CRP 2010:
People, Planning and Politics in the City
Spring 2017 (3 cr.)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:10-11:25 a.m.
Rockefeller Hall Room 112

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What do planners do? The simple answer—they guide future action—can be too simple, because you might still wonder, “Well, whose actions do they guide?” or “Do city planners have any real power, relative to a city’s elected politicians?” You might also wonder, “In a democracy, what role should planners play when citizens disagree with each other about the uses of land, the protection of the environment, and even the proper role of government?” You might wonder too, “What’s required to be a good planner?”

We cannot answer all of these questions in this course, but we can make a good beginning. We will see that planning takes place in many settings, in city hall departments as well as in community organizations, for example. Planning takes place throughout public life, in private sector businesses, in families and even, of course, in personal life. In CRP 2010 we will focus particularly on the work of planners and citizens who’re concerned with issues of public involvement and equity, with place-making and innovative neighborhood planning, and with the challenges of responding to diverse citizen interests in resolving recurring and challenging public disputes.

We begin with the work of an entrepreneurial Cornell graduate (and past President of the American Planning Association), who challenged the city planning profession to respond seriously to poverty and suffering in American cities. Norman Krumholz’s “equity planning” presents no simple recipe, no technical fix, for our urban problems, but we can learn a great deal from his and his staff’s experiences, successes and failures alike.

We then address the prospects of dealing with diverse differences of opinion, values and interests—in contexts of both interconnectedness and promises of “public participation”—challenges of planning about which “equity planning” has been relatively silent. How, for example, can planners deal with interdependence, or encourage public participation, to resolve public disputes and not simply have passionate participation lead to frustration, endless ‘talk, talk, talk,’ or impasse? In the heat of politicized, emotional disputes, how can planners and designers listen critically and distinguish exaggerated demands from real interests? Here we can learn from the "practice stories" of planners, community organizers, and mediators of public disputes as well as from participatory design practices as well.

We will assess, then, a series of complex stories about place-making, conflict and public “participation” in community affairs. Adrienne Kaufmann, for example, will describe her courageous work bringing together those with deep value differences—to
address issues often lost in "anti-abortion" and "pro-choice" debates. Malik Yakini addresses urban food security organizing in Detroit and teaches us about challenges of empowerment, insider-outsider tensions, and histories of race and power. Joe Bowes recounts an upstate New York experience with community resistance to affordable housing and 'people not like us.' Along this path, we listen critically, next, as diverse community activists give insiders’ accounts of innovative neighborhood place-making in Seattle, Brooklyn, Portland (in the U.S.) and in the U.K., Italy, and Holland as well. We will ask: If democracy, interdependence and public participation require diverse “planners” to have the skills and processes to handle differences of interests and values, how might "planners" of many kinds play effective roles, listening and learning, ‘in between’ conflicting parties—especially when distrust runs high, emotions run hot, and hope seems to run away? In the face of community conflicts, what might such critical listening and learning reveal? How can participatory or negotiated planning processes deal at all with deep differences of interests and values?

Because we will explore these problems not only in our readings, but also through term projects involving interviews with planners and citizens alike, we will be learning about interviewing techniques and strategies throughout the semester. Students will gain tips and guidance about conducting these interviews both in class and from the internet. The "Profiles of Practitioners" web site has been specially designed to help students gather and analyze diverse "practice stories," so please read—and then re-read—the materials at: [http://courses2.cit.cornell.edu/fit117/](http://courses2.cit.cornell.edu/fit117/) (even as we are updating the site!).

Class format: We will often combine regular writing exercises and discussion. We will typically begin at least one class each week with a short writing exercise assessing the assigned reading and launching our discussions. Often we will use small group reflections to probe readings and then reassemble as a larger group to discuss questions, implications and insights. Students’ careful reading and class participation—sharing questions, doubts, and evolving ideas—will be essential to making the class a stimulating and rewarding one.

Course requirements: Students will explore an aspect of "place-making" or "planning" (broadly construed!) that they find most intriguing or compelling: for example, planners’ relationships at work, community leaders’ ways of handling "apathy," project developers facing “NIMBY-ism” (“Not in my backyard!”), community organizers’ mobilizing the relatively unorganized, advocates or allies building trust across differences of religion or culture or class (etc.), coalition builders' building relationships with diverse communities, corporate managers leading effective teams, entrepreneurs developing new enterprises, and so on. As a student in the course, then, you will explore the perspectives and actual work of a citizen activist, organizer, place-maker or planner struggling with the challenges or goals of your interests. You will do that by doing a practice-focused interview with a practitioner of your choice (perhaps a CRP alum, perhaps someone you’ve read about, someone you’ve been referred to, or a Johnson School or International Agriculture alum, etc.). By sharing your interview transcript in turn with another student with similar interests, you will be able to explore differing strategies and perspectives revealed in work in a related field of interest too. This year, we will try to share term papers to refine them as well.
The term project for the course, accordingly, will include: i) an oral history interview-and-analysis that assesses the practice of a citizen leader, manager or activist, a public planner or place-maker or private developer, who faces the challenges that you would like to examine, and ii) based on your interview, an edited selection of your interviewee's "central lessons" that their work experience suggests for others in related fields. Read carefully the “sequence of preliminary and final writing assignments” below.

So our approach will be two-pronged. First, the oral history interview analysis will give every student a close look at the challenges and opportunities of a kind of planning or place-making practice (whether non-profit, private for-profit, or governmental). Second, we will try to explore together the voices of our interviewees: by listening closely to them as real speakers, and by enacting or performing (reading aloud) interview selections with each other in class, we will explore what we can learn from listening to their voices in addition to reading their words alone.

Learning Objectives: The course will provide the setting, then, for each student—

i.) to explore challenges of planning (organizing, leadership, managing, e.g.);
ii.) to work with a group of similarly interested students to probe those challenges;
iii.) to identify, as a group or individually, possible interviewees;
iv.) to select and interview an organizer, leader, coach, manager, negotiator, activist, peace-maker, or politician (e.g.) interested in reflecting upon his or her day-to-day work;
v.) to transcribe and analyze that interview (cf. "profiles of practitioners" via Google)*;
vi.) to produce an edited selection of "critical lessons" in the interviewee's voice;
vii.) to share interviews, analyses, and a critical selection with classmates; and finally,
viii.) to identify the challenges and opportunities of effective practice in each area of your interests, given the results of each student's interview.

*A note about equipment: Digital recorders, foot pedals and related software will be available on loan, as necessary, from several Cornell Libraries (e.g. Fine Arts, Mann) and from the instructor. Recording freeware for both PCs and Macs is widely available now on "smart phones." Several digital transcription programs are available as free demos (e.g. for PCs and Macs, Express Scribe [http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/]). Students who wish to produce video or digital story enhanced profiles can borrow video equipment as well. Again, whenever possible, your instructor or Cornell Libraries will loan the required equipment for recording and transcribing interviews (or producing podcasts, or perhaps video) on a short-term basis so that other interested students can use the available equipment.

University Policies on Plagiarism and Special Needs

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. When you use others’ work directly, acknowledge them by citing your sources. Failing to do this—plagiarism—is theft, grounds for that rare “F” grade.

In addition, in compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, your instructor will be available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that
may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations should generally be made during the first several weeks of the semester.

Course readings will be available via Blackboard, including the following: Norman Krumholz and John Forester, Making Equity Planning Work: Leadership in the Public Sector, Temple University Press. 1990. [In addition, highly recommended—to raise your grades for years—although not ordered via the Campus Store, and not strictly required, reading is: John Trimble's wonderfully useful and lucid Writing With Style, 2nd Ed, Prentice Hall, 2000 (1975)]

**Sequence of Preliminary and Final Writing Assignments:**

Each student will complete a series of incremental writing assignments and one substantial interview-based paper during the course of the term, as follows:

1) **Thursday, Feb. 2:**
   a. Central Curiosities or Concerns (1 paragraph). If you could ask, “How do you really do what you do?” to the “change agent” of your choice, what sort of practitioner might you approach? Consider, for example: planning directors, urban designers, community organizers, immigration rights/human rights/gay rights, etc. activists, real estate developers, therapists, coaches, public/private managers, international consultants/planners, entrepreneurs, musicians, environmental planners/activists, arts promoters/managers, among others!
   b. In one more paragraph, explain how you came to your answer in (a).

2) **Thursday, Feb. 16:** Indicate in a sentence or two who you’d like to interview and when, and who your back-up interviewee would be, just in case your first choice becomes unavailable.

3) **Tuesday, April 11:** Hand in a list of topics covered in your interviewee’s practice story, as if you were creating an un-alphabetized index. (Suggestion: identify one topic per paragraph.)

4) **Thursday, April 13:** Prepare an edited transcript of your interview (typically a 15-20-page practice story) to share with a classmate so you can receive comments from them by Thursday, April 20. Prepare also a one-page list sketching this story's revelations, insights, surprises and/or lessons, given the concerns that led you to do this interview. Please give a copy of this initial 1-page analytical list (revelations, insights, surprises, lessons) to the instructor as well as to the classmate with whom you’ll trade edited transcripts for comments.

5) **Thursday, April 20:** Prepare 1-2 pages of suggestions for analysis in response to your classmate's interview transcript. What shouldn't they miss? What's instructive, surprising, worrisome, disturbing, encouraging . . . and what's that imply for planning practice(s) and education? (Please trade your suggestions and give copies to the instructor as well.)
6) Tuesday, April 25: Identify, and excerpt, your favorite (most striking, most instructive, perhaps most surprising) interview selection, roughly 1 to 2 minutes long, edited if necessary, about a lesson learned—that you might share (perform and read!) in class.

7) Thursday, April 27: Trade drafts of your final papers for peer review comments and suggestions to share with each other on Tuesday, May 2.

8) Tuesday, May 2: Return classmates’ papers/analyses with 1-2 pages of constructive comments.

9) Final Term Paper Due: Tuesday, May 9, 5 p.m.: Your final papers should include:
   i.) Your introduction (1 page or so) to the themes, problems or challenges that you have chosen to explore;
   ii.) Your edited* transcript, the practice story you've elicited, (approx. 15-20 pgs);
   iii.) Your completed analysis (approx. 6 pages) of that interview: your exploration of the lessons, surprises, and implications of your practice story; and iv.) Your conclusions about issues you hoped to explore (a closing paragraph or so).

Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings

Part I. Introduction to Forms of Planning and Studies of Professional Practice(s)

1. [Thurs. 1/26.17] Introduction and Interest Groups: Planning as a Vocation, Profession, Political Activity, and Everyday Challenge

2. [Tues. 1/31] More Than Entertainment: The Stories We Tell and the Differences They Make—And the Stories of Our Names


   DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 1: Two Paragraphs on Your Central Curiosities or Concerns (see pg. 4 above)

4. [Tues. 2/7] Putting Stories to Work: Street Level Discretion and Design

5. [Thurs. 2/9] Cornell Grad Sets Out to Change the Profession:
Norman Krumholz’s Story of Making Equity Planning Work, In the Beginning


6. Tuesday, 2/14: A Few Faces of Equity Planning: Highways, A People Mover, Parks, and Administrative Politics and Relationships


DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 2: Who are you going to interview (and who'll be a backup)?

8. [Tues. 2/21] FEBRUARY BREAK! NO CLASS TODAY


Read: David Laws, J. Forester, and N. Verloo. 2015. “Street Level Improvisation, Governance and Democracy.” [under review for publication].

Part II. Options Analysis, or Solving Which and Whose Problems: Listening and Learning, Participation and Negotiation in Place-Making Practices

10. [Tues. 2/28] Listening and Interviewing: What Do We Have to Work With?

11. [Thurs. 3/2] Participatory Design as Multi-Stakeholder Negotiation


Video: Sheri Blake’s “Detroit Collaborative Design Center: Amplifying the Diminished Voice”

12. [Tues. 3/7] Re-imagining Space and Place: Enabling Voice, Listening in Communities


Part III. Challenges of Integrating Participation and Negotiation, Discretion and Improvisation in Planning Practice


Exercise: Challenges of Shared Decision Making and Poorly Staged Participation

14. [Tues. 3/14] How We Make “Lose-Lose” Agreements and Never Know It, and Alternatives

15. [Thurs. 3/16] Beyond Rule-Following to Discretion and Improvisation in Organizations: Spaces for Innovation and Good Groups


Part IV: Honoring and Working with Cultural and Value Differences

17. [Thurs. 3/23] Constituents of Improvisation and Negotiation in the Face of Deep Value Conflicts


(Finish interviews if need be, begin to transcribe early!)

18. [Tues. 3/28] Limits of Good Intentions, Challenges of Nimby-ism (Not In My Backyard!), and The Problems of Participatory Design


Read: "Organizing for Food Security and Empowerment: A Profile of Malik Yakini," by Ellie Bomstein, CRP 5130, Fall 2011.
--- TUESDAY, April 4 & THURSDAY, April 6: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK --


DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 3: Prepare a topic list (e.g. 1 topic per paragraph)


DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 4: Share an edited transcript of your interview with a fellow student (so you can exchange comments and suggestions by April 20)

Part V. Challenges of Organizing and Improvising, Mediating and Enabling Public Participation

22. [Tues. 4/18] Addressing Differences of Culture, Interests and Values by Integrating Participation and Dispute Resolution


DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 5: Prepare 1-2 pages of suggestions for your classmate’s transcript analysis, with a copy for the instructor.
24. [Tues. 4/25] Neighborhood Planning as a Microcosm of Loss and Change


Preliminary Writing Assignment 6: Bring to class to share a one- to two-minute passage (presenting a “lesson” or surprise) from your interview. We’ll try to perform/present several of these.

25. [Thurs. 4/27] A Trip to Sicily to Learn about Community Mapping


(Discussion of analysis of interviews II)

DUE: Preliminary Writing Assignment 7: TRADE PAPER DRAFTS to receive comments on Tuesday May 2

26. [Tues. 5/2] Putting the Pieces Together: Planning and Power, Negotiation, Mediation, and Improvisation in Place Making


Return classmates’ papers/analyses with 1-2 pages of constructive comments.

27. [Thurs. 5/4] Organizing, Participation and Learning in Katrina’s Wake


28. [Tues. 5/9] Integrating Our Themes, Summary and Reflections, Implications for Future Studies

Read: Travis North, Ed. "The Role of Values in Shaping Approaches to Design and
Final Term Paper Due: Tuesday May 9, 5 p.m. (See below for formatting guidelines)

*I. On Writing, Re-writing, Editing and Analysis:

Editing of your transcripts and your analysis requires that you: use page numbers, eliminate all typos, check your spell-checker (beware: “spell the write words correctly”), use double spacing, 1” margins, and 12 pt. Times Font.

Please liberally use paragraphs to distinguish topical changes. Use capitalizations to begin, “Quoted material,” use [brackets] to show where you have tried to embed your questions, and to clarify meaning or to complete a sentence fragment, use the very helpful em-dash (the long dash)—where your interviewee pauses in the middle of a sentence, for example—rather than a comma.

You can use subtitling in your own analysis to mark significant shifts of topics and to mark specific findings or sections. Your care in editing appreciates your readers so that they will in turn appreciate (and want to keep reading) your work.

Do this in all of your CRP papers! Remember, for help, to see John Trimble, Writing with Style (any edition).

Notes on grading (see next page) …
II. “Methods for Grading [Should Be] Clearly Stated at the Beginning of the Semester”

When I assign grades at the end of the semester, here’s what I take into account:

i. Writing assignments in class (roughly 10-20%)
   Engagement with/command of readings, thoughtfulness of responses
   Two absences forgiven as random
   Four or more may lowering project grade +/- an A to A-, an A- to B+, etc.)

ii. Class participation: (roughly 30-40%)
   Contribution to our shared sense of exploring whatever’s valuable, striking,
   eye-opening, useful, productive, disturbing in our readings/discussion
   Questions about the topics/ideas at hand that stimulate discussion
   (these count as much as insights that stimulate discussion)
   Attendance presumed, as with absences above

iii. Class project: (roughly 40-60%)
   Analyzing the practical work of an interviewee of your choice, with:
   a) a clear structure: intro, profile, analysis, conclusion;
   b) a well-edited, typo-free profile; and
   c) an insightful analysis of the work described in the interview:
      c1: linking relevant readings as interview/readings inform each other
      c2: noting lessons of the interviewee’s practice for education;
      c3: noting lessons of the interview for your interests, future studies