Course Description

This course examines the origins and development of the planning profession in the United States. It begins by exploring the context in which the idea of urban planning first arose as a basis for social intervention, and traces the historical strands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that converged with its professionalization. This entails a close look at the problems generated by the emergence of industrial cities, the early responses by reformers of various stripes, and the contributions of urban visionaries who sought to radically restructure urban form. We will examine the process by which planning became a recognized governmental activity, including the rudimentary development of many of the methods and tools still utilized by planners today.

The second half of the course will engage central topics in planning theory, including motivations for planning, the differing ways planning can be undertaken, and the values that support it. We will review the different perspectives from which the ideal of rational comprehensive planning has been critiqued, modified, and in some cases, dismantled. This is our opportunity to confront some of the most vexing issues in planning: What are the political and technical constraints faced by planners? What forces shape the production of urban space, and to what extent can planners control or guide them? Planners have been variously described as technical experts, mediators, and mobilizers—can these roles be reconciled or does one deserve primacy? What is the role of the public and how should expertise be balanced with local knowledge? What is the relationship between theory and practice and how can the gap be bridged?

We will review the different schools of planning theory that have been influential over the past 60 years, and through the final assignment, you will be given an opportunity to apply some of these theories to a contemporary and practical planning problem.
Course Requirements

Class meetings will begin with a short lecture, followed by a class discussion centered on the week’s readings. Readings have been selected to give you grounding in the history and theory of planning, and to deepen and enrich your grasp of the issues that planners routinely confront at the present time. It is therefore imperative that students complete the readings prior to class and come prepared to participate actively in the class discussion.

There are the following assignments:

(1) You must submit response papers in which you critically assess the readings for three separate classes over the course of the semester. All assignments must be submitted before class and in hard copy; no electronic submissions will be accepted.

(2) The final project will require you to design a public planning process, drawing on readings from the course to support your proposal. Further materials regarding the final project will be distributed during the semester.

Grading

The grade for this course will be weighted in the following way: 30% for your three response papers, 40% for the final paper, and 30% for class participation.

Class Schedule

1. September 5  Course Overview
2. September 12  Industrialization and Urban Transformation
3. September 19  Antecedents to Modern Planning I
4. September 26  Antecedents to Modern Planning II
5. October 3  Utopian Visions and Master Planning
6. October 10  Regionalism and Smart Growth
7. October 17  Rationality and Expertise
8. October 24  Advocacy and Equity Planning
9. October 31  Political Economy
10. November 7  Discursive Democracy
11. November 14  Pragmatism and Collaboration
12. November 21  Modernism Under Attack
14. December 5  Planning in a Globalized World

Required Readings

All of the required readings are available electronically and will be posted on Blackboard.
Week 1: Course Overview: Theory and Practice in Planning


Week 2: Industrialization and Urban Transformation


Week 4: Antecedents to Modern Planning: Social and Political Reform During the Progressive Era


Excerpt from *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, recorded by William Riordon, 1905.


**Week 5: Utopian Visions and Master Planning: City Beautiful, Garden City, and the Radiant City**


**Week 6: Regionalism and Smart Growth**


**Week 7: Rationality and Expertise**


**Week 8: Advocacy and Equity Planning**


**Week 9: Political Economy**


**Week 10: Discursive Democracy**


Week 11: Pragmatism and Collaboration


Week 12: Modernism Under Attack


Week 13: Civic Responsibility, Social Justice, and Planning Ethics


Week 14: Planning in a Globalized World


Mike David, *Planet of Slums*, Verso, Chapter 1-2