Fall 2010

Department of Urban & Regional Planning

PLAN 600
PUBLIC POLICY & PLANNING THEORY
Wednesdays, 9-11:30

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OVERVIEW

Planning theory offers interpretive and analytical touchstones to understand, analyze and reflect upon planning practice and planning institutions. Plans are attempts to create particular, deliberate futures for individuals, organizations or communities. Planning is a process undertaken by government as well as civil society; it shapes as well as reflects the meaning and forms of governance in a society. Planning is informed by historical memory, knowledge of natural systems and social systems. Planning necessarily involves deliberation over the definition of societal or organizational problems, the choice of "appropriate" intervention strategies to mitigate problems and the desirability of particular futures for groups and communities.

The distribution of power shapes every sphere of planning. Debates about social power have focused on capacities for people to ‘make a difference’ in the face of powerful structural forces within contemporary globalized capitalist systems. Debates over who is the planner in this context range from ‘modernist’ ideas of the government as regulator and the planner as expert to the planner as a facilitator of social decision-making within participatory governance processes. Planning has also come to accept different ways of knowing and of taking action that arise from differences in lived experiences and collective identities. This course examines questions of power, the social construction of urban and regional space, and the role of the planner in theory and from explorations of real world experiences. It reflects on history(ies) of planning, and, as a field serving the public interest, is deeply concerned with ethics in professional practice.

This course focuses on the concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior associated with the practice of planning. The emphasis in the course will be on developing the ability to be a “reflective practitioner.” Being reflective requires being attentive to the tacit theories, assumptions, understandings and expectations that shape our own analysis and decisions as well as those of others.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the conclusion of PLAN 600, students should be able to:

PLAN 600 Student Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of PLAN 600, students should be able to:

1. Outline the major intellectual trends in the evolution of urban planning and show their impact on contemporary planning thought and practice.

2. Describe how power operates in the planning and implementation of plans, the diverse forms and sources of community power and how the planner exercises power in planning processes.

3. Identify, analyze and critique conventional justifications for planning including efficiency, market failures and social justice.

4. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of specific planning processes designed to address a societal [or organizational] problem or opportunity.

5. Identify the primary types of ethical issues likely to be confronted by planners and describe the types of ethical frameworks that shape planning practice.

6. Describe some of the challenges and innovations in planning, such as those in environmental planning, land use and infrastructure planning, community and social planning, and planning in Asia and the Pacific region.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Position Papers – Each student will submit one position paper during the course of the semester. You will be able to sign up for the desired week. Position papers are 7-8 page (double-spaced) papers based on an assigned week’s readings. You are asked to respond to a general set of questions on the syllabus for that topic. Alternatively, you can critique the set of articles by discussing the strengths and/or weaknesses of their arguments or evidence, analyzing the logic of their arguments, and reexamining the conclusions they are making in light of other information or perspectives you are free to draw into your paper. The paper should take a clear position on a question and support that position drawing from the articles read. You will be asked to orally present a short 5-7 minute summary of your position in class and post your position paper.

2. Weekly abstract and synthesis – For at least eight of the weeks for which you are not signed up to prepare a position paper, you will be required to submit a two-page single-spaced abstract for that week’s readings. An abstract is an extremely concise
summary of the main argument of the respective papers along with a description of
the main logic of the argument. The summary should tie the themes or arguments
of the articles together in a synthetic narrative. The synthetic narrative could
highlight common themes, contrast points of view, focus on the complementary
elements of the arguments, or critique the articles in relation to one another. You
can choose the eight sessions for which you wish to submit an abstract.

3. **Midterm Examination** – The midterm examination is scheduled for Week 9 at the
regular class time. It will cover all subjects up to that class session and will include a
series of essay questions.

4. **A Case Study**—Each student is expected to write a 10-page (single-spaced) case
study of a planning project of your choice. Your paper will be a critique of the plan
along with the planning process. The latter may be limited based on the availability
of information on the process. In addition to the paper, each student will present a
5-minute powerpoint presentation (no more than 6 slides) summarizing the main
points of the paper. Each presenter should be prepared respond to questions about
his/her case. [see attached guidelines for case conten]

**Grading Policies**

Grades will be based on the following distribution:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Papers (10 pts each)</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Abstracts (3 pts each)</td>
<td>24 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>36 pts</td>
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Students are reminded that in order to advance to candidacy they must earn "B" or
better in all of DURP's core courses. Students who do not earn a B in PLAN 600 the first
time may repeat the course once.

**Text**

1. **Course Reader** (*available on CD-ROM*)
   Foresman. (*Please purchase Stone book online at a bookstore or any online book
dealer by Week 4*).

**WEEKLY READING LIST**
PART I: HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Week 1. Introduction [August 25]

Week 2. Planning Histories and Theories [September 1]
What have been the major developments in urbanization?
What is planning theory?
What have been some of the major strands of thought in planning theory and history?
What are some of the major approaches that theorists have articulated for planning practice?
Why should we bother to study theory?


Week 3. Historical Overview of Urbanization and Planning [September 8]
How have cities evolved?
What are some of the problems that have accompanied urbanization?
How have city officials sought to shape the provision of urban services and the quality of urban life?


Week 4: Utopianism and a History of Reform [September 15]
What were the catalysts for the urban reform movements during the 19th and 20th century?
What is utopianism and what is its significance in planning history?
What lessons can be drawn from reform movements for the future of planning?


**Week 5: The Political Context of Planning** [September 22]

How does political power shape cities?
How—and by whom---is power exercised in planning processes?
What power does the planner have and how is it exercised?


**PART II: RATIONALES FOR PLANNING**

**Week 6. Economic Justifications for Planning** [September 29]

How are planned interventions, such as zoning or environmental regulations, justified in a market economy?
What is meant by “public goods?”
What are “market failures?” Under what circumstances do they justify government intervention?

**Week 7: Planning and Social Justice** [October 6]

How are concepts of social justice, equity and efficiency defined and what are the challenges in defining them?

What is meant by “situated ethical judgment” and how would this apply to rationales of social justice, equity and/or efficiency?

How does Harvey explain the injustices of the world? How does he propose working toward social justice within the urban context?

How do planners create "nonreformist reforms" directed at improving the lives of residents of cities as Fainstein suggests?


**Week 8: Sustainability** [October 13]

What are the different ways to define “sustainability”? What are the main differences in definitions?

What are some of the main issues that planners face in attaining sustainability according to the various definitions?

What lessons do the land management and housing examples share (and not share) in regards to the notion of sustainability?

What does it mean for sustainability to be a rationale for planning?

- Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan (www.hawaii2050.com)

**Week 9: Mid-Term** [October 20]

**Part III: PLANNING PRACTICE**

**Week 10: The Landscape of Planning Practice** [October 27]

What professional roles do planners play?

What skills and knowledge do they require?
How are skills and knowledge acquired—and how might they be acquired more effectively?


**Week 11. Defining Problems** [November 3]

What are the strategies used to define a problem?
How do problem definitions shape the range of solutions considered?
Are there better ways to define problems than others?
What roles do planners play in defining problems?


**Week 12: Identifying Solutions** [November 10]

Why are behavioral assumptions important in developing policy, planning or programmatic solutions?
What are important considerations planners face in developing alternatives and making decisions?
What role can planners play in searching for the “best” solutions?


**Week 13: Planning with Groups** [November 17]

What are the possible relationships between power and participation?
What are the challenges in gaining greater civic participation and empowerment?
How should we evaluate community participation in planning processes?

Week 14: Plan Implementation and Evaluation [November 24]
What are the conditions under which implementation can be most successful?
What role can planners play in ensuring successful implementation?
What does a systematic approach to evaluation entail?
What are some of the major issues planners face in the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy or planning process?


Week 15: Planning Ethics [December 1]
What are some approaches that planners can take to making ethical choices?
What ethical considerations should planners take into account when making decisions?
How is the APA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct helpful and what are its limitations in guiding ethical choices?

• APA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Download this from: http://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm
• Howe, Elizabeth. 1994. "Normative Ethics in Planning".

Week 16: Student Presentations [December 8]
PLAN 600

PLANNING & POLICY

THEORY

Fall, 2010

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