CRP 2000: The Promise and Pitfalls of Contemporary Planning

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Date of Course: August 28, 2013 - December 6, 2013
Class Day and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:40 AM - 9:55 AM
Class Location: Sibley Hall 101

Graduate Teaching/Research Specialists: Nora Wright and Dean Mack
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.

¹ Rittel and Webber (1973).
• 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, including Documentary Day, presentation days, and during designated group work times.

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 Reading Journal/Quizzes 20%
- Documentary Day 20%
- Attend Public Meeting and Report 20%
- Final Team Blog/In-class Presentation 30%
- Class Participation 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 - Introductions, Course Overview, Expectations (August 29)

Due by Sunday, Sept. 1, 8 am, Journal Entry #1: Post to your Journal on Blackboard: 1) a scanned or digital photograph, drawing, or other image that represents an ideal for a rural or urban place and 2) an image that represents a damaged place. Paste these images into PowerPoint slides. Add the source at the bottom and your name. Save the images as yourlastname_ideal.pptx and yourlastname_damaged.pptx. Please contact GTRS or Prof. Minner if you need assistance.

Think about why you chose the images that you did. You will write about them next week and you may be asked about the images you selected in class. These images will be shared with the rest of the class.

Week 2 - Wicked Problems and Planning

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 3):

Read by Thursday (Sept. 5):
  Note: this section begins on the bottom of page 5.

Due Thursday (Sept. 5):
- Journal Entry #2: Write a 2-page journal entry. All journal entries should be created in Word and then uploaded as a .doc or .docx to the Journal on Blackboard. You also need to bring a paper print out of the journal entry to class.

  Use the first page to describe why you chose the two images that you submitted Week 1. On the second page, write about one of the following: a) a wicked problem associated with a city; b) a
debate in planning theory; or c) a thesis from the Fischler reading. Select one that intrigues, concerns, or otherwise interests you.

- On Blackboard, indicate the documentaries that you are most interested in watching with a team of classmates. Based on these rankings, you will be assigned to view a documentary. Assignments will be finalized during Week 3. You are responsible for setting up a time outside of class to view the documentary. Select a five minute clip to present, and prepare a short presentation on main points. Your team will present a clip and commentary in class on October 1.

**Week 3 - Grand Visions and Cities Beautiful, Social, Practical, and Modern**

*Read by Tuesday (Sept. 10):*


*Read by Thursday (Sept. 12):*

- Urban Planning Timelines posted on Blackboard.

*Due by Thursday:*

- Journal Entry #3 should be two pages long. Reflect on a particular vision of future cities that compels you and/or reflect on utopian visions, the City Social, the City Beautiful, and/or the City Practical. What seems particularly important, powerful, or even dangerous about it?

**Week 4 - Past, Present, and Future of Land Use Regulation**

*Read by Tuesday (Sept. 17):*


*Read by Thursday (Sept. 19):*

- Follow links on Blackboard to examine example zones in land use ordinances. Be prepared to talk about what you find in class.

*Due by Thursday: For Journal Entry #4, 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 important or particularly interesting. Is the ordinance clear? Is there anything ambiguous about the meaning of the rules? Relate the selected section of the land use regulation to Tuesday’s reading.
Week 5 - Comprehensive Planning
Read by Tuesday (Sept. 24):

- Start examining example comprehensive plans and finish skimming one by Thursday.

Due by Thursday (Sept. 26): Skim through the comprehensive plans and find one that interests you. Read through it. In Journal Entry #5, describe what is particularly compelling or interesting about the comprehensive plan.

Week 6 - Regionalism and Metropolitanism
Read by Tuesday (Oct. 1):

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

Due Tuesday: 1) Team in class presentation of Documentary Day clips.
Read by Thursday (Oct. 3):

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

Due by Thursday: 1) Journal entry #6 for readings. 2) One paragraph proposal for final blog from each team.

Week 7 - Challenges to Comprehensive, Rational Planning
Read by Tuesday (Oct. 8):


Read by Thursday (Oct. 10):

- 10 planning successes and 10 planning failures.

Due Thursday: Journal Entry #7 for readings is due.

Week 8 - Advocacy, Equity and the Just City
October 15: Fall Break. No Class. Office Hours moved to Wed. Oct 16, 2:30 - 5:00 pm.
Read by Thursday (Oct. 17):


Due by Thursday: Journal entry #8 for readings.

**Week 9 - Planning with Nature to Sustainability**

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 22):

Read by Thursday (Oct. 24):

Due by Thursday: 1) Journal entry #9; 2) Annotated bibliography from each team.

**Week 10 - Urbanisms**

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 29):

Read by Thursday (Oct. 31):
- Skim Tactical Urbanism. Link available via Blackboard.

Due by Thursday: Journal entry #10.

Due by Friday, 5 pm: You must have attended a public meeting and submitted a report by now.

**Week 11 - Modeling Future Scenarios, Indicators and Ratings, and What Counts in Planning**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 5):

Review by Thursday (Nov. 7)
- Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project: [http://indicatorsproject.com/](http://indicatorsproject.com/)
• Star Community Rating System: http://www.starcommunities.org/rating-system

Due by Thursday: Journal entry #11. Think about the indicators that you have reviewed in the readings for the week. What indicators do you find to be most important? Do you have ideas for new indicators?

**Week 12 – Redevelopment, Gentrification, and Public Space**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 12):

- Mueller, Elizabeth J. (2010): Old apartments and new plans: reconciling planning and housing goals in two Texas cities, Community Development, 41:1, 121-140.

Read by Thursday (Nov. 14):


Due by Thursday: Journal entry #12. Draft Blog must be completed and ready for review.

**Week 13 - Local Knowledge and Planning Expertise: Successes and Cautionary Tales**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 19):

- Chapter 1 of *The Trouble with City Planning* by Kristina Ford.

Read by Thursday (Nov. 21):

- Chapter 2 of *The Trouble with City Planning* by Kristina Ford.

Due by Thursday: Journal entry #13.

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

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 26):


No journal entry due. Be prepared for class discussion.

Thanksgiving break - No class on Thursday Nov. 28.

**Week 15 - Final Presentations/Conclusions**

Tuesday (Dec. 3): In-class presentations

Thursday (Dec. 5): In-class presentations
Assignments

Instructions for Weekly Reading Reflections
Weekly reading reflections must be submitted via Blackboard by the beginning of class. See Blackboard for further instructions.

Attend Public Meeting and 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 1st, 5 pm (Week 10).

Documentary Day(s)
Each team of approximately 5 students will view an assigned documentary outside of class. In class, on October 1 and 3, teams will present the main points and implications for urban planning. Your task is to concisely summarize the documentary in the presentation. Documentaries include: Urbanized, The Pruitt-Igoe Myth, Phoenix: The Urban Desert, Cleveland: Confronting Urban Decline, Portland: Quest for the Livable City, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, Manufactured Landscapes, The Unforeseen, Magic Highway USA, and Detropia.

Final Team Academic Blog
You will create a blog for your final project. This will be used to assess your knowledge of the promise and pitfalls of contemporary planning in lieu of a final exam. 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 blog and will be individually responsible for a minimum of two blog entries with at least three images per blog entry. The blog will have an approved theme agreed upon by all team members and Prof. Minner. Each team will present their blog in class. Blogs will be viewed by all other classmates and may be viewed by 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:

| Selection of Blog Topic | Oct 3 |
| Submission of Annotated Bibliography | Oct 24 |
| Draft Blog must be mostly complete for feedback | Nov 14 5 pm |
| Presentations | Dec 3 and 5 |
| All Revisions to blog must be completed | Dec 16 5 pm |
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.
- Each team member must contribute at least 2 blog entries. The combined word count of both blog entries for each individual should be at or exceed 1,500 words. Academic blog entries should be more rigorously researched, longer, and of higher quality than the average blog post found on the Internet. All blog posts must include citations.
- 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.
- Final submissions must be thorough proofread and decipherable to a general audience and engaging and interesting for knowledgeable, expert readers.
- Additional information will be distributed in class and via Blackboard.

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