New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
Dr. Shlomo Angel
Fall 2011

History and Theory of Planning: Tentative Course Syllabus
URPL-GP.2660.002
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Objective:
This course is a general introduction to the theory and practice of urban planning. It aims to
acquaint students with the wide body of literature pertinent to the theory and practice of
urban planning and with the historical roots of modern town planning; to introduce them to
planning problems and strategies in a wide range of cities and countries; and to engage
them in the study and discussion of current planning issues in the light of our current
understanding of the city. Through a process of reading and responding to a broad range of
articles in pertinent fields of knowledge, through listening and responding to lectures by the
instructor, and through the presentation of case studies by students and guest lecturers,
and through the writing of research papers, students are expected to form a better
understanding of what urban planners and concerned urban activists can now do for cities
and the people inhabiting them.

Course Description:
The course is designed as a lecture–seminar course. Participants in the course will meet
once a week on Wednesday evenings, 6:45–8:35p.m. in Room LL138 at the Bobst Library.
Altogether, there will be 13 meetings, starting on the 7th of September and ending on the
14th of December 2011. There will be no meeting on the fourth week of classes (the eve of
Rosh Ha'Shana, 28 September) and students are requested to view the film on Robert Moses
on line that week. Generally, each meeting will focus on one theme (see Course Schedule
below). Students will be expected to read the one or two assigned articles for the week and
post their comments on the reading(s) on the course's Discussion Board on Blackboard
before coming to class. The instructor will introduce the theme in a lecture, and two
selected students will make short Powerpoint presentations, one on the theme of the class
and one on a case study pertaining to that theme. The lecture and student presentations will
be followed by a class discussion.
**Course Requirements:**

There are three requirements for completing the course: (A) Posting responses to the assigned readings on Blackboard; (B) Preparation (and presentation, if selected) of a state-of-the-art paper on one of the course’s themes; and (C) preparation (and presentation, if selected) of a case study.

**A. Required Readings and Response:** Students will be required to read one or two articles each week, in preparation for attending class. Students will be expected to enter a concise response (100-200 words) on each of the articles they read on the course’s Discussion Board on Blackboard. The response should not be a summary of the article, but a statement of critical opinion. It should convey what the student understood to be the main thrust of the article, whether the student agreed or not, how it connected to the student experience or other knowledge, how it connected to the theme of the class, or whether the student found it relevant and useful and why. Students are also encouraged to respond to other students’ posted responses on the Discussion Board or to posted comments by the Instructor or Teaching Assistant. The responses will be graded simply as submitted/not submitted. A full set of responses will count as **10 percent** of the course’s final grade.

**B. Preparation (and presentation) of a state-of-the-art paper titled "What Can Urban Planners Learn from the Study of Urban .......?"** The challenge for the class will be to get a deeper sense of what can constitute urban planning theory or a theory of action for urban activists and practitioners who care about cities and their inhabitants. We have identified twelve fields of knowledge that have made significant contribution to the study and understanding of cities from their own unique perspective (see diagram below).

![Diagram of fields of knowledge related to urban planning](image)

The class will aim to familiarize its members with these contributions, both by reading articles in each field and commenting on them, and by making available to the class a state-of-the-art paper written by a student that delves deeper into each field with the aim of drawing out key theoretical concepts, insights, methods, findings, and visions that are deemed relevant to urban planners, practitioners and activists. Each student will prepare
one such state-of-the-art paper. Selected students will present a draft of it in an 18-minute Powerpoint presentation in class, and all students will submit their papers in full on the courses’ Blackboard as a final paper of 4,000-5,000 at the end of the term. The presentation in class will count for 20 percent of the course grade, and the final paper will count for an additional 30 percent of the course grade. Altogether, the state-of-the-Art paper, whether presented in class or not, will count for 50 percent of the grade.

C. Preparation (and Presentation) of Case Studies: All students are expected to prepare a case study PowerPoint presentation, but not all students will be able to present their case studies in class. All in all, there will only be 12 case study presentations in class, 11 by students and one by a guest lecturer. The remaining case studies will be uploaded on the course blackboard for other students to read before coming to class (case studies should be uploaded no less than 48 hours before class). Case study presentations will focus on a particular topic and its manifestation in a particular city or region. They are expected to include basic information on the city as well as empirical research results on the topic being explored. Class presentations are expected to be at most 18-minute long PowerPoint presentations (approximately 20-25 slides) and not more. Case study class presentations will comprise 20 percent of the course grade. The presentations will then be further worked on and submitted as a paper at the end of the course. The case study paper should be 3,000-4,000 words long. The case study paper will count for an additional 20 percent of the course grade. Altogether the case study paper, whether presented in class or not, will count for 40 percent of the grade.

Readings:
The required course readings, as well as the majority of further readings, will be available on Blackboard.

Office Hours:
The instructor will meet students, by appointment only, at the Wagner School’s Puck Building’s second floor lobby. Please e–mail the instructor to arrange for an appointment. Appointments will generally be held on Wednesday afternoons, 5:00–6:30 p.m. The teaching assistant will also meet students by appointment. Please email to eric.goldwyn@gmail.com to arrange for an appointment.

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# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Sept.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>In Search of a Theory and History of Urban Planning</td>
<td>An introduction to the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Sept.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>Architecture and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Sept.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>Culture and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Sept.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Rosh Hashana, No Class Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Oct</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 5</td>
<td>Sociology and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Oct.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>Demography and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Oct.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 7</td>
<td>Economics and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Oct.</td>
<td>6:45-8:25pm</td>
<td>Period 8</td>
<td>Politics and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Nov.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 9</td>
<td>Law and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Nov.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 10</td>
<td>Management and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Nov.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 11</td>
<td>Engineering and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Nov.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 12</td>
<td>Health and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Nov.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 13</td>
<td>Environmental Studies and Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Dec.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 14</td>
<td>Geography and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Dec.</td>
<td>6:45-8:35pm</td>
<td>Period 15</td>
<td>Conclusion and Reflection</td>
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Detailed Course Outline and Readings

The detailed outline introduces the themes that will be touched upon and discussed in class each week by the instructor and by the student presenting the state-of-the-art paper. Students are requested to read the required articles or chapters with the prospective themes of the class in mind and to post their comments on the appropriate Discussion Board on the course’s Blackboard site. The question ‘Is this relevant for me if I am to engage in the practice of urban planning?’ should be foremost in their minds. Articles for further reading are optional reading during the term and beyond.

**Period 1: In Search of a Theory and History of Urban Planning**

**Themes**

Definitions of urban planning; “no one plans cities anymore”; planning as misnomer or ‘signifier’; planning and altruism; planning as urban activism; planning as a normative approach to public intervention in urban land use; the basic planning paradigm and its limitation; preparing for alternative futures; sources of legitimacy for planning; integrating other fields of knowledge into planning; a Rashomon view of the city; the limits of normative action.

**Required Reading**


**Further Reading**


**Period 2: Architecture and Planning**

**Themes**

The master plan as a static end state; utopianism and environmental determinism in architectural thinking; fundamental differences between architecture and planning; the planned city and the living city; the city of monuments, boulevards, and plazas; the City Beautiful Movement; the Modernist movement and the International Style; destruction and
preservation; the death and life of the street; urban design; large projects and their limitations; the regulation of urban aesthetics.

**Required Reading**


**Further Reading**


**Period 3: Culture and Planning**

**Themes**

The city is a cultural artifact; the city as a locus of cultural production; the importance of landmarks and symbols in ‘branding’ the city; indigenous culture and architectural preservation; regional cultural differences in the design and use of urban environments; the search for regional symbols; multiculturalism and the city; the marketing of culture to the ‘creative class’; stadiums, the Olympics and the city; the demise of the local newspaper; culture and tourism.

**Required Reading**


**Period 4: Robert Moses and the Transformation of New York City**

There will be no class meeting during this period because it is Rosh Hashana.

Please watch the one-hour segment on Robert Moses in Ken Burns's *New York* (available on Blackboard) and post your comment on the Discussion Board on Blackboard.

**Themes**

The planner as an agent of social change; the planner as the embodiment of the public interest; the car and the city; the expert as an unelected autocrat; modernism in action; planning in the service of capitalist interests; invisible people made visible through organized struggle; the limits of expert-led planning.
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Required Reading
No required reading.

Further Reading


Period 5: Sociology and Planning

Themes
Urbanism as a way of life; understanding rural-urban migration; urban ecology and the location of social groups in different parts of the city; residential segregation; understanding urban poverty; homelessness; spontaneous settlement formation; squatter settlements; defining and studying 'slums'; social conflict and social cohesion in the city; urban struggles; social capital and the search for neighborliness and community; crime in the city; gated communities; gentrification;

Required Reading


Further Reading


Period 6: Demography and Planning

Themes
Measuring population growth and urbanization; measuring rural-urban migration; problems with measuring the population of the city; the ‘population explosion’ and ‘overurbanization’; population projections; the limitations of projections of city growth; Zipf’s Law; power laws and the population of cities; optimum city size; census data and spatial organization of cities; the historical growth of cities;
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Required Reading


Further Reading


Period 7: Economics and Planning

Themes

The economic rationale for the emergence of cities; explaining rural-urban migration; explaining urban spatial structure; agglomeration economies; cities and economic development; urban public goods and externalities; income inequality; urban and housing finance; property and land taxation; the rationale for subsidies; urban real estate; city competitiveness; economic analysis of urban regulatory regimes;

Required Reading


Further Reading


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**Period 8: Politics and Planning**

**Themes**

Power and class relations in cities; the city as a locus of capital accumulation; the differences between capitalist and socialist cities; urban struggles and revolts; tenure struggles and property tax revolts; justice and the city; planners accused of serving the ruling class; advocacy planning; the political legitimacy of planning; the decentralization of authority to lower-level governments; elected vs. appointed officials; globalization and the weakening of the State; the bargaining power of cities vs. footloose corporations; the rise of the urban middle-class and the demand for meritocratic government;

**Required Reading**


**Further Reading**


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**Period 9: Law and Planning**

**Themes**

The property rights that define the form of the city; forms of land ownership; the public and the private domains; limits to property: eminent domain and property taxation; the limits to eminent domain; the regulations governing urban development: zoning, land subdivision regulations, and building codes; exclusionary zoning; unaffordable regulations; the failure of regulatory enforcement; corruption and the rule of law; law enforcement; the right to the city.

**Required Reading**

Fernandes, Edesio, 2007. “Constructing the Right to the City in Brazil”, in *Social and Legal Studies*, 16(2),201-219.

**Further Reading**


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**Period 10: Management and Planning**

**Themes**

Forms of city management; planning as a part of city management; the evolution of urban management in the U.S.: from Tammany Hall to the City Management Movement; the source
of legitimacy for planning at different levels: from regional government to community control; municipal fragmentation; centralization vs. decentralization; models of decision-making in planning; privatization of municipal services; restrictive ordinances; cooperatives and condominiums; governance and corruption; large projects; models of community participation;

Required Reading


Further Reading


Period 11: Engineering and Planning

Themes

Technological development and the historical evolution of the city; the industrial revolution and the city; the key technological inventions that have transformed the city; innovations in building construction: the steel frame and the elevator; innovations in infrastructure; the transportation revolution; the communication revolution; safety standards and building codes.

Required Reading


Period 12: Health and Planning

Themes

Epidemics and the city; the history of urban epidemics and their relation to urban reforms; the cholera epidemics in New York and London in 1850 and the decision to build water and sewer systems; slum clearance in the name of health; the health justification for the great eviction in Delhi in 1976; the emphasis on infrastructure in squatter upgrading; the danger of fire; the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York in 1911 of and its consequences; zoning in the name of health and safety and its abuse; urban stress; urban vs. rural health levels;

Required Reading

**Period 13: Environmental Studies and Planning**

**Themes**

The impact of cities on the natural environment; the impact of agriculture on the natural environment; the urban origins of the nature conservation movement; urban sprawl and the efforts to contain urban expansion: the London greenbelt and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act; The Seoul greenbelt; the Portland Urban Growth Boundary: the interests of the city vs. the interests of the countryside; the brown agenda vs. the green agenda; urban water, air, and noise pollution; the urban footprint; sprawl and urban energy use; green buildings; understanding and measuring urban sprawl;

**Required Reading**


**Period 14: Geography and Planning**

**Themes**

Why do cities locate where they are? Location theory; Central Place Theory; hierarchies and systems of cities; growth poles; the internal spatial structure of cities; market areas; mapping the city; conceptual maps of the city; geographical information systems; models of the city; fractal cities; cities as self-organizing systems;

**Required Reading**


**Further Reading**


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