Cornell University
College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
Department of City and Regional Planning

CRP 2000: The Promise and Pitfalls of Contemporary Planning

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Instructor: Jennifer Minner, PhD
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Office Location: 214 West Sibley Hall
Office hours: Thursdays, noon – 3

Dates of Course:
August 26, 2014 - December 5, 2013 + Final Exam
Class Day and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:10AM - 11:25AM
Class Location: Sibley Hall 101

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Graduate Teaching/Research Specialists: Lindsay Johnson and Colleen Wider
See Blackboard for GTRS contact information and office hours.
Course Overview

City and regional planning seeks not only to comprehend cities and regions, but to steward built and natural systems and to address the needs of diverse communities. Planning is interdisciplinary, drawing from the social sciences, public policy, economics, the natural sciences, the humanities, real estate and development, among other sources of knowledge and expertise to address wicked problems.¹ Planners model future scenarios and examine alternatives; regulate, incentivize and otherwise manage land development; inform the public and decision makers; partner with multiple public and private actors; and in many other ways assist in charting future courses of action. Planners operate in the context of economic and social change, conflict, and considerable hazards of uncertainty. The legacy of planning is complicated and consists of both mixed success and failures.

This course provides a critical and pragmatic path through the past, present, and future trajectories of contemporary planning practice and theory. It offers discussion of predictable and emerging tensions and opportunities in a field that is dynamic. Planning must continually respond to forces of urban change, to new paradigms and planning theories, and to shifts in expectations for professional practice. We will survey planning processes, the role of planning in relation to multiple publics and decision-makers; and the ways in which planners, politicians, citizens, and other actors seek to manage and participate in shaping the future of communities.

Learning Objectives

This course incorporates the following learning objectives:

- To develop a solid foundation for lifelong learning and advanced studies in planning and urban studies.
- To understand the historic origins of contemporary planning practice and to anticipate further advances in the field.
- To gain an understanding of the complexity of planning efforts and the need to seek and include citizens in planning processes, especially disadvantaged and marginalized persons and groups.
- To think analytically and critically about issues that face rural, suburban, and urban communities and the role of planning in addressing those issues.
- To communicate creatively and effectively in writing, speaking, and presenting information on planning topics.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Attend all classes.
- Read all required texts.
- Complete assignments on time.
- Participate thoughtfully, respectfully, and equitably in class. In other words, come to class prepared for discussion. Respect differences of opinion among classmates. You are encouraged to express enthusiasm and share information; however, a successful learning community requires sharing the floor and encouraging others to participate.

• Refrain from distractions. During lectures and class discussions, you may not use laptops, tablets, cell phones, or other technologies that enable web-browsing or e-mail. There will be a few exceptions, which will be announced in class.

Academic Integrity
You are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. This course represents both a collective and individual educational journey. You have a responsibility to yourself and your classmates to make sure that your contributions are your own and that you cite the sources for ideas, text, and images. Cornell’s policies are available here: http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html.

Required Texts
Many of the readings come from two primary texts:

These books are available on course reserve at the Fine Arts Library and for sale at the Cornell bookstore. Additional readings are available online via the Cornell Library, on course reserve at the Fine Arts Library, and/or otherwise distributed in class.

Evaluation
Students are expected to actively participate in all class meetings. Student work will be assessed and graded as follows:
• Weekly individual reflection assignments 30%
• Attend Public Meeting and Report 20%
• Team Podcast 20%
• Final Exam 20%
• Class Attendance and Participation/Peer evaluation 10%

Tentative Course Schedule
The contents of this syllabus may shift throughout the semester to enhance class learning objectives and outcomes. If changes are made in the readings or assignments, this information will be communicated as early as possible.

Week 1 - What Can City Planners Do? An Introduction to Planning Legacies and Wicked Problems
Tuesday August 26: No readings due.

Read by class-time on Thursday (August 28):
Begin looking for a recent comprehensive plan or a regional land use plan to adopt for the semester. Everyone will adopt a plan from a community of their choice. There can be no duplicates, so identify multiple plans that you would be willing to "adopt."

Week 2 – Cities Beautiful, Social, Practical, and Modern

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 2):


Read by Thursday (Sept. 4):


Individual Reflection #1 - Due Friday (Sept. 5):

- Option 1: Select a vision of urban development from the literature this week. What makes this vision particularly powerful, dangerous, or otherwise compelling?
- Option 2: Alternatively, you may describe a wicked problem. Describe how the aspects of the wicked meet the criterial in Rittel and Webber (1973).

Week 3 – Translating Contemporary Visions of the Future City into Plans

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 9):

- Individual Reflection #2: “Adopt” a plan that you will read and analyze over the course of several mini-assignments. Indicate your selection on Blackboard by the beginning of class.

Thursday (Sept. 11):

- You should have skimmed the entire plan and have thoughts on its content and structure to share in class. Through the course of the semester, you will continue to reference the plan, reading it in more detail over time.
- Guest speakers in class – how to make a podcast.
Week 4 – Regulatory DNA of the City, Hacking Urban Codes

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 16):

- Follow links on Blackboard to examine the New York Zoning Handbook. Scan it to find zones that interest you.

Read by Thursday (Sept. 18):


Due by Friday (Sept. 19):

- Individual Reflection #3: Select a zone or overlay zone in one of the land use ordinances on Blackboard. Prepare a 2-page entry that describes why this regulation is particularly important or problematic. What evidence do you find that it is a powerful force on the form of the city? Relate the selected section of the land use regulation to Tuesday’s reading.

Week 5 – Challenges to Comprehensive, Rational Planning

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 23):


Read by Thursday (Sept. 25):


Due by Friday (Sept. 26):

- Team interim deliverable 1: One paragraph proposal for podcast from each team.

Week 6 - Regionalism and Metropolitanism

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 30):

- Fishman, Robert. The Death and the Life of American Regional Planning. See Blackboard.

Read by Thursday (Oct. 2):

- Foster, Kathryn A. “A Region of One’s Own” in Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect.

Due by Friday (Oct. 3):
- Individual Reflection #4: 2-page essay that relates concepts of regionalism and metropolitanism to your adopted plan. What evidence do you find of these concepts in your plan?

**Week 7 - Advocacy, Equity, Participation, and the Just City**

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 7):

Read by Thursday (Oct. 9):

Due by Friday (Oct. 10):
- Individual Reflection #5: 2-page essay that relates equity and social justice to your adopted plan. What evidence do you find of these in your plan?

**Week 8 – Urban Movements and Planning Practice Part I (Smart Growth, New Urbanism, Complete Streets)**

October 14: Fall Break. No Class.

Read by Thursday (Oct. 16):

Due by Friday (Oct. 17):
- Individual Reflection #6: Is there a dominant theme of smart growth, new urbanism, and/or complete streets in your plan? Detail evidence of it.

**Week 9 -- Urban Movements and Planning Practice Part II (Planning with Nature; Landscape Urbanism, Sustainability)**

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 21):

Read by Thursday (Oct. 23):
- “Adaptive Urbanism” and “Urbanism – New, Landscape or Otherwise: The Case for Complementarity” in *Landscape Urbanism and Its Discontents: Dissimulating the Sustainable City*. Editors Andres Duany and Emily Talen.
Due by Friday (Oct. 24):

- Individual Reflection #7: To what degree is sustainability a major theme or framework within your adopted plan?
- Interim Team Deliverable: From each team (uploaded by one team member to Blackboard) – a plan for completing the podcast and an annotated bibliography that reflects research going into the plan. Be sure to include the name of all team members on the document, along with the role that they will plan in producing the podcast.

Week 10 – Urban Movements and Planning Practice Part III (Everyday, Insurgent, Guerrilla, and Tactical Urbanism)

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 28):

- “The Present City and the Practice of City Design” and “Urban Diaries: Improvisation in West Oakland” from Everyday Urbanism.
- Skim Tactical Urbanism. Link available via Blackboard.

Read by Thursday (Oct. 30):


Due by Friday (Oct. 31):

- Individual Reflection #8: What is compelling about these visions of urbanism? Should planners encourage subversive and temporary acts of urbanism? Why or why not?

Week 11 – Public Space, Redevelopment, and Gentrification

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 4):


Read by Thursday (Nov. 6):


Due by Friday (Nov. 7):

- Individual Reflection #9: See Blackboard for instructions.
**Week 12 – Citizens, Planners and Expertise: Local Knowledge and Technical Expertise**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 11):

Read by Thursday (Nov. 13):
- Scenario planning examples. Available on Blackboard.

Due by Friday (Nov. 14):
- Interim Team Deliverable: Draft script and an audio rough cut must be completed and ready for review.

**Week 13 – Smart Cities**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 18):

Read by Thursday (Nov. 19):

Due by Friday (November 21):
- You must have attended a public meeting and submitted a report by now.

**Week 14 - Sources of Power and Misrepresentation in Planning Practice and Research**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 25):

*Thanksgiving break - No class on Thursday Nov. 27.*

**Week 15 - Final Presentations/Conclusions**

Tuesday (Dec. 2): In-class presentations of team podcasts

Thursday (Dec. 4): In-class presentations of team podcasts

Incorporate any constructive criticism/feedback and resubmit the team’s podcast by **December 15, 2014** at midnight.
Overview of Assignments

Instructions for Individual Reflection Assignments
Periodic reading reflections must be submitted via Blackboard by the deadline. See Blackboard for further instructions.

Attend Public Meeting and Complete Reflection Report
Attend a Planning Commission or City Council meeting or a charrette or open house related to a planning topic. If you are in doubt as to whether a meeting will count toward this requirement, please ask. Attend the entire meeting, take copious notes on the items that are discussed, on any sort of public deliberation or debate about planning issues, and then write a 3-page memo on your experiences. What insights did attending the meeting, charrette, or open house yield? Did you identify anything about the conduct of the meeting that was done well or anything that was particularly confusing? How did decision-makers, staff planner, and the public interact? This assignment must be completed by Friday, November 21. It will not be accepted late and it is required to earn a passing grade.

Final Team Podcast
You will create 10-15 minute podcast for your final project. You will work in teams of approximately five people on a contemporary issue or significant movement or idea in planning. Each team member will be responsible for actively participating in creation of the podcast. The podcast will have an approved theme agreed upon by all team members and Prof. Minner. Each team will present their podcast to the class at the end of the semester. Podcasts will be reviewed by all other classmates and may be available to students, instructors, and TAs for Promises and Pitfalls of Contemporary Planning in the future. The final team blog will require research, time management and multiple revisions. The following are important deadlines:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast Proposal</td>
<td>Sept. 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of Podcast Plan/Bibliography</td>
<td>Oct. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast Script mostly complete for feedback</td>
<td>Nov. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Dec. 2 and 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcast must be complete and submitted along with introductory page with description and image</td>
<td>Dec. 15 midnight</td>
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Guidelines:
- Your proposal will be graded based on the level of creativity, insights, and attention to background research and detail. Team blogs will be assessed both for overall cohesion and quality and for each individual’s contributions. Your podcast must be rigorously researched and include a bibliography.
- You must also create a webpage to introduce the podcast, provide a brief description of it, post a transcript, and include citations for the sources of any audio clips, interviews, and research
material. You should also include an image to go along with the description. Recommended places to look for images include Creative Commons search on Flickr, Cornell Digital Collections, and the American Library of Congress, and other online archives. You may also scan your own artwork or use your own photographs. Any images that you use must have sources. These sources should be listed on a credits section or page. All images must have a caption that explains the image and lists the source.

- The podcast should be geared toward both a general audience and engaging and interesting for knowledgeable, expert readers.
- Additional information will be distributed in class and via Blackboard.

**Final Exam**

A final exam will be administered. Exact date and instructions will be announced in class.

Draft Date: 11/24/2014