

Urban Change and Sustainability

Professor

Dimitra Babalis

Email

dimitra.babalis@unifi.it

Institution

University of Florence

General Information

The course is in both presence and online. The Course will be held in English.

Schedule

Dates	Description
16/02/2026	h. 10.00-13.00
18/02/2026	h. 10.00-13.00
23/02/2026	h. 10.00-13.00
25/02/2026	h.10.00-13.00
02/03/2026	h.10.00-13.00
04/03/2026	h.10.00-13.00
09/03/2026	h.10.00-13.00
11/03/2026	h.10.00-13.00
Total: Hours 24 - Credits 4	

Other information

The aim of the Course is to deepen PhD students' understanding of the dynamic and complex processes of Urban Change (UC) and Urban Transformation (UT) of sensitive urban environments. Emphasis is placed on sustainability and resilience as guiding frameworks for analysing, evaluating and shaping urban change.

The course addresses the following key questions:

How Urban Change can place urban and building improvement in response to the evolving people needs?
How Urban Change can place urban improvement according to the benefits of a robust urban and architectural design to overcome the former? How to acquire forms of knowledge and skills in urban planning

and design to ensure sustainable and resilient aspects of urban structures in the face of climate change and other emerging urban risks?

The main course items are as follows:

- Introduction to Urban Change (UC). Sensitive Urban Environments (SUEs): Definitions and Challenges
- Theories of Sustainable Development. Critical readings on urban complexity
- UNESCO-centered Urban Change. Definitions of Cultural Heritage (CH); Urban Heritage (UH); Heritage Urban Landscape (HUL) for a contemporary robust sustainable planning and design
- Urban Morphology and Spatial Analysis. Urban Form and spatial configuration and its impact on urban change and resilience
- Sustainable Urban Design Principles. Sustainable approach to planning and design to respond to urban regeneration and transformation
- Sustainable masterplanning and building in changing urban contexts
- Urban Transformation (UT) and Climate Change (CC); Sustainability and Urban Resilience in climate-historic environment
- Urban Greening (UG) Sustainable and Innovative Green Infrastructure (UGI) for climate emergencies
- International case studies. Comparative analysis of global examples.

Doctoral Course Final Assessment

As a core component of doctoral-level assessment, candidates are required to produce a Critical Literature Review (CLR). The CLR must include a comparative analysis, a critical discussion, and a methodological reflection based on a selection of two-three peer-reviewed research articles published in valuable international scientific journals. The chosen articles should be linked through their theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, or empirical case studies, enabling a coherent and analytically rich comparison.

This assessment evaluates the PhD student's ability to:

- Demonstrate depth of understanding of theoretical, methodological, and empirical dimensions
- Synthesize knowledge across disciplines to map key concepts, debates, and research perspectives
- Provide a theoretical critique, identifying strengths, limitations, and underlying assumptions within the selected papers.