

Course Syllabus – Urban Planning and Policy

Course Information

Course number –GEOG/PA - 3377

Course title – URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY

Term –FALL 2013

Section – 001

Classroom – FO 1.502

Time –Monday/Wednesday, 1:00 - 2:15 pm

Professor Contact Information

Name – Dr. Irina Vakulenko

Phone number – 972-883-6718

Email – ivakulenko@utdallas.edu (best way to contact me)

Office location – GR 3.213

Office hours – Tuesday 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm; Wednesday 2:30-3:30 pm; by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. General academic skills of analytical thinking, comparison, essay writing, working with statistical material, map reading will be helpful.

Course Description

This course explores important substantive areas and concepts in the field of urban and regional planning and current urban planning and policy issues and debates. Topics include: forces that have historically guided and are currently guiding U.S. urbanization; land use, growth management, transportation and traffic congestion, economic development, housing and community development, environmental planning; legal, environmental, governmental contexts.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Provide an overview of the various fields within planning, such as housing, community development, transportation, environmental planning, urban sprawl and growth management. Our focus will be on the major policy issues and problems within each of the fields.
- Introduce some of the major debates and issues in urban policy and politics nationally and regionally.
- Students will enhance their skills in conducting research, applying source material, discussing general information, and applying logical process when writing.
- Oral presentations and debating arguments will be practiced as a tool of coming to a personal conclusion in regard to policy proposals based on educated and research substantiated ground.
- Students will improve their skills in public speaking, argumentation of contentious issues and live debate. This course has been designated for the Certificate in Critical Communication Skills (C3). See more info on e-learning course page.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Contemporary Urban Planning. 10th edition. By John M. Levy, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc. 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-78159-1. Extended reading for the research on Policy Briefs.

Suggested Course Materials

Students are expected to take notes during PowerPoint presentations, reading chapters and other assigned materials, and complete the assignments listed in the syllabus by a due date.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

#	Date	Topic	Reading & Assignments
1	8/26/13	Introduction. Urbanization of America before the 20 th century.	Ch 1, 2
2	8/28/13	Urban trends in the 20 th century.	Ch 2
3	9/4/13	The history of planning before the Great Depression.	Ch 3
4	9/9/13	The history of planning since 1930s.	Ch 4
5	9/11/13	National Planning in the United States.	Ch 17
6	9/16/13	Planning Theory.	Ch 19
7	9/18/13	Test 1	15%
8	9/23/13	The legal basis of planning.	Ch 5
9	9/25/13	Planning and politics.	Ch 6
10	9/30/13	The social issues in planning.	Ch 7
11	10/2/13	The comprehensive plan and tools of land use planning.	Ch 8,9
12	10/7/13	Guest speaker on tools of land use planning.	
13	10/9/13	Role of outside investments and forces beyond local control.	Ch 9
14	10/14/13	Test 2	15%
15	10/16/13	Urban Design.	Ch 10
16	10/21/13	Debate over urban sprawl vs. smart growth: should sprawl be allowed or discouraged?	Presentation and Policy Brief on Topic 1 are due. 10%
17	10/23/13	Urban renewal and community development	Ch 11
18	10/28/13	Voucher program vs. public housing: which approach will alleviate a housing problem better?	Presentation and Policy Brief on Topic 2 are due. 10%
19	10/30/13	Transportation planning.	Ch 12
20	11/4/13	Debate on toll ways vs. freeways: What do urban planners need to do to alleviate the congestion?	Presentation and Policy Brief on Topic 3 are due. 10%
21	11/6/13	Economic development planning.	Ch 13
22	11/11/13	Growth management and sustainable development.	Ch 14
23	11/13/13	Development vs. conservation: what approach will benefit citizens more and should be adopted by urban planners?	Presentation and Policy Brief on Topic 4 are due. 10%
24	11/18/13	Environmental and energy planning.	Ch 15
25	11/20/13	Planning for metropolitan regions.	Ch 16

26	12/2/13	Test 3	15%
27	12/4/13	Planning in other nations.	Ch 18
28	12/9/13	Planning in other nations.	Ch 18
29	12/11/13	Review.	Collect up to 2 bonus points to your final grade.
30	TBA	Final Exam TBA	15%

Grading Policy

Your course grade will be comprised of three tests (15% each), participation and presentation at the mock urban policy debates (group project -10%), three policy briefs (10% each), and a final exam – 15%.

Every test will consist of 20 multiple choice questions over the covered material, 2 short answer questions asking for opinion, and one actual urban planning situation described in a paragraph to comment on like what is problematic in this situation and what needs to be done to resolve it in a professional manner. No makeup tests. (Individual consideration may be given in case of overwhelming circumstances).

Average of Test 1 and 2 will make your Midterm Grade to be posted on **October 18, 2013**.

There are 4 topics for discussion included in the syllabus addressing challenges in various fields of urban planning. ¼ of the students will be responsible for presenting pros (about 5 people) and cons (about 5 people) in regard to one topic. After listening to one opinion (5-7 min presentation) the floor will be open for questions and discussion, then another group in a 5-7 min presentation will defend the opposite point of view followed by more discussion. All the students will have to prepare Policy Briefs for discussion topics they do not need to present on and are expected to ask questions and provide comments. Rotation of topics will allow every student to participate in presenting material in the course of the semester. The total of 5 participation points (my initials on your participation tag) for contribution to the discussion equals **1 bonus point** to the final grade. A subgroup of 5 or so students will determine the participation level of each participant in the project.

Each policy brief is about 1500 words double-space paper, followed by bibliography of at least 4 sources. The brief should summarize on-going discussion in scholarly literature and mass media on the issue. Suggested readings and lecture materials covered in class may be your starting points for the research. Describe the main reasons scholars, urban planners, and public argue about the issue, arguments against either course of action for problem solution. You will not submit a policy brief on the topic chosen for in-class presentation. All references used must be appropriately cited. Policy Briefs must be turned in the day of the discussion in class. E-mail it within 24 hours – lose 10% of the grade; turn in before next class – your grade is BASED on 70 points max; not accepted after the next class. No exceptions.

The Final Exam on **TBA** is comprehensive and includes multiple choice questions, short answer questions and a short essay.

Another **1 bonus point** is assigned to those students who have perfect attendance (missed no more than 2 sessions) AND can produce a set of notes covering EVERY topic discussed in class, including those missed as well as notes on recommended reading.

Course & Instructor Policies

Attendance is crucial for the successful learning and will be taken each class. A good set of class notes will be extremely helpful if you plan excelling in this course. Although extra help may be provided to students, the professor will not hold alternate lectures or release lecture notes to students. Respectful discussions of the topics being studied are encouraged. Attendance and class participation will be used as deciding factors for borderline students. No makeup tests. (Individual consideration may be given in case of overwhelming circumstances).

If you wish to look at the ancillary syllabus material, a link to that material is as follows
<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.