



*Island Futures Studio*  
**ISLAND URBANISM:**  
**LANDSCAPE, TOURISM, AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**code**

LA 439/539

**instructor**

Ignacio Lopez Buson

**location**

Las Palmas de GC, Spain

**uo credits**

6.0

**contact hours**

105 hours



**course description**

In this experiential learning studio course, students will embark on a transformative journey to delve into the multifaceted landscape of Gran Canaria, a dynamic island ecosystem confronting a myriad of challenges, from the impacts of climate change to the pressures of tourism and resource management.

Through a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach, students will delve into the intricate interconnections between environmental sustainability, social equity, and cultural preservation. Guided by industry experts and scholars, students will unravel the complexities of Gran Canaria's socio-environmental fabric, honing their analytical and design skills through a series of engaging activities. From immersive site visits to thought-provoking guest lectures, students will glean insights from diverse perspectives, enriching their understanding of the island's unique context.

At the heart of the studio lies the task of crafting a visionary master plan that not only navigates the challenges of the present but also lays the groundwork for a resilient and thriving future. Through iterative design processes and collaborative brainstorming sessions, students will synthesize their knowledge and creativity to develop innovative solutions that balance environmental conservation with socio-economic development.

By the end of this 5-week course, landscape, architecture, and urban planning students will be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop climate-responsive solutions for vulnerable regions, aligning with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

1- Competition "Waterfront of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria."  
LPA Studio and Ignacio Lopez Buson, 2009

**project context** Gran Canaria, a designated UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve region, is a microcosm of broader global challenges, offering a compelling context for this studio. Its unique geographical features, coupled with increasing pressures from tourism and climate change, underscore the urgency of sustainable planning. By focusing on Gran Canaria, students will gain insights into the complexities of territorial planning in island environments, providing valuable lessons applicable worldwide.

**course objectives** In addition to aligning with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), #12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), #13 (Climate Action), #14 (Life below Water), and #15 (Life on Land), this studio will teach the students to:

- Understand the interconnected challenges facing Gran Canaria and similar island ecosystems.
- Develop proficiency in analyzing complex territorial systems and identifying key intervention points.
- Cultivate design strategies that promote sustainability, resilience, and social equity.
- Collaborate effectively in multidisciplinary teams to develop comprehensive master plans.
- Communicate ideas persuasively through visual, written, and oral presentations.

**instructional methodology** The course will blend lectures, workshops, site visits, and design charrettes to provide a rich learning experience. Guest lectures by experts in environmental science, urban planning, and cultural studies will offer diverse perspectives related to the course goals. Studio sessions will focus on iterative design processes, encouraging experimentation and critical feedback. Field trips to key sites on Gran Canaria and other islands will provide firsthand insights into the island's socio-environmental dynamics. Throughout, students will engage in collaborative exercises to foster teamwork and interdisciplinary dialogue.

**method of evaluation** Evaluation will be based on project milestones, design presentations, written reflections, and peer feedback. Criteria will include the depth of analysis, creativity in design solutions, integration of sustainability principles, and effectiveness of communication. Additionally, participation in discussions, workshops, and field trips will contribute to the overall assessment. Emphasis will be placed on the ability to critically evaluate and iterate upon design proposals in response to feedback and evolving contexts.

**recommended software** The use of digital design tools will be a critical part of this course. In addition to drone training for site surveying, students will learn Agisoft Metashape to process the captured data and develop 3D models of the territory. These models will be exported to McNeel Rhinoceros for further editing, analysis and visualization with the help of Grasshopper. The Adobe Suite will be used for additional diagrams, collages and layouts for the presentations and final boards.

- Rhino 7.0 or 8.0 (Free 90-day trial) <https://www.rhino3d.com/>
- Agisoft Metashape Standard Edition (Free 30-day trial) <https://www.agisoft.com/downloads/installer/>
- Adobe Suite Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign (Subscription) <https://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html>

**course outline**

The studio is divided into four main phases: research (1 week), analysis (1 week), design (2 weeks), and visualization (1 week). Each phase will start with a guest lecture and end with an internal presentation where students will summarize their findings and receive feedback from reviewers. Trips to other islands and fieldwork in Gran Canaria will happen on a weekly basis to balance office work time. Weekends without trips are free for the students to explore the island of Gran Canaria.

<b>PHASE 1</b> <i>INTRO TO GC AND RESEARCH</i>	WEEK 1	M	06/30/25	<b>WELCOME + COURSE OVERVIEW</b>
		T	07/01/25	<b>STUDIO + LECTURE JUAN PALOP</b>
		W	07/02/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		R	07/03/25	<b>INTERNAL PRESENTATION: RESEARCH</b>
		F	07/04/25	<b>TRIP TO LA GOMERA</b>
		S	07/05/25	<b>TRIP TO LA GOMERA</b>
		S	07/06/25	<b>TRIP TO LA GOMERA</b>
<b>PHASE 2</b> <i>TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS</i>	WEEK 2	M	07/07/25	<b>STUDIO + LECTURE LIDIA ESTHER ROMERO</b>
		T	07/08/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		W	07/09/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		R	07/10/25	<b>INTERNAL PRESENTATION: ANALYSIS</b>
		F	07/11/25	<b>LOCAL TRIP IN GC</b>
		S	07/12/25	
		S	07/13/25	
<b>PHASE 3</b> <i>ITERATIVE DESIGN AND MASTER PLANNING</i>	WEEK 3	M	07/14/25	<b>STUDIO + LECTURE CRISTINA SUAREZ</b>
		T	07/15/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		W	07/16/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		R	07/17/25	<b>INTERNAL PRESENTATION: MASTER PLAN</b>
		F	07/18/25	<b>TRIP TO TENERIFE</b>
		S	07/19/25	<b>TRIP TO TENERIFE</b>
		S	07/20/25	<b>TRIP TO TENERIFE</b>
	WEEK 4	M	07/21/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		T	07/22/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
		W	07/23/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
	R	07/24/25	<b>INTERNAL PRESENTATION: MASTER PLAN</b>	
	F	07/25/25	<b>LOCAL TRIP IN GC</b>	
	S	07/26/25		
	S	07/27/25		
	<b>PHASE 4</b> <i>PRODUCTION AND VISUALIZATION</i>	WEEK 5	M	07/28/25
T			07/29/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
W			07/30/25	STUDIO WORK + DESK-CRITS
R			07/31/25	<b>PRESENTATION REHEARSAL</b>
F			08/01/25	<b>FINAL PRESENTATION</b>
S			08/02/25	
S			08/03/25	

**course readings** These readings explore the unique challenges and opportunities facing island regions like the Canary Islands, offering insights into sustainable development, ecological management, and cultural preservation. They provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the complexities of island ecosystems and the strategies needed to address climate change and tourism pressures while fostering resilience and sustainability. Through these readings, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the context in which they are designing and develop a broader perspective on global island issues:

- Baldacchino, G. (Ed.). (2007). *Small Island States and Territories: Sustainable Development and Management Strategies*.
- Baldacchino, G., & Galea, S. J. (Eds.). (2013). *Tourism and Island Communities*.
- Vitousek, P. M., Loope, L. L., & Hamilton, H. (Eds.). (1996). *Islands: Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Function*.
- Whittaker, R. J., & Fernández-Palacios, J. M. (2007). *Island Biogeography: Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation*.
- Pelling, M. (2010). *Adaptation to Climate Change*.
- Godenau, D., & Nuez Yáñez, J. S. (2013). Feeding two million residents and ten million tourists: Food (in)sufficiency in the Canary Islands. *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, 7(2).
- Romero, L. E. (2019). Terraced Landscapes in the Canary Islands: La Gomera, 'The Terrace Island'. In *World Terraced Landscapes: History, Environment, Quality of Life*

**accessible education statement** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu). (See <https://aec.uoregon.edu/best-practices-faculty> for more information.)

**academic misconduct statement** The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at [researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism](http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism). (See <https://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct> for more information)

**reporting obligations** I am a student-directed employee. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender-based violence, may seek information and resources at [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu), [respect.uoregon.edu](http://respect.uoregon.edu), or [investigations.uoregon.edu](http://investigations.uoregon.edu) or contact the non-confidential Title IX office/Office of Civil Rights Compliance (541-346-3123), or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect."