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**URPL-GP 1603**

**Urban Planning Methods & Practices**

**Spring 2023**

**Section 1** (25 students)

Lecture: Monday 12:00 pm – 1:40 pm, Silver Center, Room 509

Lab: Wed 2:00 pm – 3:40 pm, 194 Mercer Street, Room 305

**Section 2** (33 students)

Lecture: Tuesday 6:45 pm – 8:25 pm, 19 West 4th Street, Room 102

Lab: Thursday 8:35 pm – 10:15 pm, online (see link under Zoom on Brightspace class site)

**Professor Zhan Guo**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 5 – 6 pm

**Teaching Assistant**

Cristina Mejia Cancelado, cm5923@nyu.edu

**Lab Lecturers**

Wednesday afternoon: Viviana Vizcaino, vov202@nyu.edu

Thursday evening: Stephen Graham, shg2063@nyu.edu

**Prerequisites: None**

### Course Description

The course will introduce students to the planning process by reviewing commonly used planning practices and approaches. As an intermediate-level course, broad overviews of each topic will be provided. The intention is to expose students to the many considerations that go into planning, while introducing them to skills that can be incorporated into their “planner toolkit,” which can be expanded upon through future coursework and work experience. Students will be expected to apply skills and concepts learned in class to a simulated planning project based on a real neighborhood in New York City.

Beyond the “toolkit,” students will be encouraged to identify and establish their own set of values and visions that underlie their work as planners. Through lectures, lab sections, and group project work, students will be expected to think critically about the intertwined challenges posed to communities, how are tools/approaches useful (or not) to the planning process, and what can you, as future planners, do to improve the planning process.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to

1) identify and scope planning problems and issues;

2) determine the information required to address the issues;

3) collect, analyze, and synthesize planning information;

4) develop practical solutions; and

5) concisely and effectively communicate findings and recommendations.

### Course Components

Class Lectures & Discussion

The 13 classes are organized around the major components of a neighborhood/comprehensive plan: neighborhood challenges, community outreach, neighborhood plan structure, scenario planning, topical issues such as land use, housing, transportation, etc. Through lectures and discussions, students are exposed to difficult situations or debates: Does rezoning expedite gentrification? Should we keep a neighborhood less desirable in order to make it more affordable? Should we protect manufacturing? Does historical preservation worsen housing affordability? Through this process, students learn the concepts of stakeholders, various approaches to soliciting often-conflicting feedback, and possible compromise policy/technical solutions.

At the end of each class lecture and discussion is a 30-minute student presentation session that showcases a variety of case studies students delve into.

Readings

The readings include planning documents from agencies as well as academic articles and books. A few are from the flagship planning journal, Journal of the American Planning Association. All readings are either available online from agency websites or through NYU E-journals.

To access E-journals, go to<https://library.nyu.edu/>. Type the journal’s title in the search bar and click Go. If NYU subscribes to that journal (all the ones on this syllabus are subscribed), it will show up as a hyperlink. Multiple providers may show up with different years of subscription available. Choose the one with the year when your article of interest was published.

Labs

Beginning with Week 1, students must attend the 13 lab sessions: 8 on case studies and 5 on the neighborhood plan making. Three or four students will present their case study the following week at class until all students have presented once in class.

The labs provide a dedicated time for students to work on their case studies and for teams to meet and work on their neighborhood plan. All students on a team should be in the same lab section. Instructors will organize a short discussion or tutorial around the week's theme and be available to review interim work on case studies and the neighborhood plan.

Final Project: Neighborhood Plan

Students will form teams to make an area-wide neighborhood plan. Although we don’t mandate that the neighborhood be in New York City, students normally choose a neighborhood not that far away from the NYU campus, given the outreach requirement of the project. New Jersey just across the Hudson, Westchester County, the southwest tip of Connecticut, or Long Island might be still feasible if access is convenient.

By area-wide, we refer to the size of a traditionally defined neighborhood, between one and several census tracts. Too large might entail a workload that overwhelms a graduate-school class, while too small you may not be able to find accurate or meaningful data for analysis. Some students may want to target a corridor instead of a traditional neighborhood. This is fine but you want to make sure that the corridor aligns well with major census boundaries (tracts, block groups, or ZIP Code for economic data). Otherwise it would be hard to compile basic data for the corridor.

You are representing the neighborhood as a whole, not any specific stakeholders. The plan should articulate the rationale behind the plan, be visionary in nature, grounded in the community’s needs and aspirations, while 1) practical given the current political, economic, and social contexts, and 2) implementable through the available technical, regulatory, and financing tools and strategies.

The team will present the plan to a jury of external practitioners. The grading of the final project is based on the quality of your plan, your presentation, and the organization of the plan-making process of your team. Each team will present their neighborhood choice and explain their reasons for it at the class.

During the plan-making process, students need to reach out to the people in the neighborhood to solicit feedback from various interest groups. They need to design an outreach plan and present their outreach outcome three weeks before the final presentation.

**NYU Brightspace**

All announcements and resources will be delivered through NYU Brightspace.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. Each student is required to sign and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated since you have all signed an Academic Oath and are bound by the academic code of the school. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, *ask*.

**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 at [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or e-mail 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 [Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html)

University policy states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students do not need to ask the instructor for permission, but they may choose to notify faculty in advance of such an absence. Whenever feasible, exams and assignment due dates will not be scheduled on religious holidays.

**Student Resources**

Wagner tutors are available to help students with their writing skills. Please see details on <https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center>.

The web also has some good resources to help you write better. After you finish writing your paper but before you submit it, you can obtain automated readability statistics here:

<https://igm.rit.edu/~jxs/services/TestReadability.html> and some additional feedback here: <http://writersdiet.com/test.php> . Use these services to improve your prose.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Class Participation (15%): Students are required to attend all lectures and labs, unless noted in the syllabus, and contribute to classroom discussion. Missing one lecture or one lab will result in a one point deduction until maximum of 15 points is reached. Please contact the instructor if any issues arise during the semester. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion.

Case Studies (5% x 8 = 40%): There are eight case studies that cover major components of a neighborhood plan. Each counts 5% of your final grade. Case studies are individual work and each student has to present one case study in class. Each class will allocate about 30 minutes for student presentations (about 3-4 students each week). Please check the case-study document for details. Students need to sign up for their presentation schedule on a Google Sheet distributed at the beginning of the semester. By the end of the semester, each student should have completed eight case studies and presented one of them to the class.

Plan-Making Progress Reports (7.5% x 2 = 15%)

During the course of making a neighborhood plan, each team is required to report their progress at two points in time: in the fifth week on which neighborhood was chosen and why, and in the third-to-last week on the community-outreach efforts. Each team will present their progress in class and submit a slide presentation to NYU Brightspace. Progress reports are teamwork.

Neighborhood Plan & Final Presentation (20%):

Each team will present their neighborhood plan (slide presentation only) at the last class. All team members must present, and each team has 30 minutes, 15 for presentation and 15 for Q&A. Professional planners and community activists may be invited to the final presentation as jurors. The last class will last for 3-4 hours — please adjust your schedule accordingly.

Teamwork (10%)

Teamwork will be evaluated based on the final-project team's peer evaluation. Each team member will comment on all members’ share of workload and the quality of work. Each member will be graded based on all members’ feedback.

**Learning Assessment Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Graded Assignment | Course Objective Covered |
| Participation | All |
| Case Study #1 | #1, and #2 |
| Case Study #2 | #1, #2, #3, and #4 |
| Case Study #3 | #3, #4, and #5 |
| Case Study #4 | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Case Study #5 | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Case Study #6 | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Case Study #7 | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Case Study #8 | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Neighborhood Choice | #1, #2, and #3 |
| Outreach Update | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |
| Team work | #3, #4, and #5 |
| Neighborhood Plan  | #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 |

**Grading Scale and Rubric**

Students will receive grades according to the following scale:

(A) Excellent: Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Numeric value=4.0 points.

(A-) Very good: 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. Numeric value=3.7 points.

(B+) Good: Work is well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course. Numeric value=3.3 points.

(B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Meets key course objectives but evidence suggests that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Numeric value=3.0 points.

(B-) Borderline: Meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Numeric value=2.7 points.

(C/-/+) Deficient: 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. Numeric value = 2.3; 2.0; 1.7 points.

(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. Numeric value = 0.0 points.

###  Course calendar table

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Wk** | **Lecture (Monday)** | **Lecture Topic** | **Presentation in Class?** | **Labs Same Week** | **Presentation File Due at Class** | **Grade** |
| 1 | Jan 23 | Neighborhood Challenges | No | Case Study #1: Why Is a Plan Needed? | None |   |
| 2 | Jan 30 | Disagreements  | Yes (Case Study #1)  | Case Study #2: Disagreements  | Case Study #1 | 5% |
| 3 | Feb 6 | Neighborhood Plans | Yes (Case Study #2) | Case Study #3: Plan Analysis | Case Study #2 | 5% |
| 4 | Feb 13 | NYC Rezoning Process | Yes (Case Study #3) | Teamwork: Neighborhood Choice | Case Study #3 | 5% |
| 5 |  Feb 20 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | Feb 27 | Workshop | Team Presentation (Neighborhood Choice) | Teamwork: Outreach Plan | Neighborhood Choice | 7.5% |
| 7 | Mar 6 | Zoning Technical Aspects | No | Case Study #4: Zoning and Rezoning |   |   |
| 8 | Mar 13 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9 | Mar 20 | Housing Affordability | Yes (Case Study #4) | Case Study #5: Housing | Case Study #4 | 5% |
| 10 | Mar 27 | Preservation of Manufacturing | Yes (Case Study #5) | Case Study #6: Manufacturing | Case Study #5 | 5% |
| 11 | Apr 3 | Commercial Development | Yes (Case Study #6) | Case Study #7: Commercial | Case Study #6 | 5% |
| 12 | Apr 10 | Transportation | Yes (Case Study #7) | Case Study #8: Transportation | Case Study #7 | 5% |
| 13 | Apr 17 | Historical Preservation | Yes (Case Study #8) | Teamwork on Outreach Results | Case Study #8 | 5% |
| 14 | Apr 25 | Workshop | Team Presentation (Outreach Updates) | Teamwork on Final Project | Outreach Results | 7.5% |
| 15 | May 1 | Development Financing | No | Teamwork on Final Project |   |   |
| 16 | May 8 | Final Presentations (3-4 hours) | Final Presentations (3-4 hours) | No Lab | Neighborhood Plan | 20% |

Note: orange color means individual work, green means teamwork

### Readings and resources

 **Topic 1: Neighborhood Changes & Challenges**

The readings will be primarily related chapters from neighborhood plans/rezoning reports that explain why the neighborhood needs rezoning or a plan. Neighborhoods from NYC and other localities are both welcome.

* East Harlem Neighborhood plan. Pages 1-19 [East Harlem Neighborhood Plan | PDF | Harlem | New York City (scribd.com)](https://www.scribd.com/doc/300494091/East-Harlem-neighborhood-plan)
* Gowanus Neighborhood Plan: [Final Environmental Impact Statement](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/gowanus/noc-feis.pdf) (FEIS) Chapter 1 Project Description, Page I 4 to I 15 [Chapter 1: Project Description - DEIS (nyc.gov)](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/gowanus/01-feis.pdf)
* East Midtown Rezoning Plan [East Midtown Rezoning - Department of City Planning (nyc.gov)](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/east-midtown/east_midtown.pdf)
* East New York Sustainable Community, Chapter 1 & 2: [Introduction and East New York in Context](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/sustainable-communities/eny/east_ny_report/east_ny_introduction_context.pdf) [east\_ny\_introduction\_context.pdf (nyc.gov)](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/sustainable-communities/eny/east_ny_report/east_ny_introduction_context.pdf)

**Topic 2: Disagreements**

The readings will be primarily on different opinions regarding a neighborhood plan or rezoning effort. Information sources to collect the diverse/contrasting opinions include but not limited to minutes of public hearings/meetings, website of opposing groups, media coverage, etc. For example, during the rezoning for SoHo/NoHo, at least two civic groups filed law suits against the City’s effort: Coalition for Fairness in SoHo and NoHo (https://sohonoho.org/), and Soho Alliance (<http://sohoalliance.org/>). Meetings minutes from public meetings in NYC could be found from websites of Community Boards, Planning Commission, or City Council.

* Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes (uploaded to BrightSpace)
* One45 Public hearing video
* SoHo NoHo Lawsuit Court Ruling:

[soho-noho-lawsuit-Verified-Petition.pdf (thevillagesun.com)](https://thevillagesun.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/soho-noho-lawsuit-Verified-Petition.pdf)

**Topic 3: Neighborhood Plans**

Readings will include community plans from NYC and other localities. The focus is on the structure of the plan instead of the detailed content.

* Inwood 2017 Action Plan <https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/filemanager/Projects/Inwood_NYC/InwoodNYCActionPlan_english_digital.pdf>
* Buffalo 2030 Comprehensive Plan [untitled (buffalony.gov)](https://www.buffalony.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3273/Comprehensive-Plan---Queen-City-in-the-21st-Century)

Vision (pg. 4-5); Key Principles (pg. 59-62); development scenarios (pg. 62-66); 2.4 (pg. 68-107)

* Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan

Core Values, Growth Strategy: [https://www.SeattleComprehensivePlanCouncilAdopted2018.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/SeattleComprehensivePlanCouncilAdopted2018.pdf)

Five alternatives: [One Seattle Plan Environmental Impact Statement Scoping (arcgis.com)](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/8c90f3a5e0704f8687213b669efa6fb0?item=6)

[Seattle Reveals Rezoning Concepts and Invites Scoping Comments for Big 2024 Update | The Urbanist](https://www.theurbanist.org/2022/06/23/seattle-reveals-rezoning-concepts-and-invites-scoping-comments-for-big-2024-update/)

* San Diego General Plan: Strategic Framework: <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy//planning/genplan/pdf/generalplan/adoptedsfelem.pdf>
* Richmond 300. A guide for growth. Pages 1-80 and 179 – 203

<https://www.rva.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/R300_Adopted_210331_0.pdf>

**Topic 4: NYC Rezoning Process**

* [Williams, Alfred M. Jr.](http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2264/HOL/AuthorProfile?action=edit&search_name=Williams%2C%20Alfred%20M.%20Jr.&collection=journals) 2016. Reforming New York City's ULURP: Less Confusing than Its Name. [Journal of civil rights and economic development](https://getit.library.nyu.edu/resolve?umlaut.institution=NYU&url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_tim=2017-01-22T16%3A41%3A10-05%3A00&ctx_id=&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rft.jtitle=Journal+of+civil+rights+and+economic+development&rft.object_id=3280000000000105&rft_val_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Ajournal&rfr_id=info%3Asid%2Fsfxit.com%3Acitation&umlaut.institution=NYU). Vol. 28, Issue 3, pp. 399-418 (available from NYU Library E-journal online)
* Tom Angotti. 2010. Land use and the New York City Charter

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/ccpd/repository/files/charterreport-angotti-2.pdf>

* NYC Department of City Planning. Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/applicants/applicant-portal/step5-ulurp-process.page>

**Topic 5: Zoning Technical Aspects**

* The 2018 NYC Zoning Handbook <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/zh.page>

Chapter 2: Applying Zoning

**Topic 6: Housing Affordability**

* Keeping Neighborhood Affordable: A Handbook of Housing Strategies for Gentrifying Areas, Urban Institute <http://www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/411295_gentrifying_areas.pdf>
* New York City Mandatory Inclusionary Housing: Promoting Economically Diverse Neighborhoods

<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/mih/mih_report.pdf>

* Behind New York’s Housing Crisis: Weakened Laws and Fragmented Regulation

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/20/nyregion/affordable-housing-nyc.html>

* The Eviction Machine Churning Through New York City

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/20/nyregion/nyc-affordable-housing.html>

**Topic 7: Preservation of Manufacturing**

* The 2018 NYC Zoning Handbook <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/zh.page>

Chapter 5: Manufacturing Districts

* The Steep Costs of Using Noncumulative Zoning to Preserve Land for Urban Manufacturing, available from [http://ssrn.com/abstract\_id=1527276](http://ssrn.com/abstract_id%3D1527276)
* [Up-Zoning New York City’s Mixed Use Neighborhoods : Property-Led Economic Development and the Anatomy of a Planning Dilemma](https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=cplan_papers) <https://repository.upenn.edu/cplan_papers/45/>
* Employment trends in M districts outside Manhattan: 2000 - 2014 <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/data-maps/nyc-economy/employment-nyc-manufacturing-zones.pdf>
* Can Industrial Mixed-Use Buildings Work in NYC?

https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/housing-economy/can-industrial-mixed-use-buildings-work-in-nyc.pdf

**Topic 8: Commercial Development and Mom & Pop Stores**

* The 2018 NYC Zoning Handbook <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/zh.page>

Chapter 4: Commercial Districts

* Assessing Storefront Vacancy in NYC: 24 Neighborhood Case Studies

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/housing-economy/assessing-storefront-vacancy-nyc.pdf?r=1>

Note: Comptroller’s office maintains a website to review storefront vacancy and historical trend by neighborhood <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/retail-vacancy-in-new-york-city/>

* NYC Neighborhood Economic Profile

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Neighborhood_Economic_Profiles_2018.pdf>

**Topic 9: Transportation**

* [Red Hook Transportation Study](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/red-hook/red-hook.page)

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/red-hook/full_report.pdf>

* Access to Opportunity: A Transportation and Housing Study in the Eastern Rockaway. Final Report. March 2019

https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/easternrockaways-access-to-opportunity-final-

report.pdf

* North Williamsburg Transportation Study. Final Report. February 2019

https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/north-williamsburg-study-existing-

mar2017.pdf

* Bringing equitable bike share to Bed-Stuy. Progress Report from Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in Partnership with NACTO, March 2017

**Topic 10: Historical Preservation**

* New Density and Shrink-Wrapped Streets: Contextual Zoning Policy in New York City
* Sinel, Genna (2017). New Density And Shrink-Wrapped Streets: Contextual Zoning Policy In New York City. New York University Journal of Law & Liberty. New York City [Vol 11:510 2017].
* Delaware County 2035. Historic Preservation Plan.

https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/pubs/delco2035/HistoricPlan.pdf

**Topic 11: Development Financing**

* The Myth of Self-Financing: The Trade-Offs Behind the Hudson Yards Redevelopment Project <http://www.economicpolicyresearch.org/images/docs/research/political_economy/Bridget_Fisher_WP_2015-4_final.pdf>
* Alternative Funding for an Equitable Park System in New York City and State

<https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1776&context=pelr>

* Vicki Been. 2010. Community Benefits Agreements: A New Local Government Tool or Another Variation on the Exactions Theme? The University of Chicago Law ReviewVol. 77, No. 1, pp. 5-35 (available from NYU Library E-journal online)
* Register of Community Board Budget Requests: For The Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2020

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/cbrboro4-19.pdf>

* Register of Community Board Budget Requests: For The Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2019

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/cbrboro4-18.pdf>

* Value Creation, Capture, and Destruction: Hudson Yards and the False Promise of Self-Financing Mega-Projects <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2022.2026808>