Course Description

Rare is the graduate student who hasn’t experienced the pairing of means to ends, linking processes to outcomes, reconciling multiple objectives and making plans in general. The planning that we are concerned with in this course involves groups of people living together in space, becoming more or less interdependent, relying on shared resources and relating past experiences to present needs to desires for the future. This collective exercise of planning encounters deep tensions: Why plan? Who is to plan? What is progress? What is justice? How is the public good to be reconciled with private desires? What is the public good and who defines it? How are conflicting values to be addressed? What are current needs? Which future should be aimed for? How is this future to be reached? How is it to be sustained? What happens when it disintegrates? How is the success of these efforts to be assessed? How can a plan be changed if the results are unexpected? Despite this, plans are regularly made, remade, implemented and evaluated. Cities are evidence of this.

Planners have approached these tensions in many ways throughout history, and their ideas have been influenced by their own practice, a range of other disciplines, their particular historical circumstances, and the institutions within which they have worked professionally. The profession of planning is premised on constructive answers to fundamental questions about planning practice including: Have planners accumulated a body of codified and tacit knowledge? Is this knowledge particular to specific situations, general enough to apply to different types of situations, or both? Is this knowledge unique to professional planners? Can one reconcile professional knowledge with local knowledge, personal ideals and institutional demands in public decision making? Are some planners more effective than others? The theories of planning that we encounter in this course mark influential attempts to grapple with these and other dilemmas.

In this course, we will begin to develop our own analytical perspectives through which to understand the history and theory of planning. We will orient ourselves in relation to classic ideas on institutions, organizations, individuals, groups and networks, justice in process and outcomes, human behavior and group rationality, the law, dissent, and professional ethics. Then, from our own analytical positions, we will critically analyze the ideas of major thinkers who have had a significant impact on urban form, institutions, and planning. 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; John Turner and dweller controlled housing; Elinor Ostrom on governing the commons; Rexford Tugwell on planning as a fourth power; Amartya Sen on practical justice; and Donald Schon on reflective practice.

Finally, we will also explore the historical development of some common planning techniques, their analytical underpinnings and hidden assumptions. Our goal will be to understand why and how these tools are supposed to work. Our intention is to begin to develop an understanding of the conditions under which a planner’s tool kit is adequate, or not, to deal with 21st-century urban issues. Our topics include: master plans, data surveys and the framing of planning as a social science, intelligent algorithms, urban design, institutional design, public policies, zoning and participatory planning. Through guest lectures we will also trespass on several sub-disciplines of planning including development planning, transportation planning and housing. This will expose students to the frontiers of planning research at Wagner and also give us a view of how these tools are currently used.

Please Note. This is a seminar-style course. Class sessions will largely be driven by your contributions to the discussion. The assignments are designed to give you a chance to develop your position on the readings, to articulate your thoughts, to subject them to scrutiny by peers, and to change them.

You are expected to read the texts carefully, grapple with the ideas they advocate and discuss them in class. For nearly everyone, this will mean reading the materials more than once, marking up and actively engaging with them. I strongly suggest reading in groups and asking each other questions outside of the classroom. Asking your colleagues to proofread your writing before you submit it can also be helpful.

Please bring your electronic devices to class and use them freely. You are responsible for the behavior of your machines. Please don’t allow them to disrupt the class. It may be to your benefit – and to the benefit of your colleagues - to participate in the discussions without distraction: using devices without good reason can detract from the quality of discussion for the entire class.

Intended Learning Objectives
Students who complete the course will:

1. Develop an understanding of key ideas, authors and texts in the history of urban planning from the 19th century to the present
2. Gain the ability to position current planning ideas and theories in critical and historical context
3. Develop and understanding of common planning tools, their historical development, assumptions and mechanisms
4. Develop an understanding of the emergence of planning as a discipline and professional practice as well as some of the dilemmas of professional practice
5. Develop an understanding of common institutions and ideas of justice planners encounter in professional practice
6. Improve the ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively in writing and to marshal evidence culled from research to support your arguments
7. Improve research skills
8. Improve the ability to articulate thoughts clearly and persuasively

Prerequisites
None.

**Course Requirements**

This course has the following requirements:

1. Class Participation: As a seminar class, the course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. Participants are expected to read and discuss the readings on a weekly basis. That means coming prepared to engage the class with discussion questions and/or comments about the reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class to the point where you can be called on to critique or discuss any reading.

2. Readings: You will be assigned approximately 100-150 pages of reading a week. Some of the readings are denser than others and some are longer than others. So, please be sure to plan for this variation. The syllabus may change during the semester for reasons such as the availability of guest lecturers, so please check the class site for the latest course content. Note that the readings for a class will not change after 12 noon on the Wednesday before that class, unless there is an extraordinary circumstance.

3. Writing Assignments 1 and 2: You will write two guided essays during the semester. Details and grading rubric will be handed out in class.

4. Final Paper: You will write a substantial final research paper. Instructions and grading rubric will be handed out in class.

5. Final Presentation and Presentation Skills Bootcamp: You will be asked to give an in class presentation about your final paper project. To help you with this, you will also be required to attend a presentation skills “bootcamp” session. In a one hour Presentation Skills Bootcamp in October, Will Carlin, Adjunct Professor at Wagner, will provide students with an overview of the skills and format necessary to make a concise and compelling presentation. Register for one of the three October sessions. Attendance counts toward half of the Final Presentation grade. Details and a grading rubric will be handed out in class.

**Class Participation**

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 reflect on your experiences, actively trying to relate 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.
Written Assignments

The writing assignments will be posted under the “Assignments” tab on the classes site.

Some important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Length (all inclusive)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-5 pages</td>
<td>9/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5-7 pages</td>
<td>10/31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>3-5 minutes</td>
<td>12/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10-12 pages</td>
<td>12/8</td>
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Submission Protocol for papers and responses

All papers should be submitted on the NYU Classes website. Please note the following formatting guidelines:

- Papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date. The late policy applies to late papers.
- Submit your paper as a PDF file. No other formats will be accepted.
- File Name: Your Surname-Paper-#.pdf (e.g. Surname-Paper-1.pdf)
- Paginate your paper
- Spacing is 1.5 or double, as you prefer
- Font is Times New Roman, 11pt.
- Margins should be 1 inch on all sides.

Grading Summary

15%  Writing Assignment 1  
25%  Writing Assignment 2  
30%  Writing Assignment 3  
10%  Class Presentation and Presentation Skills Bootcamp  
20%  Class Participation  

Grading is not curved and therefore your course grade does not depend on those of others in the class. This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the following guidelines:

Incomplete Grades: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes)  
Academic Honesty: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies)  

Late Policy

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of fairness to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers and assignments handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.
Special Accommodations
Special accommodations and services are available for students with hearing and visual impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, chronic illnesses, and psychological impairments. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities for assistance.

Textbooks
There is no textbook for the class. All required readings will be provided in pdf form under “Resources” on the NYU classes website.

Sequence of Topics by Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Should we plan and do we need a theory to do so?</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>The idea of progress</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Urbanization, industrialization and beyond</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>The pursuit of the ideal: comprehensive, incrementalist, pragmatic</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>Planning, Discretion, Dissent and Informality: Is law a hindrance or help?</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>The professional planner: reflective, specialist, generalist, communicative</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Algorithms, modeling, representation and storytelling</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Garden City, Growth Belts and Metropolitanism</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>The right to the city, participation, self-built and incremental housing</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>Planning as design: the modernist city, zoning and development controls</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>November 14</td>
<td>Planning as governance: institutions, jurisdictions and scope</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Knowledge and power: expert, local, scientific and political</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Planning Theory and Practice: Looking Back and Ahead</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
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Guest Speakers

Week 10. Ingrid Gould Ellen  
Week 11. Mitchell Moss  
Week 12. Zhan Guo  
Week 13. Natasha Iskandar

Week 1. Should we plan and do we need a theory to do so?

Optional Readings [ ~ 22 pages ]


Week 2. The idea of progress

Required [~140 pages]


Recommended


Week 3. Urbanization, Industrialization and beyond

Required [~86 pages]


Recommended


Week 4. The pursuit of the ideal: Comprehensive, Incrementalist, Pragmatic

Required Readings


**Recommended**


**Week 5. Planning, Discretion, Dissent and Informality: Is law a hindrance or help?**

*Required [-140 pages]*


Recommended


Week 6. The Professional Planner: Reflective, Specialist, Generalist, Communicative
**Required [~135 pages]**


**Recommended**


Howell Baum, “Planning and the problem of evil,” *Planning Theory* 10 (May 2011), 103-123. L.


**Week 7. Algorithms, Modeling, Representation and Stories**
Required [~118 pages]


Pokharel, Atul. “Planning with Machines: machine learning, artificial intelligence and big data in public agencies” [Article Manuscript]


Recommended

Robert Fishman "The Rise of the Technoburb"


Week 8. Garden City, Growth Belts and Metropolitanism

Required [~150 pages]


Recommended
Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett, *Plan of Chicago* (Chicago, 1909; reprint N.Y., 1993). Introduction; Chaps. 1, 7, and 8. For online version:  


**Week 9. The Right to the City, Participation, Self-Built and Incremental Housing**

*Required [~153 pages]*


TED Talk: Alejandro Aravena, “My architectural philosophy? Bring the community into the process,”  


*Recommended*


**Week 10. Planning as Design: The Modernist City, Density, Zoning and Development Controls.**

*Required [~ 136 pages]*

( I recommend you read these texts in the order listed. )


**Recommended**


Frank Lloyd Wright: “Broadacre City” excerpted in *The City Reader* (Le Gates and Stout, eds.).


William H. Whyte “The Design of Spaces”

**Week 11. Planning as governance: Institutions, jurisdiction and scope**

*Required (~ 140 pages)*


Kropotkin, Petr Alekseevich. 1916. Conclusion in Mutual Aid, a Factor of Evolution. New York: Knopf.


*Recommended*


Schlomo Angel “Planning for a Planet of Cities”


**Week 12. Knowledge and Power: Expert and Local, Scientific and Political**

*Required [~ 100 pages]*


*Recommended*


Robert Bruegmann “The Causes of Sprawl”

M. Nelson, R. Ehrenfeucht, S. Laska, Planning, plans and people: Professional expertise, local knowledge and government action in post-hurricane Katrina New Orleans, Cityscape 9 no. 3: 23-52

**Week 13. Planning Theory and Practice: Looking Back and Ahead**

*Required [~ 100 pages]*


*Recommended*


**Week 14. Final Presentations**

*Required [~35 pages]*
