

# Concordia University

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/concordia/en/students/exchanges/field-schools/detroit-re-think--re-align--re-make---the-future-of-the-city.html>

## Detroit Re-Think, Re-Align, Re-Make - The Future Of The City



### 2020 Summer Program

The Faculty of Fine Arts and Concordia International are pleased to offer a 4-week summer program focused on the city of Detroit, Michigan. This hands-on program provides students with the opportunity to earn 3 Concordia credits while spending approximately 2 weeks in Detroit. Dr. Carmela Cucuzzella, Associate Professor, Design and Computation Arts and the Concordia University Research Chair in Integrated Design, Ecology, and Sustainability (IDEAS) for the Built Environment will accompany the group.

### Program Overview

This field school invites students to discover what the future of Detroit could look like. The main aim of the school is to actively engage students in the processes needed to rethink the future of the city, the actions needed to realign development with the local needs and in the multifaceted innovations needed to remake the city. The field school will investigate the role design – as a broad field of discovery and creation – plays in shaping this future.

To answer this design mission, students will first have the chance to study and experience the history of the motor city. The students will be then offered the chance to engage directly with the city's designers, artists, researchers, students, and community leaders. Taking the form of workshops, design-charettes and interactive discussions, the students would seek to

understand the visions and aspirations for Detroit's future. Finally, each student will be invited to imagine a project, product or process which can become part of the city's future. The students' observations and creations will then be featured in an exhibition at Concordia University.

While a specific focus will be given to urban, architectural, and interstitial spaces, the school will also expose the students to art and design in the city: including object design, fashion design, visual communication, interaction design, and community-based design. Additionally, cultural sites and spaces, such as museums, historic monuments and performance venues will also be included in the field school.

## Field School Learning Outcomes

1. Students will gain an understanding of the processes (social, economic, and political) involved in the rise and fall of industrial cities.
2. Students will gain an understanding of the history of Detroit – from its rise as an industrial and cultural center to its fall leading to its bankruptcy in 2013, and to its revival initiatives since 2013.
3. Students will gain first-hand experience of the range of design practises that could be used as models to revive post-industrial urban centers.
4. Students will learn to analyze, categorize, and compare design approaches to city revival.
5. Students will be able to ideate and propose novel ideas that can help complement urban renewal efforts.
6. Students will expand their professional network – by meeting and exchanging with local students, designers, and artists.

## Program Dates & Courses

DATE: May 4th, 2020 to June 4th, 2020

- Pre-departure sessions: May 4th to May 7th
- Start of the field activities in Detroit: Sunday, May 10th
- End of field activities in Detroit: Thursday, May 21st
- Post-arrival sessions: Thursday, May 28th – Thursday, June 4th
- Exhibition launch: Evening of June 4th

The program consists of the following course worth 3 credits:

### **DART448 or DART635: Nature-Inspired Environments\***

open to graduate and senior undergraduate students across Concordia University

\* The prerequisites for the course could be waived by the instructor.

## Scope and Teaching Approach

The decline of Detroit received significant attention since the 1970s. After officially declaring bankruptcy at the end of 2013, the city has been on a slow track of renewal. The city of Detroit has already experienced most pangs of large modern metropolitan cities since the wake of the industrial revolution. A place for all urban fantasies. Detroit is a point of

convergence of gurus of start-ups, a speculative test bed for all genres, like street artists, where we cannot even count all the studies, projects, competitions, initiatives, declarations, statistics, photographic dossiers, urban actions, etc. that have sought to understand both, the past and the future of such a megalopolis.

The field school will be divided into 3 phases:

#### A) Familiarization (Pre-Field)

This phase of the field school will take place at Concordia University. The aim of this phase is to familiarize the participating students with the City of Detroit and the activities that will take place during the trip. In order to prepare the students, they will be provided with readings, movies, and data to be consulted. During this pre-trip phase, the students will be expected to become familiar with the basic context of the past and present of the city. Additionally, group discussions and exchanges will help clarify the expected outcome from each of the 2 upcoming phases of the field school. Skype or web meetings with some of the collaborators could also be used during these discussions.

#### B) Retrospective/ Prospective

The trip to Detroit will feature a series of visits that will engage students in a reflection of the city's past, present, and future.

A portion will be dedicated to educating the students about the history of the city as well as the events and conditions that led to its decline and bankruptcy (socio-cultural, economic, and political). This portion will encompass visits to museums, guided walks in the city's neighbourhoods, as well as visits to abandoned, restored, and repurposed buildings. The assigned readings and course resources (which include movies) will also support in delivering knowledge about the city's culture. Additionally, and through the collaborations initiated, local experts (architects, urban planners, and designers) will participate in the tours.

Another portion will focus on exposing the students to established or emerging design initiatives that aim to revitalize and revive the city. Visits to design centers, various revitalization projects, new developments, educational institutions, and community organizations, will take place. The institutional and community collaborations developed for this field school will play a key role in familiarizing the students with the work and approaches being deployed around the city. Local designers, artists, academics, educators, and practitioners will involve the students in a number of experiential learning and hands-on activities (including workshops, design-charrettes, discussions and on-site presentations). Additionally, the students will be offered a number of opportunities to exchange and connect with local students, artists, and community leaders.

Field activities may encompass both portions.

#### C) The Exhibition (Post-Field)

This concluding phase of the field school will be focused on the students' observations. The students, organized in groups, are expected to summarise and illustrate their observations around the themes of past, present, and future. The observations specifically made for the design initiatives that aim to renew the city will be analyzed using figures 1 and 2. Additionally, each group is also expected to propose a design idea (of a project, object, process, or creation) that could complement or support the work already being done in the city. The presentations are open-format and open-ended deliverable. The student's will be able to present their work and design ideas in Detroit to local artists, designers and city officials. After returning to Montreal, they will be able to improve on their ideas – reflecting the comments received during the critique. The students' contributions will be combined to create an exhibition at Concordia – open to the public and invitations will be sent to the collaborators from Detroit.

## Estimated Costs & Bursary

Concordia will charge program participants for 3 credits of Concordia tuition and a program fee **\$1,450** (based on the final number of participants). This fee includes accommodation, breakfast (self-serve) local transport, fees, and tickets (museum and workshop and visit fees at multiple projects/institutions in Detroit) as well as studio space at The Detroit Center for Design + Technology.

Students are responsible for selecting and paying their transportation to/from Detroit; mandatory health and travel insurance; meals; spending money; any required travel documents and other miscellaneous expenses associated with travel.

To offset costs, Concordia International is offering a bursary of up to **\$700** to students admitted to the program.

**NOTE:** Please note that the above mentioned bursary cannot be combined with any other in-house mobility scholarship, mobility bursary or mobility award.

## Eligibility Requirements

Credit and GPA criteria:

- Be enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program, have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and have completed at least 24 credits toward your current degree program.

Or

- Be enrolled in a Master's degree program, have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and have completed at least 9 credits toward your current degree program.

Or

- Be enrolled in PhD degree program, have a 3.7 cumulative GPA and have completed at least 9 credits toward your current degree program.

Motivation Letter:

- Applicants must submit a letter of motivation for their participation

## Evaluation

- Pre-departure sessions and trip attendance - 20%
- Pre-departure readings & research summary - 20%
- Exhibition planning and participation - 20%
- Observations / analysis / projects proposals / crit Rev. - 40%

## Collaborations and Host Institutions

The field school is designed based on multiple collaborations with institutions and initiatives in the City of Detroit.

Lawrence Technological University (<https://www.ltu.edu/>) and its Detroit Center for Design + Technology (<https://detroit.design/index.html>) will serve as the key collaborators for the field school – and can be considered as our host institution.

Other collaborators include:

- University of Detroit Mercy (UDMercy) <https://www.udmercy.edu/>
- The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) <http://www.dcdc-udm.org/about/>
- Smith Group – Detroit <https://www.smithgroup.com/>
- Wayne State University <https://wayne.edu/>
- Kresge Arts in Detroit <http://www.kresgeartsindetroit.org/>
- The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative <https://www.miufi.org>
- Detroit Design Center <http://www.detroitdesigncenter.com/>
- The Heidelberg Project <https://www.heidelberg.org/>
- CIVILLA <https://www.civilla.com/>

## Field School Activities include:

- Walking tours and bike tours – with local experts;
- Architectural tour of Detroit by leading urban designers and urban researchers (tours include areas of urban revival and ruin);
- Interactive workshops with scholars, artists, designers, and students;
- Visit and workshops at leading urban and architecture design studios;
- Visits to available student design shows;
- Hands-on activities and urban farming activities;
- Tours of LTU, Wayne State and UDMercy campuses;
- Free and leisure time to explore the city.

## Accommodations and Studio Space

- Students will have accommodation provided in a local not-for-profit institution (the Detroit Hostel - <https://www.hosteldetroit.com/>). Accommodation arrangements will range between 4 beds dorms and 10 beds dorms - with shared bathroom facilities. The hostel includes a self-serve breakfast.
- Studio facilities will be provided at the Detroit Center for Design + Technology.

## How to Apply:

- Attend an information session
  - **January 23 2020, 12:00PM to 1:00PM in Concordia International (Annex X, 2080 Mackay), X103**
  - **February 18 2020, 12:30PM to 1:30PM in Concordia International (Annex X, 2080 Mackay), X103**
- After you have attended an information session, submit online a complete Concordia Field School Abroad Application, and arrange to have one academic reference sent to Concordia International (instructions on form).
- Your application must also include:



- A copy of your most recent transcript (whether from Concordia or another institution)
- A letter of intent describing why you wish to participate in the Detroit Field School and the kind of work you hope to accomplish while there. You should also make mention of what strengths or contributions you think you will bring to the group
- A sample of your creative or scholarly practice. This could be either (or a combination of both):
  - 5 images of artwork, plus image list (dates, dimensions, media) and artist's statement
  - A sample of scholarly or creative writing, minimum 5 pages double-spaced

## Please Note:

- Concordia admissions decisions will be communicated by email after the application deadline.
- The program monitor will make final admissions decisions.
- Students admitted to the program will have to attend the mandatory pre-departure sessions.
- Students admitted to the program will have to attend the mandatory post-field sessions and actively participate in the exhibition at Concordia University.
- All information on this website is subject to change without notice.
- The program is subject to cancellation at any time and for any reason.
- A maximum of 18 participants will be selected to participate in the program.

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