Fundamental social and political issues animate the history and theory of planning. One urban historian defined planning as “collective action for the public good concentrated on ... shaping the shared physical infrastructure for present needs and future growth.” Consider the questions that arise from these keywords: collective action, public good, present needs, future growth. In American society, planning as a form of collective action comes up against strong claims of individualism and private property. How are these conflicting values reconciled? How does planning differ in societies where the claims of individualism and private property vary from U.S. norms? What is the public good and who defines it? How are current needs determined, and whose needs are prioritized? Growth targets depend on a vision of the good society. Toward what ends should growth be directed, and how are those goals advanced?

This course examines key ideas in the history and theory of planning and is organized around two themes: Classic Texts in Dialogue and Planning Tools in Historical Context. We will read a series of classic books by major thinkers whose ideas have had a significant impact on urban form, theory, and planning. We will also consider how those planning ideas have played out in recent years by reading about significant developments that derive in some fashion from the classic text. Our topics include: Ebenezer Howard and the garden city; Daniel Burnham and the metropolitan idea; Le Corbusier and the modernist city; Jane Jacobs and pedestrian-centered urbanism; Ian McHarg and environmental planning; Henri Lefebvre and the right to the city.

Another set of readings and class sessions will focus on the techniques of planning. We will explore the historical development of those techniques and consider if the planner’s tool kit is adequate to deal with 21st-century urban formations and problems, including climate change and slums. Our topics include: master plans, data surveys and the framing of planning as a social science, zoning, clearance, participatory planning, and urban “acupuncture”

The class will operate as a seminar driven by your participation in lively and informed conversation. You are expected to read the texts closely, grapple with the ideas they advocate, and discuss them in class.
Intended Learning Outcomes
Students who complete the course will:

- Develop an understanding of key ideas, authors, and texts in the history of urban planning from the 19th century to the present
- Gain the ability to position current planning ideas and theories in critical and historical context
- Develop an understanding of the historical development of the primary tools used by planners in their professional practice
- Develop an understanding of the emergence of planning as a discipline and professional practice
- Improve the ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively in writing and to marshal evidence culled from research to support your arguments
- Improve research skills
- Improve the ability to articulate thoughts clearly and persuasively

Grade Scale
25% Participation and Preparation for Class
15% Writing Assignment 1
20% Writing Assignment 2
40% Writing Assignment 3 and Class Presentation

Readings
Most of the readings are available in electronic form on the course website on NYU Classes. The books listed below are available at the NYU Bookstore.

**Required**: You are asked to read at least half of the following books. No pdfs are provided.
- Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning.*

**Optional purchase**: The assigned chapters are available on the course website as pdfs, but some copies of the books have also been ordered.

Participation and Preparation
The following elements contribute to the grade for participation and preparation.

- Your comments demonstrate that you have come to class prepared and done the assigned reading.
- Your comments demonstrate that you have reflected on the assigned readings and how they relate to other readings.
- Your comments are germane to the class discussion. You respond to the dialogue and engage with the ideas of your classmates.
- You participate in the exploration of the artworks, actively trying to figure out what they mean and relating them to the readings and course themes.
• You are an attentive listener, taking in what your classmates say.
• You keep to the time limit in the presentation of your final paper, you communicate clearly and you respond effectively to questions.
• Attendance.

Weekly Outline with Readings
Unless otherwise stated, all required readings are available as PDF's on the NYU Classes website. Many but not all of the “Further Readings” are also posted.

1. September 6
   Introduction


2. September 13
   Classic Texts: The Garden City and Growth Belts
   Portland’s Urban Growth Boundary: http://www.oregonmetro.gov/urban-growth-boundary

3. September 20
   Paper 1 due.
   Classic Texts: Daniel Burnham and Metropolitanism

4. September 27

**Tools: The Planner: Scientific Expert or Political Power**


5. October 4

**Classic Texts: Le Corbusier and the Modernist City**


6. October 11

**Classic Texts: Jane Jacobs, Scale and Density**


7. October 18 (Habitat III)

**Classic Texts: Ian McHarg and Landscape Urbanism**


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8. October 25

**Classic Texts: Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City**


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9. November 1

**Paper 2 due.**

**Tools: Zoning and Development Controls**

**Read:** I recommend you read these texts in the order listed.


Zoning at 100, [http://www.zoning100.com/](http://www.zoning100.com/). Read the essays.

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10. November 8 (Election Day)

**Tools: Community Participation and Self-Built & Incremental Housing**


11. November 15

**Tools: Clearance**


The End of Chicago’s Public Housing (website), http://apps.npr.org/lookatthis/posts/publichousing/.


12. November 22

**Tools: Upgrading by “Acupuncture”**


13. November 29

Class Trip to the Future City Lab, Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue (between 103rd-104th Streets). Meet at the museum entrance.

14. December 6

**In-class Presentations of final paper**

December 9

*Paper 3 due.*
Writing Assignments
The writing assignments are posted under the “Assignments” tab.

Schedule

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<th>Paper</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3-5 pages</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5-7 pages</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class presentation</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10-12 pages</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
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Submission Protocol
All papers should be submitted on the NYU Classes website. Please note the following formatting guidelines:
- Papers are due by 5pm on the due date. Late papers are not accepted.
- Submit your paper as a Word file, not as a PDF.
- File Name: Your Surname-Paper # (e.g. Ballon-Paper 1)
- Paginate your paper.
- Spacing: 1.5 or double spacing, as you prefer.
Paper 1: Public Space
3-5 pages + 1-2 photographs (Do not exceed the ceilings in these ranges. The photos may be incorporated in the text or added at the end, as you prefer.)
Due: September 20

In 1980 William Whyte published a highly influential book, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, which analyzed how public spaces were used and whether they provided appealing areas to socialize. His analysis was based on close observation of how people actually operated in the space, which he discerned in part by filming the spaces and watching use patterns over time. Whyte’s book has had considerable influence on the approach to public space, raising the bar on both design standards and awareness of public access issues. It led to many follow-up studies, including Jerold S. Kayden’s *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience* (2000) about the privately owned public spaces (known as POPS) that were stimulated by the city’s 1961 zoning revision. For this assignment, please read the chapters listed below from Whyte’s classic book. The relatively short text is supplemented by extensive illustrations that are fundamental to his argument; examine them too. The chapters are attached as pdfs to this assignment. In addition, Whyte made a related 55-minute film, which is available on Vimeo and in Bobst.

Read: Introduction, Chapters 1-2 (pp. 10-39), Chapters 5-7 (pp. 54-75).

Inspired by Whyte’s work, this assignment asks you to examine an outdoor public space in any borough of New York City. It could be one you consider exemplary, one facing capacity issues and compromised by its appeal, or one flawed and in need of alteration. **You must visit the space in person, and at different times of day so you understand use patterns.**

The paper should analyze the effectiveness of the public space, its strengths and weaknesses, any issues you see in how different publics use the space, and your recommendations, if any, to modify the space. Whyte’s book provides a model of close, observational analysis and poses fundamental questions you’ll want to address, but you may also spot issues Whyte did not consider. Please include 1-2 photographs that you have taken to support your argument. The photographs are not meant to be scenographic; like Whyte’s photographs, they are evidence to support your points, thus the photos should not be downloaded from web. At the start of the paper, be sure to identify your public space and its location. Here are some questions to consider. This list is not intended to serve as an outline for your paper, just prompts for your thinking.

- How does the space work? Does it fulfill its intended purposes? Have unintended or informal uses developed?
- Does the space attract people? Who are the publics the space serves? Does it attract diverse people and accommodate diverse needs? Do you observe tensions between different types of users? Does the space exclude certain categories of users, by explicit or implicit measures?
- How the design of the space support its uses? What are the shortcomings of the space? How could it be improved?
- Who maintains the space? If the space is privately owned or privately managed, do you observe tensions between the public and private dimensions of the space?
- Is there advertising or commercial activity in the space? What impact does that have?
- What planning decisions informed the creation of the public space? What could a planner do to improve the space?
**Papers 2 and 3: Challenge and Response**

Papers 2 and 3 are closely related, with paper 3 a sequel that builds on paper 2. Begin by choosing an urban challenge and a place where the issue is relevant. The challenge might be housing affordability, rising sea levels, pollution, transportation access, traffic, public hygiene, migration, to mention a few examples. You are not constrained by this list, but the challenge should be one where you think planning can or should address and have an impact. The place could be any city worldwide, or it could be a metropolitan region if you consider that broader geographic unit of analysis key to tackling the issue. Paper 2 will focus on the definition of the problem. Paper 3 will focus on possible responses to the challenge. Details follow.

**Paper 2: Urban Challenge**

*5-7 pages*

*Due: November 1*

Analyze the challenge in the location of your choice. The analysis should be site specific and identify the dimensions of the problem in that particular place. In many cases, it may be appropriate to provide historical context to explain the present conditions, but any historical analysis should serve the trajectory of your argument rather than be a broad history of the topic. Include a bibliography; illustrations are welcome if they contribute to your analysis.

**Paper 3: Responses to the Challenge**

*10-12 pages*

*In-class presentation: December 6*

*Paper Due: December 9*

This paper examines both actual and possible responses to the challenge you analyzed in paper 2. In the first part explain the current approaches, if any, now being pursued, whether by the municipality, planning agency, or third party, such as the World Bank, Ford Foundation, other NGOs, or universities. How effective are these strategies, what are they accomplishing, and what are their shortfalls? Please consider governance issues if the governance is not in place to act on the challenge, for example, if the city lacks an empowered planning agency; if local community groups are not in place to achieve stakeholder buy-in (assuming you consider that important in your process); if your place extends beyond municipal boundaries; if a state has authority over the municipal issue (as New York State does in many NYC policies); or if regional authorities do not exist to implement solutions to regional problems.

In the second part of the paper, discuss new approaches that you recommend. Scan other cities worldwide to gather not just the best ideas, but ones you consider applicable to your location. If you find a compelling solution in a small city but are writing about a megacity, how would the solution to be scalable? It would be valuable to learn about a range of possibilities but then zoom in on the strategy, or strategies in an integrated approach, that you find most compelling and recommend. For that recommended approach, please consider how the solution could be financed. I’m not looking for a detailed business plan, just a general indication of the financial resources that would enable implementation.