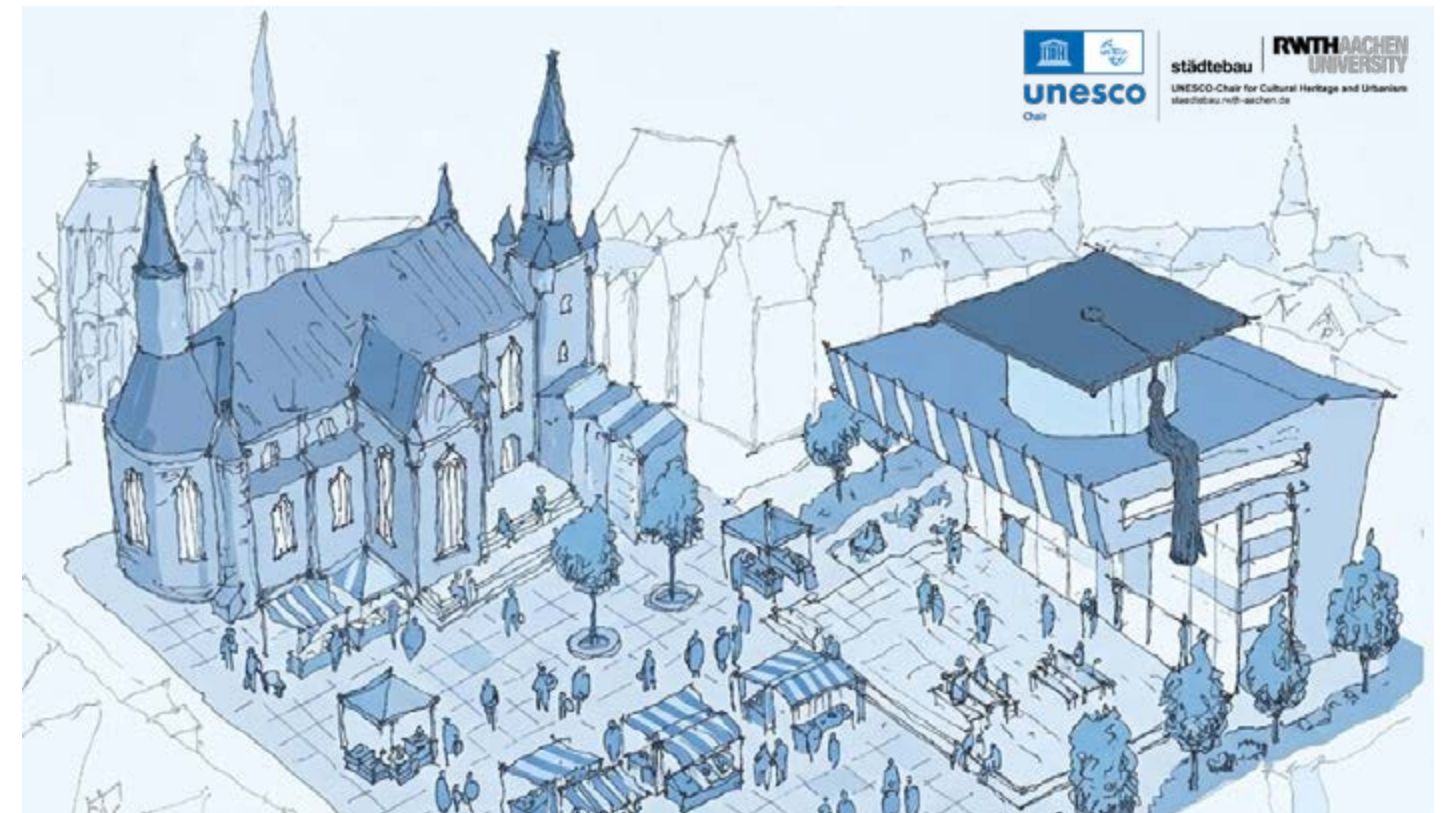
RWTH Aachen and Maastricht University invite you to a joint party at the **New Regional Bauhaus**. Meet each other. Exchange ideas. Make new connections. And discover what's happening on both sides of the border.

Flash Talks · Drinks · Music · Good Conversations
14 OCTOBER 2026 · NEW REGIONAL BAUHAUS · HEERLEN



FUTURE CITYREGIONS

Urbanism and Architecture in Times of Uncertainty
International Conference, 22-24 November 2026, D-Aachen



City regions are shaped by decisions made under conditions of uncertainty, where urgent action precedes full knowledge of long-term consequences. At the same time, long-term spatial decisions must respond to shifting priorities, limited resources, and distributed responsibilities, including housing, infrastructure, land use, and heritage. Rather than treating uncertainty as a background condition, this conference frames it as a defining feature of contemporary urbanism and architectural practice.

In this context, decision-making shifts from optimisation to judgement — shaping how knowledge is produced and applied, how actions are justified, and how insights travel across contexts. These challenges are further intensified by digitalisation and AI, demographic change, and geopolitical and financial constraints, which reshape how evidence is generated and what can be realised or sustained. The conference focuses on how spatial decisions are interpreted, negotiated, and translated into action, bringing together academic, professional, and policy perspectives on how the futures of city regions are shaped in times of uncertainty.

Three lines of inquiry are of interest:

Heritage: examines how continuity, identity, and use are negotiated over time and understood as active components of spatial decision-making. It addresses how existing structures, practices, and narratives are reinterpreted and transformed, and how questions of adaptive reuse, governance, building culture, and everyday urban change inform long-term development.

Resilience: addresses how risks, resources, and responsibilities are organised through governance, infrastructure, and institutional capacity. It considers how trade-offs are defined,

managed, and redistributed across domains such as housing, energy, mobility, circularity, campus development, and cross-border and transregional cooperation.

Spatial practice and research: focuses on how knowledge is produced and translated into strategies, plans, and built form without fixed end states. It engages with how methods, tools, and formats — including AI-supported and scenario-based approaches, data-driven practices, and experimental settings such as real-world laboratories — inform decision-making and shape spatial outcomes.

Against this background, the conference brings together academic, professional, and policy perspectives on future city regions. We invite contributions that engage with one or more of the outlined lines of inquiry, as well as proposals that extend beyond them. Submissions may be conceptual, methodological, or practice-based, and should present a clear argument that demonstrates what they reveal about how planning and design operate in conditions of uncertainty.

Organizer

RWTH Aachen University, Chair & Institute of Urban Design
UNESCO Chair for Cultural Heritage & Urbanism
Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Christa Reicher
conference@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de

More information

Detailed programme, keynotes, registration and further information are available on the [conference website](#).

Impressum

Contact

RWTH Aachen University
Faculty of Architecture
Chair of Urban Design
Institute for Urban Design and European
Urbanism

Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Christa Reicher

Wüllnerstraße 5b
52062 Aachen
Tel.: +49 241 80 95033
info@staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de
www.staedtebau.rwth-aachen.de