

PPD 531L Planning Studio: Design of the Built Environment

University of Southern California
Sol Price School of Public Policy
Fall 2016
Section 51241D

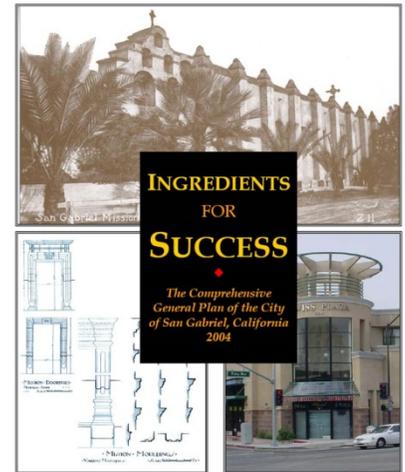
Thursdays
9:00 am – 12:20 pm
RGL 215

Todd Gish, PhD, Instructor

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VKC 250 (next to stairwell; 'doctoral' sign on door; knock for entry)

Office hours: Thursdays 1-2 pm; and by appointment



1. OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This course is a design studio focusing on the creation of alternative proposals for redevelopment of two sites in the city of San Gabriel, California. Site visits will be required, and students will produce graphic deliverables on a weekly basis that, over time and with revision, will contribute to both a final client presentation as well as a project booklet useful for demonstrating the student's capacity for urban design work.

• LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Familiarity with field work, site documentation, interpretation & analysis;
- Identification and interpretation of key public agency planning documents, and their application to a particular site and design;
- Synthesis of a wide range of materials and inputs into a set of design concepts;
- Working iteratively—the continued refining of previous work by incorporating new information and feedback;
- Design criticism of others' work;
- Working with a range of graphic tools to present design ideas clearly and convincingly;
- Refinement of spoken, written, and graphic presentation capabilities.

• FORMAT

- Class meetings will be organized in a studio format. Though timing may vary, a typical session will involve some combination of presentations and critiques of new work; a short break; and lecture with new assignment.
- Attendance and participation during the entire class session is required. (Leaving after your project is discussed is not acceptable; you also have the responsibility to be present and offer comments and criticism of your colleagues' projects. Also, in a studio format, a useful discussion on an important topic can't always be planned, and could happen unpredictably at any time.)

2. COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate study is a stage in professional life; everyone should conduct themselves accordingly. This means that the classroom is a workplace where we get things done—usually with some enjoyment as we learn. Class time is very short, and we need to make the very most of it. You're expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration; to complete assignments on time; to actively participate in discussions; and to treat your colleagues and instructor with courtesy and respect. This expectation of professional conduct extends outside the classroom to any and all correspondence and meetings.

• BLACKBOARD

- This course utilizes the Blackboard web platform at <https://blackboard.usc.edu>, where you'll log in with your USC ID and click on the PPD 531L module. Digital versions of course documents, announcements, and supplementary readings will be posted there.
- You are responsible for checking Blackboard frequently for updates and notices.
- In some cases you will upload digital versions of your assignments there, in addition to a bringing a printed copy to class on the due date.

- CONTACT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Email is the best way to contact me; I check mine frequently..
- You are responsible for checking your USC email (@usc.edu) frequently. It is that address to which any course-related emails will be sent.
- I'll regularly be available during office hours (see page 1), and can also arrange alternative times to meet by appointment.
- Please communicate any concerns or problems you may be having as soon as you're aware of them, rather than waiting until later in the semester, when solutions are few or no longer possible.

- PROTECTING YOUR WORK

- A crashed drive or lost file is not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline. Good advice: be cautious with your work, and **backup your electronic files frequently onto multiple drives**. This is a useful habit to cultivate, one that will eventually save you hours (or more) of work (and frustration) when an electronic/digital problem inevitably occurs.
- Always keep a complete copy of all work you turn in, both digital and hand-drawn.

- ACADEMIC CONDUCT (See below)

- ACADEMIC SUPPORT (See below)

3. EVALUATION & GRADING

Students will be evaluated on the quality, clarity, and completeness of assignments / deliverables as first submitted, and as subsequently revised. Active participation and engagement is another important performance measure.

- BREAKDOWN

- 15% Participation and engagement in all aspects of the course (discussions, collaborations, critiques, reviews)
- 50% Weekly assignments / deliverables
- 15% Mid-semester in-class presentation
- 20% Final in-class presentation & final project document

- GRADES

- Attendance is mandatory, and anyone not attending class will not pass the course.
- Your course grade will be determined by calculating your level of in-class participation in combination with the degree of satisfactory completion of assignments and presentations.
- To earn an 'A' grade in the course, a student must complete all deliverables / assignments on time, and consistently submit work of superior quality. Work must address all aspects of the required assignments, reflect a strong design idea, and reflect critical thinking. Students must revise prior work assignments for the final project based on feedback from the instructor, guest critics, and colleagues in studio. Students must consistently contribute to class discussions, and make constructive critical observations on their colleagues' work.

4. DESIGN WORK

The process of design differs from other academic and creative work, and these aspects will characterize work in this studio.

- *Synthesis*: Collection, analysis, and interpretation of multiple data sources (e.g., lecture content, readings, field work, personal observations, planning & policy documents, local reporting, interviews & discussions) for synthesizing into a set of concepts proposing physical change is at the core of design work.
- *Critique*: Commentary on design work in the form of constructive criticism by the instructor, by invited critics and experts, and by colleagues in the studio is an important part of the design process. This will take place every class meeting in one way or another, and provides another set of inputs for the designer to consider.
- *Iteration*: Revision of design work to incorporate new information and additional ideas can result in anything from minor adjustments to major changes. These revisions will be based on ongoing critiques, further research, and refinement of (and, on occasion, completely replacing) a basic plan or design concept.

- *Context*: Consideration of surrounding physical context is essential to good urban design: how would the adjacent area be impacted by aspects of a design proposal? Conversely, how do existing physical conditions near the site inform elements of a design? Putting this into practice means always having a sense of (and indicating graphically) existing conditions adjacent to the project site.
- *Graphics*: Visual communication is a basic and important skill for urban planners. Aside from a small amount of writing (summaries of research, or overviews of goals and concepts), graphic work will be the medium of both the work process and its products and deliverables—ranging from simple diagramming to a developed presentation.

5. GRAPHIC WORK

In planning practice, tools for design and graphic presentation include a variety of software applications as well as sketching and hand-drawing. In a degree program with a wide variety of student backgrounds, there is bound to be a diversity of ability here. While no previous experience is required for this studio, it is the expressed intention of this course that all **students should demonstrate marked improvement** over the 15 weeks. Students with some background and skill should improve to a level at/near excellence, while those entering with little or no background should be prepared to work very hard and achieve basic competence in this important skill set by the final presentation.

- **This is not a course in software tools.** Rather, it is a studio for learning the process of urban and site design and the skill of communicating proposals for the built environment in oral, written, and visual forms. And while the use of computer graphics is greatly recommended, it is not required. Hand-drawing is acceptable, as long as it meets suitable standards; the scanning of work produced by hand into digital form for incorporation into an overall digital presentation format is strongly encouraged.
- Software workshop sessions (covering Adobe and Sketch-Up tools) are offered as an adjunct to this course. These will be held on weekends early in the semester (tentatively set for Saturdays & Sundays, August 27-28 and September 10-11; each of the sessions offers new instruction), offering the opportunity to start learning these programs, or to polish up on existing experience. **Attendance of workshop sessions is optional, but strongly recommended.** (Also: online tutorials for these are provided free to USC students via <https://itservices.usc.edu/lynda/>.)
- All graphics for this studio will be evaluated for their qualities of communication, clarity, and completeness. They may be produced with any tools available (computer, hand, or some combination), but they must meet these standards of quality.
- The ability to hand-sketch is important for design professionals—even if only for quick, clear diagramming with no further refinement as finished drawings. This is not a requirement for the studio, just a recommendation. More traditional tools and supplies facilitate this kind of work, and are important for any planner to have. (Blick, Utrecht, Graphids, Raw, Top's are some of the art supply retailers in Greater Los Angeles; office supply stores will carry some of these as well. The following are not required, but strongly recommended.)
 - ✓ Camera (phone cam works fine)
 - ✓ Engineering scale (e.g. 1"=100', 1"=200', etc.)
 - ✓ Straight-edge (plastic ruler or triangle)
 - ✓ Sketchbook (any size)
 - ✓ Pad of 11x17 gridded vellum (can be shared among colleagues)
 - ✓ Black drawing pens (fine, medium, & heavy points; e.g., Razor Point, Sharpie, etc.)
 - ✓ Colored pencils* or markers (* more easily revisable)
 - ✓ Roll of tracing paper (12")
 - ✓ roll of artists tape (1/2") or "drafting dots"; push-pins, also.
- PRINTING / SCANNING
 - **All students must have ready access to a reliable scanner and color printer with 11x17 capability.**
 - **Allow sufficient time to complete printing of assignments before class.** Printer problems do not constitute an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline.
- SUBMITTAL OF WORK
 - Students are required to submit their projects in physical (printed) format. (Hand sketches/ drawings should be scanned, so you keep the originals). Physical documents will not be returned. Print two copies at the time of submittal, one for yourself.
 - In addition, at certain times, you'll be required to also upload your work digitally. (For example, teams will upload their site documentation and analysis; and individuals will upload their final presentations at the end of the term.)

6. PROJECT

This studio provides the opportunity to study concepts and principles of urban and site design, and apply them to a local case of (re)development. The project will involve the planning and design of a site, proposing new development and/or reuse. It also calls for design of the public realm at and around the site—looking at opportunities for the project to act as a prototype or catalyst in improving the larger urban environment.

The city of San Gabriel provides an ideal laboratory for planning and design with preservation in mind. A socially and economically diverse community, it is home to one of California's earliest missions as well as other architectural treasures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And, like many municipalities, it faces numerous challenges in attempting to increase its tax base, job creation rate, development of attractive housing, and provision of public amenities—all while trying to protect its unique character and quality of life as a small, livable city.

Since the 2012 demise of formal, government-assisted redevelopment in California, San Gabriel (and cities like it) have lacked the resources necessary to generate site analyses and feasibility studies for potentially catalytic development sites. One purpose of this course is to furnish useful analysis and creative concepts to San Gabriel's Community Development Department to help fill the void.

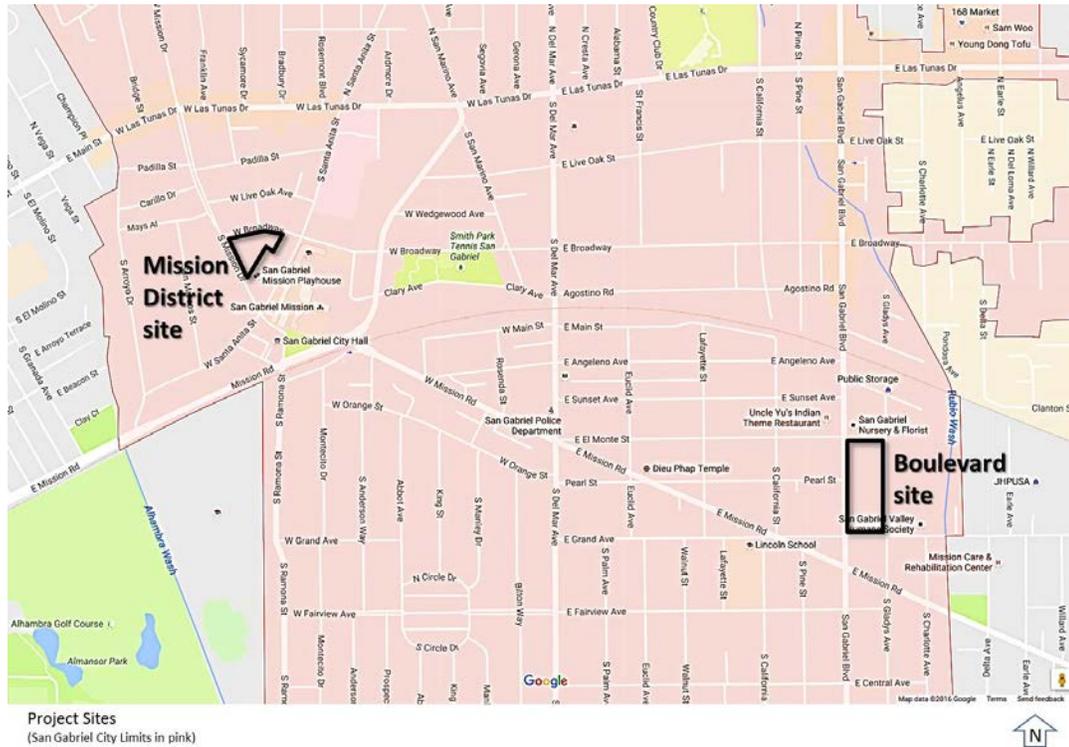
The organizing idea for the class over the course of the semester is this: you are a planning consultant asked to investigate and analyze one of the city's prime opportunity sites; review the city's plans, policies, goals, objectives and regulations as they affect the site; identify and propose possible development scenarios; and finally select one concept, develop and expand it, then present it in some detail.

Both sites identified by San Gabriel planners for this project are high-visibility, high-access locations that offer the chance for new development to meet goals for economic development and quality-of-life delineated by city leaders, in response to input by citizens and residents. Both are sufficiently complex in terms of shape, size, surrounding physical context, and applicable regulation to challenge each designer. Yet each site has unique characteristics to be observed, analyzed, and dealt with in the creative process. (Both sites will be studied, discussed, compared and contrasted over the semester; each student will have the choice on which they will focus their design work.)

- ❖ The **Mission District site** is approximately two acres in size, and presently holds a surface parking lot and two small, older civic buildings; it is also directly adjacent to the remarkable Mission Playhouse built in the 1920s. The site is located in the city's historic Mission District, which serves as San Gabriel's quaint and walkable downtown. Though fairly low in scale, this neighborhood has a distinct *urban village* sensibility of compact development, mix of uses, pedestrian-friendly streets, and mature landscaping. Though some structures are more recent, a municipal imperative exists for preserving landmark buildings and conserving the historic fabric and aesthetic charm of this district. This goal is a subject of the specific plan governing all projects in the area.
- ❖ The **San Gabriel Boulevard site** is currently a family-owned nursery property that has been used in commercial horticulture for generations. It is about six acres in size and fronts on a high-traffic thoroughfare. Existing residential and business development in this area is older and conventionally suburban in character, though an adjacent new and successful townhouse development suggests possibilities for a node of mixed but compatible uses in this neighborhood. City leaders (in one scenario) would like to attract major retailers to this part of the city, but are concerned about the downside of typical suburban designs which emphasize automobility to the detriment of pedestrian experience and street life. Creative design and exploration of newer building types might help accomplish both goals of easy access and dense vitality here. The potential is real to catalyze a new, more economically active and visually attractive major corridor connecting the northern and southern parts of San Gabriel.

The semester-long assignment is to research, document and analyze these sites; read and evaluate existing plans and planning measures in the city as applied to each site; and then propose and develop concepts for potential revitalization / redevelopment of each site.

While planning and urban design work sometimes begins with a program (i.e., a set of required land uses in specified quantities) provided by a client, in this case the project scope also requires the designer to propose a program of uses/ functions/ spaces as part of the design work. (This may be as simple as citing the existing zoning code, development standards, and design guidelines; or you may propose an altogether different set of uses, functions and spaces based on your analysis of the site, its larger context, and/or overall goals stated in the city's general or specific plan documents. In the latter case, be prepared to argue for your recommended changes to public policy.)



7. REQUIRED READING / SELECTED REFERENCES (This list may be added to. Some of these are pdfs available on Blackboard.)

Required reading for this course is comprised of official planning and other documents concerning the City of San Gabriel and its related jurisdictions (larger region, internal neighborhoods). These contain critical information about the municipality, its neighborhoods, the project sites, and the larger goals, specific policies, and other considerations that should inform your design process and project from beginning to end. Note: this list is only partial, and you should **thoroughly search and read the city's website and all links**. Let me know if you find other useful links to add.

- San Gabriel General Plan <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/index.aspx?nid=404>
- San Gabriel Community Development <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/92/Community-Development>
- San Gabriel Planning Department <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/index.aspx?NID=164>
- San Gabriel Zoning/ Land Use <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/index.aspx?NID=169>
- San Gabriel Design Guidelines <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/331/Design-Guidelines>
- Mission District Specific Plan <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/index.aspx?NID=403>
- San Gabriel Historic Preservation <http://sangabrielcity.com/1145/11553/Historic-Preservation>
- SCAG Profile of San Gabriel <http://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/SanGabriel.pdf>
- City of San Gabriel <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/>
- Projects underway in the city <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/index.aspx?NID=731>
- San Gabriel Mission Playhouse <http://missionplayhouse.org/> and <http://www.sangabrielcity.com/79/Mission-Playhouse>
- San Gabriel Nursery & Florist <http://sgnurserynews.com/site/index.php>
- San Gabriel Valley Council of Gov't's <http://www.sgvcoq.org/>
- SGVCOG Plans & Projects <http://www.sgvcoq.org/#!programs/c1kxn>
- San Gabriel Valley Tribune newspaper <http://www.sgvtribune.com/>
- Global Times newspaper <http://www.globaltimes.cn/us-edition/>

8. SCHEDULE

(subject to revision during the semester)

	• Topic(s) Introduced / Assigned	✓ Due @ start of class // Present & Discuss (Specific instructions for each will be posted)
Aug 25 Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions & course overview • Reference readings & materials • Site documentation & analysis • Prep for next week's field trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site assignments (for documentation / analysis phase) ○ Pair up into teams (for documentation / analysis phase) ○ Coordinate site visits & field trip ○ Visit your assigned site, begin documentation/ analysis prior to next week's class
Sept 01 Week 2	<p><u>Field trip to San Gabriel City Hall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation by City staff ○ Site walk (time permitting) ○ Attendance is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ List of <i>informed</i> questions for city staff (individuals) ✓ Summary & analysis of reference readings & materials (individuals) ○ Teams should be working on their Site documentation & analysis, and be well on their way to next week's presentation / critique <p>➤ Working individually & in teams</p>
Sept 08 Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/ Land Use • Scale • Design Concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Site Documentation & Analysis (teams) <p>➤ Working in teams</p>
Sept 15 Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Design & the Public Realm • Site Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revise & update team site analysis; upload to Blackboard for colleagues' use ✓ Program concept diagram & precedents ✓ Scale tests ✓ Design concept diagram & precedents <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Sept 22 Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing in the Third (Vertical) Dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Site plan (existing conditions) ✓ Site plan (proposed concept) <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Sept 29 Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing for Access & Circulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Site Sections ✓ Revisions to Site Plans based on critiques, and new work <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Oct 06 Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing for Preservation / Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access / Circulation Diagrams ✓ Ongoing revisions to various exhibits based on critiques, and new work <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Oct 13 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing for Sustainability • Preparation for Mid-term Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Concept & precedents for Preservation / Conservation ✓ Ongoing revisions to various exhibits based on critiques, and new work <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Oct 20 Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for Mid-term Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Concept & precedents for Sustainability ✓ Written 1-page project summary / overview / "pitch" ○ Tips and instructions for presenting <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Oct 27 Week 10	<p><u>Mid-term Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentations of design to-date ○ Reviews by guest critics* ○ Peer notes by colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Revised versions of all assignments, organized into a coherent presentation ✓ Pin up all required exhibits, per instructions ✓ Bring prepared "pitch" ✓ Be prepared to take notes for 1-2 colleagues <p>➤ Working individually</p>
Nov 03 Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-Review Debrief & Discussion • Revisions to Design & Graphic work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Written summary of comments, critiques, lessons from your Mid-term reviews ○ Peer notes on individual reviews will be posted ○ (Be working on revisions to your design & graphics) <p>➤ Working individually</p>

Nov 10 Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to Design & Graphic work Preparation for Final Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected revisions to previous design & graphics 	➤ Working individually
Nov 17 Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to Design & Graphic work Preparation for Final Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected revisions to previous design & graphics Write-up of revised goals, opportunities, constraints, intentions & final design elements Discuss upcoming reviews, expectations, preparation, timing, etc. 	➤ Working individually
(Nov 24) Week 14	<p>NO CLASS MEETING (Thanksgiving holiday)</p> <p>I'll be available (probably on Tuesday, Nov 22) to consult individually on your prep for next week's reviews. Meeting is <u>not</u> required, but may be useful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be working on your final design presentation materials You may email questions to me and I'll do my best to respond; I'll probably ask you to scan and send whatever image you're asking about. 	
Dec 01 Week 15	<p><u>Final Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations of revised designs Reviews by guest critics * Peer notes by colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised versions of all assignments, organized into a coherent presentation Bring prepared "pitch" Pin up all required exhibits, per instructions Be prepared to take notes for 1-2 colleagues 	➤ Working individually
Dec 08 Finals week	<p>FINAL CLASS MEETING (to be announced)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadline to turn in final package for grading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final exhibit materials, packaged into a finished document (both a printed copy & a digital version) Revisions based on comments in the final review are encouraged but not required 	➤ Working individually

* Guests from our field will be invited to review and critique your projects.

(Schedule is subject to revision during the semester.)

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. (This applies to graphic work as well.) Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/AcademicIntegrityOverview.pdf> Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

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