URPL-GP 2660
History and Theory of Planning
Fall 2021

Instructor Information
Atul Pokharel
Email: pokharel@nyu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment (Zoom)

Class Information
Section 001: Tuesdays 9:30am – 11:10 am [Zoom]
Section 002: Tuesdays 4:55pm – 6:35pm [194 Mercer Street, Room 305]

Course Prerequisites
None

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; and Amartya Sen on practical justice.

Finally, we will 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 toolkit is adequate, or not, to deal with 21st-century urban issues.

**Course and 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 understand 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

Learning Assessment Table

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<tr>
<th>Graded Assignment</th>
<th>Course Objective Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>#1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #8</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Assignment 3</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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Required Readings

There is no textbook for the class. All required readings will be provided in pdf on the NYU course website.

NYU Classes

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the NYU course site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations
are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

**Student Resources**

Wagner offers many quantitative (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/quantitative) and writing (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center) resources as well as skills workshops (https://wagner.nyu.edu/education/courses/search?search_api_fulltext=&subject%5B%5D=2343 &field_course_semesters_offered=All). I strongly advise using the services available at the NYU Writing center (https://www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/writing-center.html)

**Class Policies**

**Late Policy:** Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day (i.e. if the paper is submitted between 1 hour and 24 hours after the deadline, the maximum score you can receive is a B+)

**Incomplete Grades:** http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes

**Academic Honesty:**
http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html

**Electronic Device Policy:** 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.

**Recording:** As a seminar style class, it is important that all students feel comfortable participating freely. Because of this, the class discussions will not be recorded unless required as a reasonable accommodation. And when this is necessary, participants will be informed that this is the case.
Assignments and Evaluation

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. Details on group-work will be provided in class.

Class Participation (20% of total grade):

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 of them.

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 in class and group meetings.

Assignment 1 (15% of total grade):

In this assignment you will analyze a public space from the physical, digital and institutional perspectives.

Assignment 2 (25% of total grade):

In this assignment you will delineate a planning challenge for further investigation.

Assignment 3 (30% of total grade):

In this assignment, you will propose a solution to the challenge that you elaborated in Assignment 2.
Class Presentation (10% of total grade)

You will be asked to give an in class presentation about your final paper project.

Grading Scale and Rubric

Grading is not curved and therefore your course grade does not depend on those of others in the class. This means that it is possible for everyone to get an A. 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. Students will receive grades according to the following scale:

There is no A+

A = 4.0 points
A- = 3.7 points
B+ = 3.3 points
B = 3.0 points
B- = 2.7 points
C+ = 2.3 points
C = 2.0 points
C- = 1.7 points
There are no D+/D/D-
F (fail) = 0.0 points

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:
(A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

(A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

(B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

(B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but the student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
(B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

(C/-/+ ) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

(F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

Overview of the Semester

Lectures

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Note: On 10/12, classes meet on a Monday schedule.

Assignments

The writing assignments will be posted under the “Assignments” tab on the class site. Submission protocols for papers are included in the assignments.

Assignment 1
- Length (all inclusive): 3 – 5 pages
- Due Date: 9/20, 11:59pm
Assignment 2
  o Length (all inclusive): 3 – 4 pages
  o Due Date: 11/01, 11:59pm
Presentation
  o Length (all inclusive): 3 – 4 minutes
  o Due Date: 12/13, 11:59pm
Assignment 3
  o Length (all inclusive): maximum 10 pages
  o Due Date: 12/15, 11:59pm

Detailed Course Overview

Week 1

Topics:
Should we plan and do we need a theory to do so?

Optional Reading:

Week 2

Topics:
The idea of progress

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Week 3

Topics:
Urbanization, Industrialization and beyond

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


Recommended Reading:


Week 4

Topics:
The pursuit of the ideal: Rational, Pragmatic, Communicative, Just

Required Reading:


● * Handout on the Nozickian idea of justice.

**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 5**

**Topics:**
Planning, Discretion, Dissent and Informality: Is law a hindrance or help?

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


● Waldman, L. (1965). “Civil rights yes; civil disobedience no (a reply to Dr. Martin Luther King).” *New York State Bar Journal*, 37(4), 331-337.

**Week 6**

**Topics:**

Algorithms, Modeling, Representation
Required Reading:

- Angwin J., J Larson, S Mattu, L Kirchner. *Machine Bias: there’s software used across the country to predict future criminals.* And it’s biased against blacks, 2016.

Recommended Reading:

Week 7

Topics:
The Professional Planner: Reflective, Specialist, Generalist, Comprehensive, Incremental

Required Reading:
- * Handout on the Rawlsian idea of justice

Recommended Reading:

Week 8

Topics:
Garden City, Growth Belts and Metropolitanism

Required Reading:
● * Burnham, D. and Bennett, E. Plan of Chicago (Chicago, 1909; reprint N.Y., 1993). Introduction; Chapters 1; 7-8.

Recommended Reading:

Week 9

Topics:
The Modernist City, The Right to the City, Participation, Self-Built and Incremental Housing

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


Recommended Reading:


Week 10

Topics:
Planning as Design: Density, Zoning and Development Controls

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


Recommended Reading:

- Revell, K. D. (1997). “Regulating the Landscape: Real Estate Values, City Planning and the 1916 Zoning Ordinance,” in Ward, D. & Zunz, O. eds., The Landscape of


**Week 11**

**Topics:**
Planning as governance: Institutions, jurisdiction and scope

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 12**

**Topics:**

Knowledge and Power: Expert and Local, Scientific and Political
Required Reading:

- * Handout on the Utilitarian idea of justice.

Recommended Reading:


**Week 13**

**Topics:**
Planning Theory and Practice: Looking Back and Ahead

**Required Reading:**
- *Handout on Nussbaum’s ideas of practical rationality.*

**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 14**

**Topics:**

**Final Class**

**Recommended Reading:**
