

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

## CRP 2000: The Promise and Pitfalls of Contemporary Planning

Instructor: Jennifer Minner, PhD

E-mail: [j.minner@cornell.edu](mailto:j.minner@cornell.edu)

607.255.5561

Office Location: 214 West Sibley Hall

Office hours: Mondays, 10:00 – noon



*Atlantic Coast at Night (NASA, International Space Station, 02/06/12) [on Flickr.](#)*

Dates of Course: August 25, 2015 - December 4, 2015 + Final Exam  
Class Day and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:10AM - 11:25AM  
Class Location: Sibley Hall 101

Teaching Assistant: Christine Wen  
Contact information: [hw495@cornell.edu](mailto:hw495@cornell.edu)  
609-534-3612

Office hours: Fridays 10:00 - noon in Sibley 314

### Course Overview

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City and regional planning seeks not only to describe processes that relate to 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.<sup>1</sup> Planners model future scenarios and examine alternatives; regulate, incentivize and otherwise manage land development; inform decision makers and engage the public; 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. We will discuss predictable and emerging tensions and opportunities in a field that is dynamic and ever-changing. 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**

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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 out and include citizens in planning processes, especially disadvantaged and marginalized individuals 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**

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Students are expected to:

- Attendance counts. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet, which will be circulated at the beginning of class. Absences will count against your participation grade. You cannot earn an A if your attendance is spotty.
- Be on time. Coming in late disrupts the rest of the class.
- 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 for web-browsing or e-mail.

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<sup>1</sup> Horst W. J., Rittel, and Webber Melvin M. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences* 4.2 (1973): 155-169.

## Academic Integrity

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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>.

## Texts

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Several of the readings come from two primary texts:

- Fainstein, Susan S.; Campbell, Scott. *Readings in Planning Theory*. Third edition. Wiley-Blackwell: Malden, MA, 2012.
- Sanyal, Bishwapriya; Lawrence J. Vale and Christina D. Rosan. *Planning Ideas That Matter: Livability, Territoriality, Governance, and Reflective Practice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012.

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

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Students are expected to actively participate in all class meetings. Student work will be assessed and graded as follows:

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| • Weekly mini-assignments                                    | 20% |
| • Attend Public Meeting and Report                           | 20% |
| • Click-bait Assignment                                      | 20% |
| • Final Exam (Will relate to readings and your adopted plan) | 30% |
| • Class Attendance and 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 - What Can Planners Do? An Introduction to Planning Legacies and Wicked Problems

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**Tuesday August 25:** No readings due. Take note of assignment due Wed at noon.

**To do by Wednesday August 26 (by NOON):** Weekly mini-reflection #1. Upload to 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. These images should be pasted into PowerPoint slides. Add the source at the bottom and your name. Label them as "Ideal Place" or "Damaged Place." Save the images as Week1slides\_yourlastname.pptx.

Think about why you chose the images that you did. Print the images or bring them on a laptop to class – and be prepared to discuss them in groups.

Read by class-time on Thursday (August 27):

- Rittel and Webber. (1973) “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning.” in *Policy Sciences*.

*Begin looking for a recent comprehensive plan or a regional 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.”*

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

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 1):

- Wirka, S. M. (1996) “The City Social Movement: Progressive Women Reformers and Early Social Planning.” *Planning the Twentieth Century American city*. M. C. Sies and C. Silver. Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press. p. 55-75.
- William Wilson. (1989). “The Glory, Destruction and Meaning of the City Beautiful Movement,” in *The City Beautiful Movement (Creating the North American Landscape)*. Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Read by Thursday (Sept. 3):

- “Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century” in *Readings in Planning Theory*. p. 27-53.
- Consider and be prepared to discuss in class:  
Select a vision of urban development from the literature this week. What makes this vision particularly powerful, dangerous, or otherwise compelling?

**Due by end of day Friday, Sept 4:** Weekly mini-reflection #2. Write a response to the prompt from Thursday (Select a vision... what makes it particularly powerful, dangerous, or otherwise compelling?) Craft a well-written one page, single-spaced entry and upload it to Blackboard as a *Word doc*.

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

Read by Tuesday (Sept. 8):

- Ryan, Brent D. “Reading through a plan.” *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Volume 77, Issue 4, October 2011, p. 309-327.
- **“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. 10):

- 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.

#### Week 4 – Regulatory DNA of the City, Hacking Urban Codes

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Read by Tuesday (Sept. 15):

- Chapter 1. A Brief History of Zoning and Chapter 2. Failed Assumptions. From Elliott, Donald L. *A better way to zone: ten principles to create more livable cities*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2008.
- Follow links on Blackboard to examine the *New York Zoning Handbook*. Scan it to find zones that interest you. Be prepared to talk about it in class.

Read by Thursday (Sept. 17):

- Silver, Christopher. "The Racial Origins of Zoning in American Cities," in June Manning and Ritzdorf, eds., *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Housing monitor finds zoning in six towns problematic  
<http://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/2014/09/08/housing-monitor-zoning-six-towns-problematic/15314983/>
- Westchester loses \$5 million more in HUD grants  
<http://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/2014/09/30/westchester-loses-million-hud-grants/16500049/>
- <http://www.propublica.org/article/living-apart-how-the-government-betrayed-a-landmark-civil-rights-law>

Due by Friday (Sept. 18):

- Weekly mini-reflection #3: Try to find the zoning ordinance for the city whose plan you have adopted. Is it online? If so, submit a link to the zoning ordinance on Blackboard. If not, try to track it down. How would you access the zoning ordinance? (No more than 1 paragraph on Blackboard).
- Select a zone or overlay zone in the land use ordinance/zoning ordinance for your city, or if one is not available online, from the *New York Zoning Handbook*. Prepare a 1-page entry that describes why this zoning regulation is particularly important or problematic. Relate it to Tuesday's reading.

#### Week 5 – Challenges to Comprehensive, Rational Planning

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Read by Tuesday (Sept. 22):

- Charles E. Lindblom. "The Science of Muddling Through," in *Readings in Planning Theory*.
- "Is History Repeating Itself? From Urban Renewal in the United States to Inner-city Redevelopment in China" In *Readings in Planning Theory*.

Read by Thursday (Sept. 24):

- James C. Scott. 1998. "Authoritarian High Modernism" in *Readings in Planning Theory* (From *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven: Yale University Press).

Due by Friday (Sept. 25): Weekly mini-reflection #4: One paragraph summary of each reading and Clickbait proposal.

## Week 6 - Regionalism and Metropolitanism

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Read by Tuesday (Sept. 29):

- Yaro, Robert D. Metropolitanism: How Metropolitan Planning Has Been Shaped by and Reflected in the Plans of the Regional Plan Association. In *Planning Ideas that Matter*. P. 153-177.
- Fishman, Robert. The Death and the Life of American Regional Planning. See Blackboard.

Read by Thursday (Oct. 1):

- Foster, Kathryn A. "A Region of One's Own" in *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect*.
- Hack, Gary. "Shaping Urban Form." in Sanyal, B. et al. in *Planning Ideas that Matter*.

Due by Friday (Oct. 2):

- Individual Reflection #5: 1-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

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Read by Tuesday (Oct. 6):

- Davidoff, Paul "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," in *Readings in Planning Theory*.
- Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. Vol. 35, Iss. 4, 1969.

Read by Thursday (Oct. 8):

- Portland Regional Equity Atlas. <http://clfuture.org/programs/regional-equity-atlas/maps-and-analysis/>
- Mueller, Elizabeth. *Creating Inclusive Corridors*. On Blackboard.

Due by Friday (Oct. 9):

- Individual Reflection #6: 1-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 (New Urbanism and Smart Growth)

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**October 13: Fall Break. No Class.**

Read by Thursday (Oct. 15):

- Fishman, Robert. "New Urbanism" in *Planning Ideas that Matter*.
- Talen, Emily. (2006) "Connecting New Urbanism and American planning: an historical interpretation" in *Urban Design International* 11, 83–98.

Due by Friday (Oct. 16):

- Individual Reflection #7: Is there a dominant theme of new urbanism in your plan? Detail evidence of it in no more than 1 page.

## Week 9 – Urban Movements and Planning Practice Part II (Planning with Nature; Sustainability; Resilience)

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Read by Tuesday (Oct. 20):

- Steiner, Frederick. 2011. "Plan with Nature: The Legacy of Ian McHarg" in *Regional Planning i*

Read by Thursday (Oct. 22)

- Read about the APA's Sustaining Places Initiative. Readings on Blackboard.
- LEED for Neighborhood Development. <http://www.usgbc.org/neighborhoods>. Read page and click on the View Credits button.
- Star Community Rating System: <http://www.starcommunities.org/rating-system>

Due by Friday (Oct. 23):

- Individual Reflection #8: To what degree is sustainability and resilience a major theme or framework within your adopted plan? 1 page.

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

Read by Tuesday (Oct. 27):

- “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. 29):

- “Claiming Latino Space: Cultural insurgency in the public realm” in *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla urbanism and the remaking of contemporary cities*. Edited by Jeffrey Hou. New York, New York: Routledge, 2010. Pages 99-110

Due by Friday (Oct. 30):

- Individual Reflection #9: What is compelling about these visions of urbanism? Should planners encourage subversive and temporary acts of urbanism? Why or why not? 1 page.

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### **Week 11 – Complete Streets and Public Space**

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 3):

- *Excerpt from* McCann, Barbara. (2013). *Completing Our Streets: The Transition to Safe and Inclusive Transportation Networks*. Washington: Island Press.
- Mehta, Vikas. (2015) “The Street as Ecology” in *Incomplete Streets: Processes, Practices, and Possibilities.* New York, New York: Routledge.

Read by Thursday (Nov. 5):

- Agyeman, Julian. (2013) “Space and Place” in *Introducing Just Sustainabilities: Policy, Planning and Practice*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Ehrenfeucht, Renia and Anastasia Louikatos-Sideris. (2014) “The Irreconcilable Tension between Dwelling in Public and the Regulatory State” in *The Informal American City*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Suggested: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/02/arts/design/the-price-of-thomas-heatherwicks-imagination.html>

Due by Friday (Nov. 6): Mini-Reflection #10: See blackboard.

## **Week 12 – Scenario Planning, Resilience and a Voyage to the Archives**

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This week during the class period, we will take turns visiting the planning-related collections at the Rare and Manuscript Collections in the Kroch Library. Liz Muller, Assistant Director for Technical Services & Curator of Digital and Media Collections, will be your guide. We will meet in class first and then walk over in groups.

Read by Tuesday (Nov. 10):

- Community Scenario report from *the Sustainable Places Project*. Available on Blackboard.

Read by Thursday (Nov. 12):

- Innes, Judith and Booher, David. (2010). "Chapter 6: Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience" in *Planning with Complexity*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Additional resources on Resilience posted to Blackboard.

Due by Friday (Nov. 13):

- Individual Deliverable: Draft of your Click-bait article in the form of a Word document. Upload to Blackboard.

## **Week 13 – Creative Cities and Smart Cities**

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Read by Tuesday (Nov. 17):

- Florida, Richard. 2014. "The Creative Class and Economic Development." *Economic Development Quarterly*, Vol. 28(3) 196–205.

Read by Thursday (Nov. 19):

- Excerpt from Townsend, Anthony. *Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hacker, and the Quest for the New Utopia*. New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 2013.

No weekly reflection, be prepared for class discussion.

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

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Read by Tuesday (Nov. 24):

- Forester, John. 1989. Chapter 3 of *Planning in the Face of Power*. Pages 27-47.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2002. "Bringing Power to Planning Research: One Researcher's Praxis Story," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 21, 4: 353-366.
- You must have attended a public meeting and submitted a report by the end of day today.

***Thanksgiving break - No class on Thursday Nov. 26***

## **Week 15 – Concluding Thoughts**

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Due Tuesday (Dec. 1):

- Fischler, Raphaël. Commentary: Fifty Theses on Urban Planning and Urban Planners. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. Volume 32 number 1, 2012, pp. 107-114.

- **Final Click-bait article must be posted to Blog.**

Thursday (Dec. 3): Discussion of Click-bait Assignments! Last day of class.

## Overview of Assignments

### Instructions for Individual Reflection Mini-Assignments

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

### Attend Public Meeting and Complete Reflection Report

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You must attend a Planning Commission or City Council meeting or a charrette or open house related to planning. Relevant meetings will be posted to Blackboard. 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 4-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 **Tuesday, November 24**. It will not be accepted late and it is required to earn a passing grade.

### Click-bait Assignment

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You will create a "Click-bait" article for the class blog. This is an article, geared for the web, with a snappy, exciting title and interesting images. In this assignment, you must lure the reader in. Unlike real Click-bait, your article must get increasingly sophisticated and profound. It must relate to a concept or insight about city and regional planning. You must end with a bibliography of at least 7 sources; at least five of the sources must be from your own research, not the syllabus. You must also use in-text citations as appropriate.

You should work on this individually, although you may be allocated some time in class to develop your own idea in teams. Your click-bait article will be completed by the end of the term. The following are important deadlines:

Sept. 25 - Clickbait Proposal

Nov. 13 - Draft Click-bait article (complete, well-written, and with a bibliography) submitted as Word document

Dec. 1 - Final Click-bait article submitted on class blog

Guidelines:

- Your click-bait article may be related to any topic in planning. It must reference at least 3 of the readings in some way.
- You **MAY NOT** use pornography, racist, sexist, or otherwise likely to be offensive images or humor. If in doubt, talk with the TA before posting it.
- Your proposal will be graded based on the level of creativity, insight, and attention to background research and detail.
- The click-bait article should be image rich, with at least four images. You may only use only your own original images (photographs or artwork) or images that have a creative commons license. 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 click-bait article should be geared toward both a general audience and engaging and interesting for knowledgeable, expert readers.
- The crescendo of your click-bait article must be an important insight into planning and it must culminate in a bibliography.

## Final Exam

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A final exam will be administered via Blackboard after the final class. You are to complete it on your own without the help of your classmates and in reference to your own adopted plan.

Draft Date: 8/24/2015