

PLS 513-Regional Planning Politics and Policy

Fall 2011

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 4:40 pm -6 pm or by appointment

Course Description: *Explores the connections between formal planning processes and political decision making at the regional and local level for various policy issues like rapid development, sprawl, transportation, aging, affordable housing, rural poverty, economic development, quality of life. Special attention is given to how planners and analysts provide advice to elected and non-elected decision makers.*

Course Goals: Students will be provided with a basic set of practice skills and knowledge in planning and politics at the state and local level that will allow them to provide staff support and assistance to public officials in different planning. Students will better understand the roles of staff assigned to planning agencies, elected bodies with jurisdiction over planning and upper level management responsible for issues.

Class Assignments, Exams, and Projects: There will be weekly reading assignments and short weekly written assignments or power point presentations or panel discussions. There will also be a written field assignment where you will adopt a city and analyze one planning issue of your choice.

Grade:

Weekly written assignments or power point presentations.....50%

Field project and presentation.....40%

Class Participation.....10%

Field Paper:

Field paper ---Focus will be on a planning use in one community. If you pick a community outside this region, make sure their newspaper has an archive so you can follow the issues. Also check Nexus and other data bases for information. Everyone

should contact at least the planning department in the community for an interview and for other information. In the paper, 12 page limit (double spaced) include the following.

- Background statistics and history on community
- Identify and illustrate a critical planning issue in the community over last five years
- Document the issue or trend and use best data available
- Analyze stakeholders connected on each issue, the politics and tradeoffs involved
- Recommend “best practice” or solution to the issue as seen by the professional planner
- Give reasoning behind professional planners recommendations
- Give your recommendation and reasoning

Books:

Bernard Ross and Myron Levine (2006), Urban Politics. Belmont, Ca.: Thompson Wadsworth.

John DeGrove (2005), Planning Policy and Politics, Cambridge, Mass: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Gregory Squires (2002), Urban Sprawl, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press (Required)

Topics and Weekly Assignments:

August 30

Introduction, Overview of Course

Developing a Framework for analyzing urban areas and change
The structure and dynamics of urban sprawl.
Key Terms and Concepts in Planning and Politics
Planning Roles

September 6

Major dimensions and causes of urban sprawl

Reading: Squires, Chapters 1-6.

Assignment: Make a 10 minute power point presentation on urban sprawl where you describe the problem and set the agenda. You are searching for a clear agenda to influence citizens and elected officials. Concentrate on the definition of sprawl and how to measure it in this assignment.

September 13

***Solving Regional growth problems
Using formal and informal political solutions***

Reading: Squires, Chapter 7-12. Ross, chapter 12

Assignment: Make a 10 minute power point presentation on the structural and organizational solutions to sprawl. What would work the best and which decision makers would be the most receptive to these solutions. Look at both short term as well as long term solutions.

September 20

***State Policy and Urban Growth
Smart Growth
Progressive Policies***

Reading: DeGrove, chapters 1-4

Assignment: States will be assigned. 10 minute presentation on what your state is doing in terms of best practice. Ie., Smart Growth.

September 27

Smart Growth continued.

Reading: DeGrove, chapters 5-9

Assignment: Finish state presentations

October 4

Suburbanization
Exclusivity and urban location
Equity and public policy
Local politics

Reading: Ross Chapters 2,6,7,11.

Assignment: In a 10 minute power point presentation, describe the major problems that exclusive suburbs create for the rest of the metropolitan area.

October 18

Using public policy to minimize exclusivity in suburban development
Designing equitable public policy in the region
Limiting growth of gated communities
Adapting gated communities to make them more accessible to middle class people.

Reading: chapter 15.

Assignment: In two pages, focus on policy planning changes that will make gated communities more accessible or public policy more equitable in the region.

October 25

Metro Regions and problems around the world
Urban challenges
Squatter settlements
Managing traffic
Managing social problems

Reading: Internet.

Assignment: Pick one more developed region in the world and compare it with a less developed region in terms of wealth, housing, urban problems, transportation, etc. 15 minute power point presentation.

November 1

Metro Regions in the world (continued)

Assignment: continue the presentations.

November 8

***Economic Development
Urban Revitalization***

Reading: Ross, Chapter 5, 16

Assignment: What are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the most popular tools being used to revitalize cities today?

November 15

*Quality of Life comparison
City comparisons
Pros and Cons of making statistical comparisons*

Assignment: Using the internet, develop 10 indicators of the Quality of Life and give a selection for their rationale. How comprehensive should these indicators be to be credible ? Compare two cities of your choice on these indicators. Bring the tables to class.

November 22

***Do we need a federal policy toward cities?
Should the federal government give cities more autonomy ?***

Reading: Ross chapter 14

Assignment: What should the core policies toward cities be, assuming the federal government is going to become more involved?

November 29

Final presentations on projects. Power point.

December 6

Final presentations on projects. Power point.

