

PLAN 247-SOLVING URBAN PROBLEMS

Department of City and Regional Planning • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill • Fall 2019



This is an introductory course on city planning. You will become familiar with the various issues and challenges planners face, stakeholders involved (e.g. local government, business owners, real estate developers, community activists, etc.), and the methods planners use to solve them.

The course is focused on one main question: How do planners solve urban problems? We'll look at the approaches, tools, and best practices that planners use to identify and solve urban problems.

When we meet as a class, we will discuss how planners address problems such as affordable housing, economic development, and transportation (public transit access, new modes), taking into consideration national, regional, and local politics, climate change, and social equity issues.

Methods and tools we will use in this class include ArcGIS, Excel, PowerPoint, Data visualization (Tableau, Excel), Census data, planning documents (General Plans, Zoning Codes, Capital Improvement Programs, etc.). We will do out-of-the-class activities in small groups, such as walkability analysis, urban design analysis, etc. once the weather improves. You need to observe the urban environment.

This course is intended for students who want a Minor in City and Regional Planning as well as anyone who is interested in learning about urban planning. Be warned—there are a lot of acronyms in planning, but don't let that scare you off. And once you get used to them, you'll become a planning nerd.

This course is a companion course for PLAN 246: Cities of the Future, which focuses on the history of US cities and early urban planning movements. PLAN 247 will provide a general background but will not go into significant historical detail. In other words, I may name drop and give you references to follow up on your own, but we will not spend a significant time on the history of planning.

Disclaimer: We are not going to go over every planning issue. We may not get to a planning issue you are interested in. Take advantage of the individual assignments as an opportunity to explore issues that are important to you. I will bring in short articles for in-class discussion to complement our assigned readings and to also highlight other planning issues we may not be able to discuss in-depth.

Reusing other course materials: If you are working on a similar topic in another class, you can use the research and materials, but you cannot use the same report. For example, you can discuss climate change and planning, but it should be focused on the what a city is doing to address this.

At the completion of this course, students are expected to gain the following knowledge and skills:

1. A general understanding of contemporary urban planning issues (persistent and emerging)
2. A familiarity with methods and techniques used to solve urban planning issues
3. Ability to assess strengths and weaknesses of urban policies
4. Ability to present complex information through both written, oral, and visual presentations.

As a student, you are expected to:

- Complete all readings prior to class and come prepared to discuss
- Complete assignments on time.
- Ask questions in class, via email or at office hours, if you're unclear about a concept.

Tues/Thurs 11:00-12:15pm

Sitterson Rm 009

Instructor: Dr. Allie Thomas

alainna@ad.unc.edu

Office Hours

TUESDAYS 1:30-4:00 PM

@ New East 317

Sign up up@alliethomas.youcanbook.me

Teaching Assistants

Nora Schwaller, Head TA, #602

Luke Lowry Section #603

Lauren Turner Section #604

Veronica Brown Section #601

Course Requirements and Grading

- **Deadlines and exam dates are subject to change**, especially if we experience hurricanes, water shutoffs, etc. I always try to change dates in your favor, meaning assignments or exams will be due later, not earlier. But this also means that grading will be done later as well. Your flexibility is appreciated.

Assignment	Due Dates	% of grade
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION	Attendance will be taken at all classes, recitations. One unexcused absence is allowed. I often drop hints of what will be on the exam in class.	10%
READING QUIZ	Mondays at 11:59 pm. Online. Allowed two attempts; timed, open book.	10%
EXAMS Graded on a curve.	EXAM #1: Week 6 Sept 26 (10%) Study Guide: Week 5 EXAM #2: Week 9 Oct 17 (10%) Study Guide: Week 8 EXAM #3: Week 13 Nov 14 (10%) Study Guide: Week 12	30%
Assignment#1: Case Study Demographics Assessment	Handout: Week 1 Thursday Due Week 10: October 24	5% (up to +3% extra credit)
Assignment #2: Case Study	Handout: Week 1 -Thursday Case Study Topic: Week 2 (ungraded) Case Study Group: Week 3 (ungraded) Case Study Draft: Week 7 October 3/ Return Week 9 October 17 Case Study Final (Individual): Week 12 Nov 7 Poster presentations: Week 14 Nov 19 or Nov 21	30% (20% case study; 5% poster & 5% recommendations)
Assignment #3: Op-Ed	Handout: Week 4 Sept 12 First Draft due: Week 15 November 26 –Thanksgiving week Final Draft due: December 12 hand in class	15%

Grading Scale

A 93%+

A- 92.99%-89.5%

B+ 89.49%-85%

B 84.99%-83%

B- 82.99%-79.5%

C+ 79.49%-75%

C 74.99%-73%

C- 72.99%-69.5%

D+ 69.49%-65%

D 64.99%-63%

D- 62.99%-59.5%

F 59.49% or less

Your grades will be updated in as timely matter as possible on Sakai. Reading quizzes, in most cases, will be graded immediately. If you see any discrepancy or errors, please bring it to the attention of your TA immediately.

ASSIGNMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

Reading Quiz (10%)

Reading quizzes are to be completed by Mondays at 11:59 pm. You will have a total of 10 reading quizzes over the semester. The lowest will be tossed. Reading quizzes are open book. Similar questions will appear on the exams. Reading quizzes can include in-class readings, podcasts, films, guest speaker content.

Examinations (30%)- We'll provide you with a study guide that includes example questions and answers. The exams will be comprised of True/False, Multiple Choice, Short answer, and Matching. Short answer: one word, a couple of sentences, but not a short essay. All examinations will be done online on Sakai.

Case study report (30% → 20% individual case study +10% poster presentation & group recommendations)

Individual case study: The Town of Chapel Hill has asked you to provide them with a best practice to improve the city. You will conduct a case study on any best practice in urban planning. You can consider either international or US examples. Examples of case studies include: Bikeshare programs, transit-oriented development, downtown revitalization, stormwater management/green infrastructure. You will discuss the history of the program, main stakeholders, motivation for the program, and why it is seen as successful. Then, you will discuss why you think it would be a good idea for the Town of Chapel Hill. You will submit this paper in four parts and will receive feedback along the way. This is a short paper of no more than

You will need to work with three other students on your recommendations and group poster. Your group should be created around a theme. Theme examples include: Transportation –with each of you taking on a different transportation issue. Or, it can be on Housing, etc. You can also have a geographical theme, such as North Carolina, Charlotte, Southeastern Region.

Your group poster presentation is a quick 5-minute summary of your cases and findings. You create a poster as a group and a short write up (2-3 pages at the most) that synthesizes your findings and makes recommendations. Your group should be made up of members from your recitation so that you have time to meet.

Op-Ed 15% (5% Rough Draft; 10% Final)

The op-ed can be written on the same urban planning issue as your case study. Unlike the case study report, you will be allowed to be as opinionated as you like about the issue. You must provide evidence for your views. This evidence should be taken from course lectures, case studies, readings, and your own research, as applicable. Your references should not be from Wikipedia nor solely from newspapers. You need to use resources such as planning reports, meeting minutes, professional reports, etc. You can start with newspaper reports to get ideas about possible sources and places to look for primary sources.

Semester at-a-glance and Important Dates

Part 1. Planning Fundamentals		
Week 1	Aug 20, 22	Intro to Course. What is Planning? Why do we plan? What are urban problems? Handouts—Syllabus; Assignment #1, #2 (Thurs)
Week 2	Aug 27, 29	Governance and Planning; Public Participation Reading quiz #1
Week 3	Sept 3, 5	Planning and Zoning Reading quiz #2
Week 4	Sept 10, 12	Legal Framework of Planning and Zoning, pt 1 + Guest speaker Reading quiz #3 Handout –Assignment #3: Sept 12
Week 5	Sept 17, 19	Legal Framework of Planning and Zoning, pt 2; Comprehensive Plan/General Plan Reading quiz #4; Handout –Study Guide
Week 6	Sept 24, 26	Review Sept 24 & Exam #1: Sept 26
Part 2. Case Study: Foxconn and Wisconsin—Economic Development, Eminent Domain, governance		
Week 7	Oct 1, 3	Case Study: Foxconn and Racine, WI Reading quiz #5
Week 8	Oct 8, 10	Case Study: Foxconn and Racine, WI Reading quiz #6; Handout –Study Guide
Week 9	Oct 15, 17	Review Oct 15 Exam #2: October 17 Reading quiz #7
Part 3. Transportation, Jobs, and Housing		
Week 10	Oct 22, 24	Transportation Planning; Bus Rapid Transit Project, Chapel Hill –guest speaker Reading quiz #8
Week 11	Oct 29, 31	Transportation & Housing/Community Development Reading quiz #9
Week 12	Nov 5, 7	Housing/Community Development Reading quiz #10; Handout –Study Guide
Week 13	Nov 12, 14	Review & Exam #3: Nov 14
Week 14	Nov 19, 21	Poster Presentations (both days); Op-ed draft due
Week 15*	Nov 26, 28	Op-ed lab; Thanksgiving
Week 16	Dec 3	Last Day of class/Course evals.
FINAL December 12 @NOON		

Late Assignments

Assignments are marked down 5% per day.

IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL OR PERSONAL EMERGENCY, LET ME KNOW ASAP.

Academic Assistance

My purpose is to help you to excel in this learning environment. Should you need further assistance beyond my help, please consult the following on-campus resources:

The Writing Center: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>

Academic Success Program (for students with learning disabilities (LD) and/or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): <http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/>

Learning Center: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/acadserv/learn.html>

Counseling and Wellness Services: <http://campushealth.unc.edu>

Honor code

The UNC honor Code states: "It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the honor code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity." We are committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html> If you have questions it is your responsibility to ask the professor about the Code's application. All written work, and other projects must be submitted with a signature that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

Absences

Students are permitted to miss class for EXCUSABLE absences only (for details about what an excused absence is, see UNC-Chapel Hill's attendance policy below). If a student has unexcused absences, their attendance and participation grade will be affected. [Basically, attendance is required.] <https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>

"For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments."

You are allowed one unexcused absence. Your second unexcused absence will result in a penalty of .5% off of your participation grade.

Laptops and cell phones

Please turn off your cellphones before entering class. If you must have your phone on during class because of an extraordinary circumstance, please let me know beforehand. Laptops are permissible only for classroom purposes. You must turn off all other programs including web browsers, emails, instant messaging, etc. If laptops are used for anything other than taking notes, I will ask you stop using your laptop during class time.

Disability

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you may need to contact the Academic Services office that houses the Academic Success Program for coordination in your academic accommodations. Please contact me to discuss any accommodations that may be required to satisfy your needs.

Readings

The lectures will not cover all of the material in the reading, so it is essential that you keep up with the required reading. If you have any questions on the readings or if certain concepts are unclear, please let your TA know in recitation, or ask during or after lecture.

Course outline and Readings

All readings should be completed before class. Reading quizzes will close at 11:59 pm on Mondays.

Week 1: Overview of Class. Short introduction

Brief overview of course; course expectations; small group ice breakers. Thurs: In-class reading and discussion.

Assignment #1 Handout

Week 2: Governance and Planning; Public Participation

Reading: *Planning in the USA 4th edition*: Ch 1-2 (skip pp. 11-14 only discussion on planning theory); Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Week 3: Planning and Zoning

Reading: *Planning in the USA 4th edition*: Ch 3-4

Tentative Guest speaker: Phil McDaniel, Library –US Census data

Week 4: Legal Framework of Planning and Zoning, Part 1

Reading: *Planning in the USA 4th edition*: Ch 5

Week 5: Legal Framework of Planning and Zoning, Part 2

Reading: *Planning in the USA 4th edition*: Ch 6

Guest speaker: GoTriangle Community Outreach staff

Week 6: Review and Exam #1

Part 2: Case study #1

Week 7-9: Case study: Foxconn and Racine, WI

Kaufman, Dan. "Did Scott Walker and Donald Trump Deal Away the Wisconsin Governor's Race to Foxconn?" *The New Yorker*, November 3, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/did-scott-walker-and-donald-trump-deal-away-the-governors-race-to-foxconn>

I will post this article on Sakai.

Podcast: Reply All- "Negative Mount Pleasant"

Additional readings to check out, seek Reply All's website for this episode: <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/reply-all/wbhjwd>

Quinn, Jimmy. "The Foxconn Plant Is a Bad Deal for Wisconsin Taxpayers" *The National Review* <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/07/wisconsin-foxconn-plant-bad-deal-for-taxpayers/>

Additional readings to check out, seek Reply All's website for this episode: <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/reply-all/wbhjwd>

Week 9: Review and Exam #2

Part 3: Transportation Planning

Week 10 Transportation Planning; Chapel Hill Bus Rapid Transit case study

Lecture topic: Overview of transportation planning. Link between transportation and land use. Bus Rapid transit. Origins. Current cities considering BRT.

Readings:

The Geography of Urban Transportation, Peter O. Muller: Ch. 3 "Transportation and Urban Form: Stages in the Spatial Evolution of the American Metropolis", pp.56-85.

Ian Carlton (2007). Histories of Transit-Oriented Development: Perspectives on the Development of the TOD Concept Real Estate and Transit, Urban and Social Movements, Concept Protagonist. (IURD Working Paper).

Week 11: Transportation case study; Housing and Community Development

Guest speaker from Chapel Hill BRT project.

Reading: *Chapel Hill BRT plan (select parts); Parking and Housing (Shoup);*

Week 12: Housing and Community Development

Housing policy in the United States.

Reading: **Crane, R., & Manville, M.** (2008). People or Place? Revisiting the Who Versus the Where of Urban Development. *Land Lines*.

Alexander von Hoffman (2009): Housing and Planning: A Century of Social Reform and Local Power, Journal of the American Planning Association, 75:2, 231-244

Public Housing Timeline, 1933–1993, Journal of the American Planning Association, 78:4, 359-359

Making of Ferguson

<http://prospect.org/article/making-ferguson-how-decades-hostile-policy-created-powder-keg>

Week 13: Review & Exam #3

Week 14: Poster Presentations

Week 15: Op-ed draft due. Thanksgiving

Week 16: Last day of class December 3/ Course evaluations

Final: Thursday December 12 at noon.