

LOUIS L THOMAS PhD [AICP](#)

1021 Annin St., Philadelphia, PA 19147

+1 (971) 340-0176 | thomaslou@rowan.edu | he/him/his

CURRENT POSITION

Rowan University; Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability

Assistant Teaching Professor, Sept. 2023 - present

EDUCATION

PhD Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Cambridge, MA

Urban Planning, Policy, & Design, Sept. 2019

Dissertation: *High-Density Parenting – design, policy & family-oriented urbanism*

Examination Fields: City Design & Development, Mediated Placemaking

MCP University of Maryland College Park | College Park, MD

Urban Studies & Planning, 2012

Specializations in Urban Design & Land Use Planning

BA Bard College | Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

Film & Electronic Media, 2000

PREVIOUS ACADEMIC & PLANNING RELATED EMPLOYMENT

Planning & Design Consultant, Mount Pleasant Village (mountpleasantvillage.org) 2022

Created visioning presentation for streetscape improvement initiative.

Bard High School Early College DC

Associate Professor of American History & Urban Studies, Aug. 2022 — June '23

University of Chicago, Social Sciences Division

Postdoctoral Scholar in the Urbanism Lab, Sept. 2020 - Aug. 2021

Community Media Outreach & Zoning Code Rewrite Team,

Montgomery County, MD Planning Department; 20hr/wk 2010–2012

PUBLICATIONS

peer-reviewed:

Thomas, L. 2021. "Committed and 'Won Over' Parents in Vancouver's Dense Family-Oriented Urbanism." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 87:2, 239-253 DOI: [10.1080/01944363.2020.1834871](https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2020.1834871).

Thomas, L. 2021. "From Childless Tower to Child-Full Density: Families and the Evolution of Vancouverism." *Planning Perspectives*. 36:3, 559-581 DOI: [10.1080/02665433.2020.1815568](https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2020.1815568).

other:

Thomas, L. Jan. 17, 2022. "[Dense Family-oriented Urbanism](#)." Invited Op-Ed for [PLATFORM](#).

Thomas, L. 2021. "[Strategies for Family-Oriented Densification](#)." JAPA Takeaway, *Planning*. Winter 12-15.

AWARDS AND HONORS

JPER Writing Workshop for Early Career Planning Scholars, Rutgers 2019

Prestigious expenses paid three-day workshop

Sagalyn and Hack DUSP Grant, MIT 2017 - \$5,000 in research support

Rodwin International Travel Fellowship, MIT 2015 - \$1,250 in research support
Presidential Fellow, MIT 2012–2013 - Full funding of tuition plus living stipend
American Institute of Certified Planners Award, UMD 2012

For highest grade point average while completing the MCP

Urban Studies and Planning Program Alumni Award, UMD 2012

In recognition of commitment to scholarship and academic excellence

Full-time graduate assistantship, UMD 2010–2012

Full funding of tuition and living stipend in exchange for working 20hr/wk

Excellence and Equal Cost (EEC) Scholarship, Bard College 1996–2000

Matched cost of in-state public university, including awards, for financially needy high school students among the top 10 of their graduating class

ExCEL Award, Pepsico Foundation 1996–2000

Competitive college scholarship for children of Pepsico employees

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Teaching Professor, Rowan University,

Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability

Community Planning, Engagement & Site Design (two sections: Graduate & undergraduate) Fall 2023 & 2024

Land Use & Conservation (undergraduate) Fall 2023 & 2024

Introduction to City Planning (two sections, undergraduate) Fall 2023 & 2024

Research Seminar in Planning (undergraduate) Spring 2024 & 2025

Environmental and Sustainability Planning (Graduate) Spring 2023, 2024 & 2025

The Contemporary City on Foot & Film (Graduate & undergrad), Summer 2025

Associate Professor of American History & Urban Studies, Bard Early College DC

Year 2 Seminar in History, Fall 2022 & Spring 2023 (two sections/semester)

History of the Americas (HS), Fall 2022 & Spring 2023 (two sections/semester)

Professorial Lecturer in Sustainable Urban Planning, George Washington University

The Contemporary City on Foot & Film (Graduate), Summer 2022

Qualitative Methods for Planners (Graduate), Fall 2021

Adjunct Lecturer, Georgetown University, Urban & Regional Planning Program

History & Theory of Planning (Graduate), Fall 2021 & Spring 2022

Affordable Housing Strategies (Graduate), Fall 2021

Capstone Advisor:

Jacob Foster (2023) *The Last Parcel: Looking Back on Urban Waterfronts to Guide Vancouver's Northeast False Creek*

Regina M. Bleck (2021) *Repositioning Affordable Housing Strategies*

Before Gentrification: What can North Philadelphia learn from Vienna?

Lecturer, University of Maryland College Park, Dept. of Urban Studies & Planning

Qualitative Research Design & Methods (Graduate), Spring 2019 & 2022

Urban Design Software (Graduate), Winter 2019 & 2020

Adjunct Professor, University of the District of Columbia,

College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability & Environmental Science

Urban Sustainability (Undergraduate), Spring 2022 Environmental

Health (Undergraduate), Fall 2021

Environmental Studies & Sustainability (Undergraduate), Fall 2019

Urban Land Use Planning (Graduate), Spring 2020
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Hunter College, Dept. of Urban Policy & Planning
 Qualitative Research Design & Methods (Graduate), Spring & Summer 2020
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies & Planning
PhD Instructor
 Introduction to Urban Design & Development (Graduate), Fall 2015
 Special Seminar: Urban Studies & Planning (Graduate), Fall 2015
Teaching Assistant
 Qualitative Methods for Planners & Designers (Graduate), Spring 2015
 Introduction to Urban Design & Development (Graduate), Fall 2014
 Introduction to Urban Design & Development (Undergraduate), Fall 2013

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies & Planning
Research Assistant for Prof. Brent D. Ryan, Spring 2014 & Spring 2016
*Researched and tested via GIS the Transect Theory of New Urbanism;
 Analyzed Flint, MI's Community Land Trust program through mapping*
Research Assistant for Prof. Annette M. Kim, Summer 2013
*Member of the Sidewalk Laboratory (SLAB); edited videos, provided research
 and technical assistance for an exhibition at MIT of the lab's work on street
 vendors in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam*

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND EXHIBITS

Panelist, Building Strong Towns: A Roundtable (May 14, 2025) with NJ Mayors
 Sheena C. Collum, Township of South Orange Village & Dr. Jody Veler, City of
 Salem. A Community Conversation on Strong Towns Principles at the Haddon
 Township Library.

Georgetown MURP Faculty Debate (2023), "Can You Raise Kids in Cities?" with
Prof. Lou Thomas and Prof. Leila Batties

Thomas, L. (2022). "Committed and 'Won-over' Parents in Vancouver's Dense
 Family-Oriented Urbanism" Paper presentation, *Child in the City World
 Conference*, Dublin, Ireland.

Interview on UCLA's [Housing Voice](#) podcast: [Ep 14: Family-Friendly Urbanism with
 Louis Thomas](#) (2021)

Invited Featured Speaker "New Futures: Design & The Future of Childhood,"
 at the GSD's [Design Impact Vol. 5.](#) (2021)

Thomas, L. (2019). "Great Streets Without Trees: Assessing Quality Over Quantity in
 Urban Tree Canopies." Presentation, Green Cities Summit, Washington, DC.

Thomas, L. (2019). "Creating and Contesting an Everyday District Center: a new Civic
 Plaza for Columbia Heights." Paper presentation, D.C. History Conference.

Thomas, L. (2019). "From Anti-Density to Podium-Tower: the untold history of
 Vancouverism." Paper presentation, Society for American City and
 Regional Planning History (SACRPH) Conference in Arlington, VA.

Thomas, L. (2019). "Committed and 'Won-over' Parents in Vancouver's Dense
 Family-Oriented Urbanism" Paper presentation, Association of Collegiate
 Schools of Planning (ACSP) conference in Greenville, SC.

- Thomas, L.** (2018). "High-Density Parenting: Urban Design & Childrearing in the densifying North American City." Paper presentation, Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) conference in Buffalo, NY. Also presented at MAPPoF the Future: A Research and Creative Practice Symposium conference at the University of Maryland, College Park.
- Thomas, L.** (2016). "The Educative Potential of the Right to the City." Paper presentation, The Space of Struggle: a mini-conference on radical planning in Portland, OR.
- Thomas, L.** (2015). "Creating and Contesting an Everyday District Center: a new Civic Plaza for Columbia Heights, DC." Paper presentation, Society for American City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH) Conference in Los Angeles, CA.
- Thomas, L.** (chair); Arroyo, J.; Gudis, C.; & Kim, A. (2015) Roundtable Discussion - From City Beautiful to Livable City: Reflections on Art, Space, and Politics over a Century of City Planning. Society for American City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH) Conference in Los Angeles, CA.
- Rabins, S. & Thomas, L.** (2014). "The Provision of a Decent, Pleasant, and Humane Environment: remarks on the (un)remarkable public spaces of Kendal Square." Video 7min. Screened at the Illuminus Festival, Boston.
- Thomas, L.** (2014). "Baltimore's Oldtown Mall: walking on sunshine or the ghost of an everyday neighborhood." Paper presentation, International Planning History Society (IPHS) Conference in St. Augustine, FL.
- Manning, J. & Thomas, L.** (writ/dir/ed.) (2007) "Little Terrors." Video 28min. Experimental narrative/documentary on the psychic reverberations of war, media, and contemporary urban landscapes. Screened at the Portland (OR) International Film Festival, 2008.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Thomas, L.** High Density Parenting (book prospectus) – Adding a US case and reworking dissertation into a book.
- Thomas, L.** "Baltimore's Oldtown Mall: walking on sunshine or the ghost of an everyday neighborhood." Paper being prepared for journal submission. Interest expressed by the Journal of Planning History.
- Thomas, L.** "Creating and Contesting an Everyday District Center: a new Civic Plaza for Columbia Heights, DC." Paper being prepared for journal submission.
- Modan, Gabriella Gahlia; Leeman, Jennifer; and Thomas, L.** "The Gentrification of Bilingualism," (working title). Paper being prepared for submission to the Journal of Sociolinguistics.
- Arroyo, J. & Thomas, L.** "Building Codes and Bohemian Space: the avoidable lethal dangers of precariousness" (working title). A study of the cyclical creation of illegal event spaces and post-disaster event national crack-downs in the context of a lack of state support for the arts and youth culture.
- Mehta, A. & Thomas, L.** "New Media Technologies, Social Movements and Urban Planning." Paper being prepared for submission to the Journal of Digital and Media Literacy.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Designing Early Childhood Outdoor Environments, Certificate Program, The Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, NC State University. 2019
Certified Online Instructor, University of the District of Columbia, 2019
Grant Writing Class, Grant Writing USA, two-day workshop, July 2019
Teaching Certificate Program, Teaching & Learning Laboratory, MIT 2014
Digital Drafting and Mapping, Masters CAD course in UMD's LArch program. 2012
ULI Hines Urban Design Competition, Team Captain for UMD's official curated student team. 2012
SketchUp for Site Design 3-day workshop with Daniel Tal, ASLA, 2011
Green Economics & Sustainable Development Graduate Course, Portland State University, OR. Fall 2006
Intro to Life Drawing Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, Fall 1994

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Rowan University Faculty Advisor to the Student Planning Organization, serves on the undergraduate and graduate planning program committees.
University of the District of Columbia Served on IRB Committee, Fall 2019
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies & Planning
City Design & Development Group First Field Reading List Update, 2014
City Design & Development Group PhD Applicant Student Reviewer, 2014

LANGUAGES

12 weeks Spanish Immersion Classes in Guatemala and El Salvador, 2010
 PLQE in Xela, Guatemala, and at CIS in San Salvador, El Salvador

RELATED PROFESSIONAL & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Volunteer Videographer, Design Studio for Social Intervention (ds4si.org) 2014
 Created documentary video for 'Street Lab: Upham's' project.
Music Composer, Sandy Montana, Portland, OR, 2008–2009
 Created music for Bonneville Environmental Fund (BEF) promotional videos
Video Editor, Good Magazine, Portland, OR, 2007
 Edited videos on sustainability issues for online magazine content.
 Motorcycle Doctors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tynto1DUMFg>
 Portland Aerial Tram: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j60nq73EAYk>
 Totes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l4GoBsfwTM&feature=channel>
Volunteer, ILLAHEE: a forum for environmental innovators, Portland, OR, 2007
 Edited video of author Michael Revkin's talk on global warming
Volunteer, Café Au Play/Tabor Community Commons, Portland, OR, 2006–2007
 Created video to aid non-profit in fundraising: <http://youtu.be/qJb6jgy5xH4>
 Documented building remodeling for future LEED certification
Volunteer, REACH Community Development Corporation, Portland, OR, 2006
 Assisted with fundraising media
Writer/Director/Editor, Adventures in Architecture & Sock Monkey, 2006
 Two videos screened in Portland, OR's 1 min Video Festival Sock Monkey awarded Funniest Video in show
Instructor, SUN After School Program, Portland, OR, Fall 2005 Taught

middle-school students how to create their own videos
Instructed bicycle safety class through the Community Cycling Center
Developed curriculum and taught painting class
Technical Advisor, Lay Down Tracks, 16mm 60min Documentary, 2004–2006
Study of five Americans who travel for work, from a carnie to an executive
Wrote press releases and designed promotional materials for screenings
Educator, Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria, Queens, NYC, 2000–2004
Developed and taught workshops, tours, and demonstrations to advance media literacy on the science and production of film, TV and digital media
Actor/Video Editor/Songwriter, Doomefishe Theatre Troupe, NYC, 2001–2010
Avant-garde theatre troupe that played to audiences of over 100 people
Video Colorist, Struggling for Health and Justice, NYC, 2004
Performed video color correction for documentary on rural healthcare
Video Editor, Oxygen Media, NYC, 2000–2004
Edited for the Isaac Mizrahi Show, oversaw two assistant editors
Volunteer, Groundswell Mural Project, Brooklyn, NY, 2004
Supervised teenagers painting a mural in a community garden
Volunteer, Office Assistant, Fifth Avenue Committee, Brooklyn, NY, 2003
Assisted the Capital Campaign for a tenants' rights CDC
Volunteer, Video Editor, Paper Tiger TV, NYC, Fall 2003
Edited video documentary featuring Howard Zinn
Instructor/Question Writer, the Princeton Review, NYC, 2000–2001
Taught SAT prep to high school students and wrote test questions

REFERENCES

Zachary Christman

Professor and Chair, Department of Geography, Planning, and Sustainability
School of Earth & Environment, College of Science and Math, Rowan University
christmanz@rowan.edu | 856-256-4810 office (direct)

Mahbubur Meenar

Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Planning, & Sustainability
School of Earth & Environment, College of Science and Math, Rowan University
meenar@rowan.edu | 856-256-4811

Brent D. Ryan, Dissertation Chair

Vice Provost and Professor of Urban Design & Public Policy
Department of Urban Studies & Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
(617) 324-1874 | bdr@mit.edu

Lawrence Vale

Professor of Urban Design & Planning
Department of Urban Studies & Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
(617) 253-0561 | ljvale@mit.edu

Annette M. Kim

Associate Professor
Director, Spatial Analysis Lab (SLAB), University of Southern California
(213) 740-1801 | annettek@usc.edu