This course is designed to introduce the incoming professional master’s student to the professional field of urban and regional planning. In many ways, the task is an impossible one. The field of planning is broad, encompassing many concentrations and specialities – e.g. land use, housing, transportation, design, economic development, community development, environment, social, food systems, public health – and is practiced at many different scales – e.g. international, national, regional, state, county, city, neighborhood, in growing and shrinking urban and rural places. Therefore, the best that I (as teacher) and you (as student) can hope to achieve is a sense (a flavor) of what the field is, what some of its major challenges are, and how it has come to be what it is. And even this goal is ambitious and difficult to realize.

So some caveats. This course will not be a comprehensive introduction to the field of urban and regional planning. Even after completing a master’s degree you will not have this, so it can not be done in one, one semester course. This course will reflect my interests, slant, and expertise in planning, and as such ignore certain practice areas (most specifically transportation, new urbanism, social policy, and international development). This is not because I do not think these areas are important. But there is only so much time and space. Specifically, this introduction will have a land use slant. This is for several reasons – land use is my substantive area, and it is one of the several key areas that gave rise to the field.

The course is organized into four sections: Introduction (covering past and future visions of the American city, and the issue of sprawl and redevelopment), occurs over three weeks; What Planners Do, a section covering four weeks, will concentrate on meeting with guest speakers (some practitioners, some faculty) who will speak with you about their practice of planning – why they became planners, what skills they use in practice, what they see as the major challenges for the field; Why and How Planners Do What they Do, a section covering five weeks, will to examine some of the history of planning, some of planning’s tools for implementation, and some of the theoretical debates about the role and function of the planner and plan; Planning’s Challenges, a section covering three weeks, examines a set of contemporary challenges for
planning practice.

An official component of the class students is a required set of two field trips (dates to be announced) which will further introduce you to local and regional planning issues. During these field trips you will have further opportunities to meet practicing planners who relate theory to practice and communicate the challenges of planning in a complex and changing world.

REQUIREMENTS. This course will be conducted as a lecture-seminar. Lectures will be delivered by me and by guest speakers, but you are expected to be an active learner. I am a strong believer that the best learning comes about through active engagement of the learner. Also, planning is a field that often requires you to share your ideas and analysis in meetings with other professionals, at public meetings, before elected officials, etc. Therefore you must learn to hone the skills of effective public speaking. This course will provide you with one opportunity to do this.

Specifically, students are expected to: (1) come to all class sessions, (2) be fully prepared in terms of having done class readings and other required preparations, (3) show appropriate interest and respect for the ideas, thoughts, and ponderings of guests and other members of the class (4) participate in class discussions, both formally and informally (this is explained immediately below), (5) prepare a set of four short papers, and (6) take a take-home final examination. N.B. There is no mid-term examination in this course.

Primarily during the second half of the semester course readings will be divided out among the members of the class for presentation the following week. Students with reader responsibilities will work with me in engaging the class as a whole. This will constitute formal participation. Open discussion of individual readings, themes of the week, and themes of the course and interactions with guests will constitute informal participation. If this seems confusing, don’t worry; it will become clear very quickly.

The four short papers will be on designated topics selected by me. Details on the papers (and their due dates) are provided below, and will be discussed further in class.

As this is lecture-seminar, we have the opportunity to explore ideas with each other. Therefore, I expect that often we will be dealing with half-understandings, half-thoughts, etc. This is fully appropriate and is what makes an experience such as this exciting, as long as those half-thoughts and understandings are based on full preparation on your part. I expect you to challenge me and your colleagues in our presentation of ideas, and to be challenged yourself. All this is part of the excitement of graduate study, as long as it is done from a basis of respect.
GRADES. Grades will be based on the following schedule:

- 15% class participation; class participation will include all aspects of your participation – quantity (formal and informal) and quality;
- 55% four short papers (10% paper #1, 10% paper #2, 15% paper #3, 20% paper #4);
- 30% take-home final exam (details to be discussed).

Final grades are given on the following schedule: 100-93/A; 92-88/AB; 87-83/B; 82-78/BC; 77-70/C; 69-65/D; 64 and under/F.

PAPER DETAILS (Due dates & subjects)

#1 – Distributed 19 September, due in class 24 September; what kind of city for city planning?
#2 – Distributed 24 September, due in class no later than 15 October; individual speaker assessment.
#3 – Distributed 24 September, due in class 15 October; synthesis of speakers.
#4 – Distributed 05 November, due in class 26 November; planning for a progressive society.

READINGS. Two books have been ordered as required readings for this course. Books are available for purchase through Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative on 426 W. Gilman Street (2576050), a five minute walk from the end of Library Mall. Required readings (except those in the required books) will be available for downloading from Learn@UW – https://learnuw.wisc.edu/. There is no formal reading packet for this course.

Required Books:


FINAL NOTES. 1) I reserve the right to make minor modifications to the syllabus, assignments, requirements and expectations for this course. 2) It is possible that additional learning opportunities will be presented throughout the semester. As-if these arise, how they will relate to the formal expectations for the course (requirements and grades) will be made clear.
URPL 741: Introduction to Planning

INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

I. Introduction

05 September  Introduction: the course and ourselves
10, 12 September  The Function of Cities
17, 19 September  The Inevitability of Sprawl?

II. What Planners Do

24, 26 September  A View from the Private Sector
01, 03 October  Planning as Persuasion
08, 10 October  Planning as Analysis
15, 17 October  Reflection, Assessment, Analysis

III. Why and How Planners Do What they Do

22, 24 October  Urban Utopias??
29, 31 October  Rise of the Regulatory State – Zoning & Land Use Regulation
05, 07 November  Planning’s Past – Planning’s Future
12, 14 November  Planning Theory
19, 21 November  Planning Theory (continued)

IV. Planning’s Challenges

26, 28 November  The Politics of Planning; The Anti-Planning Movement
03, 05 December  Learning from Europe
10, 12 December  Globalization and Its Effects