

GEOG1110: Introduction to Urban & Regional Planning

Dept. of Geography & Earth Sciences, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Instructor: Robert Boyer, Assistant Professor [rboyer1@uncc.edu; 704-687-5979]

Teaching Assistant: Stella Smith [ssmit448@uncc.edu]

Tuesday/Thursday, 11-12:15

McEniry Building, room 117

Course Description

GEOG1110: Introduction to Urban & Regional Planning introduces students to the field of urban and regional planning and prepares students for more advanced courses in urban planning and urban studies in the Department of Geography & Earth Sciences. This course has no pre-requisites. The principal focus of this course is **plans** and the individuals and organizations that make and use plans to influence outcomes in the urban built environment.

Everybody makes and uses plans. Yes, you too! If you're a student reading this syllabus at the beginning of the semester, you're probably in the process of making and using plans that will help you select courses and ultimately graduate from this university. This small plan may be part of a larger, longer-term plan to get a good job after college, which may be part of an even *longer*-term vision of professional success.

Plans influence action through information: the syllabus that you're reading right now is a plan, created by the instructor to influence your decisions and actions in the coming semester. You will make and use other smaller plans throughout the semester to guide you and your classmates through specific assignments and help you complete the course.

Some plans are big, expensive, and made in the public eye with the hope of influencing the actions of others for many decades. Some examples include the 1909 Plan of Chicago, Charlotte's *Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Plan*, or the current *Blue Line Extension* plan that attempts to guide the growth of the light rail system in northeast Charlotte. Some plans are small, private, and used very briefly like weekend plans you make with friends and family. Some are big and private, like Apple's (presumed) plans for the next iPhone or plans for a secret military operation. Some are relatively small and public, like this syllabus or a bus schedule. *All* plans express intentions about actions that are **interdependent**, or actions that require multiple free-thinking, free-acting individuals to do something together, at about the same time, in about the same place. In the case of decisions in the built environment, these actions also tend to be **irreversible** (cannot be easily un-done), **indivisible** (cannot be easily completed in small steps), and with **imperfect** knowledge of the future.

In the past century, urban and regional planning has grown into a professional undertaking. All over the world, public, private, and non-profit organizations hire individuals to make and use plans. The planning profession is extremely diverse, and cannot be covered comprehensively in a single semester. This course focuses mostly on planners in the public sector, at the local and regional level.

Students in GEOG1110 will explore how plans and planners shape towns, cities, and regions. As a class, we will explore when and why humans make plans, why cities exist, the causes and consequences of urbanization and sub-urbanization, why cities and regions look and function differently, the origins of the modern planning profession, tools and policies that professional planners use to solve social, economic, and environmental conflicts, the settings in which professional planners work, and issues that local and regional planners will likely confront in the coming century.

Objectives

Graduates of Introduction to Urban & Regional Planning will...

- understand and express how plans and plan-making for the built environment have evolved since colonial times, including how the concerns of planners have changed and, in many cases, not changed.
- recognize important individuals, groups, and events in planning history, including those populations that have been *excluded from* and *marginalized by* mainstream planning processes
- understand and express why organizations make plans and how plans work over time
- learn how to communicate and collaborate on a small team
- explore career possibilities in the planning profession

Team-Based Learning

Working and learning in teams is a critical component of this course. It is also a critical skill in the planning profession. Early in the semester, you will be assigned to a permanent team of 5-6 members. We will form teams in class, using a process that balances skills and experience across teams. You will work with your assigned team in almost every classroom session, and will likely meet with your team outside of class from time to time. Teams will collaborate on “Readiness Assurance Tests” (RATs), Application Exercises, and several larger projects. Your team can also serve as a de-facto study group for the midterm and final exams. At multiple points in the semester you will provide and receive qualitative feedback from your teammates.

Course Structure:

The course is divided into six units:

Unit One focuses on plans and planners in “pre-modern” colonial America and the process of urbanization that inspired the modern urban planning profession. Prior to the year 1917, the majority of Americans lived and worked in rural places and relied directly upon farming for their livelihoods. Today, in 2015, over 80 percent of Americans live in or near cities, and less than 1 percent of the population works on farms for their living. The transition from a “rural” to an “urban” society in the United States and Europe was unplanned and unpleasant for most new urban inhabitants, including millions of immigrants arriving from Europe and Asia. The earliest large cities were congested, disease-ridden, and violent relative to cities in Europe and North America today.

Unit Two focuses on early industrial cities and the plans to reform them. During this unit, your team will present a visual representation of urbanization for a specific region or nation to the entire class. It will require you to tell a story in a creative way, using real data.

Unit Three will focus on plans and planners in the early and middle twentieth century. Beginning in the 1920s, cities and regions began to confront new problems related to rapid *outward* growth or what planners refer to as “sprawl”. For many, urban and suburban living was accessible and comfortable, but the “American Dream” of home ownership and mobility was inaccessible to some. Additionally, rapid sub-urbanization has resulted in new economic, social, and environmental problems at new scales. Unit Three will conclude with a midterm exam.

In **Unit Four** we focus on contemporary planning practice, examining who makes and uses plans today. In some ways the *who, what, where, when, and how* of planning in 2015 is no different than planning in the early 1900s. Planners must still balance public and private interests and work to resolve environmental, social, and economic dilemmas related to the built environment. In other ways, planning has changed dramatically. Planners work for local, regional, state, and federal agencies, for private firms, and non-profit organizations. Planners have access to new tools and information technologies that allow for very detailed analyses and coordination across vast regions. Plans and planners are also supported by strong legal institutions that did not exist in the early 1900s.

Unit Five devotes time to specific plans in the Charlotte region, and will require that you and your team deliver a ten-minute lesson to the rest of the class that reveals how an actual plan was developed and implemented. Your team will be assigned your plan early in the semester. One class session is reserved for your team to work together on this assignment.

Unit Six pays special attention to contemporary issues of global sustainability. In the twenty-first century, local decisions about the built environment have intended and unintended consequences for communities and individuals thousands of miles away. Issues like climate change, ecosystem conservation, biodiversity, and economic development cannot be isolated to specific cities or even specific countries. As a result, local plans and planners have begun to consider connections to global ecological, economic, and social systems.

In each unit, you should remain mindful of *who* is making plans, for *whom*, at *what scale*, for *what purpose*, with *which tools*, and to *what extent* their plans were successful.

Evaluation

Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs), 25% of final grade. RATs are 10-question quizzes that take place seven times in the semester, usually in the second day of a new unit. RATs test basic knowledge of the required readings and lectures and can be easily passed if you complete the readings, make use of the reading guides provided by the instructor, and attend lectures. You will take each RAT as an individual (iRAT) and re-take the identical RAT with your team (tRAT). iRATs will be worth between 50 and 75 percent of your final RAT grade. We will decide the exact proportion as a class.

RAT Appeals Process

Teams have 24 hours to appeal answers marked incorrect on their RATs. Appeals must express a specific concern with a question on the RAT, and offer evidence (e.g. a page number and quotation in a required reading) that a different answer was equally or more appropriate. Appeals can also be issued if a RAT question was poorly worded or somehow misleading. Such an appeal must explain why the particular question was misleading, and where it 'led' your team. Appeals must follow these instructions precisely:

- Submit an appeal as a single e-mail to the instructor within 24 hours of the completion of the class session (i.e. before Saturday 4:45pm).
- The e-mail must have the subject line "RAT APPEAL, GEOG3215, <TEAM NAME>, DD/MM/YYYY".
- Team members will only receive credit for the appeal if their e-mail address is copied to the e-mail.
- Teams may appeal more than one question per class session, but can only make 5 total appeals in the semester.

Application Exercises (AppExs), 20% of final grade. Application exercises are team-based challenges that require you to apply knowledge from lecture and readings to a specific problem. They take place in-class. These challenges require analytical and critical thinking, and will likely involve negotiation amongst members of your group. They are designed to simulate the types of decision-making scenarios you will encounter in a professional planning setting. Some application exercises will require your team to bring supplies to class (e.g. scissors and glue sticks).

Urbanization Visualization, 10% of final grade. On Tuesday, February 3rd, your team will use demographic data to represent the process of urbanization in a city, region, or country using some visual medium. Your team's presentation will be evaluated by classmates and the instructor.

Plan Presentations, 15% of final grade. Toward the end of the semester your team will be assigned to teach a lesson on a specific plan in the Charlotte region. Your lesson should explain who the planners were, what the planners were trying to accomplish, how they suggested to accomplish these goals, which other actors or organizations the plan was trying to influence, what obstacles or challenges the plan envisioned, what obstacles the planners did not and could not envision, and the extent to which the objectives of the plan were accomplished. The presentation should also connect your plan to other past and future plans in the region.

Exams 1 & 2, 30% of final grade (15% each). Exams will demand that you connect and apply material that has been discussed throughout the course. Exams will draw heavily from questions you've encountered in RATs and AppExs.

Reading Material

This course requires that students engage in readings and other media outside of class. Students are required to purchase two texts, both available at the UNC Charlotte bookstore:

- Levy, John M. 2011. *Contemporary Urban Planning (10th Edition)*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Smith, Carl. *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City*. University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Other reading material will be posted as either PDFs or hyperlinks on the course's Moodle site*

*Readings or hyperlinks marked with an asterisk are available on Moodle.

Course Schedule*

			Topic	In Class	At-home content/reading
January	8	Thr	Course Introduction		Moodle Survey. Complete before Jan 15.
	13	Tue	Pre-Modern Settlements	Lecture	*Bailey & Peoples, "Human Adaptation" *This American Life, "Ruining it for the Rest of Us"
	15	Thr	Pre-Modern Settlements	Form groups! Sample RAT	*Foglesong CH2, "Colonial Town Planning"
	20	Tue	Urbanization	RAT#1, Assign datasets	LEVY CH2; SMITH Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. xv-10)
	22	Thr	Urbanization	AppEx	* Kingsley Davis 1965. City Reader.
	27	Tue	The Perils of the Industrial City	RAT#2	SMITH Ch3: "The City the Planners Saw." (pp. 34-53); *Jacob Riis, Introduction from "How the Other Half Lives"
	29	Thr	The Perils of the Industrial City	AppEx	* Foglesong CH3, "Early Housing Reform"
February	3	Tue	Visual Representations Day		Present visual representations of urbanization.
	5	Thr	The First Modern Planners: Envisioning Post-Industrial Cities	Group feedback, Lecture. Plan assignments.	
	10	Tue	Post World War II: Rise of the American Suburbs	RAT#3	*Dolores Hayden 2004, ch 1-2
	12	Thr	Post World War II: Rise of the American Suburbs	AppEx	*A Planet of Suburbs; *James Howard Kunstler video.
	17	Tue	Left Behind: Socio-Spatial Inequality	Lecture/In-Class Film	
	19	Thr	Left Behind: Socio-Spatial Inequality	AppEx	*A map to Ferguson's Unrest; *Atlanta's Snow Fiasco
	24	Tue	Professional Panel - Careers in Planning	Guest Lecture	
26	Thr	Midterm Exam Class cancelled due to snow.			
March	3	Tue	SPRING BREAK		

	5	Thr	SPRING BREAK		
	10	Tue	Midterm Exam (rescheduled)		
	12	Thr	Making and Using Plans	RAT#4	SMITH CH7; LEVY CH8.
	17	Tue	Guest Lecture- Penelope Karagounis	Guest Lecture	
	19	Thr	Land Use Planning	RAT#5	LEVY CH9; *Centers and Wedges Framework
	24	Tue	Land Use Planning	AppEx	
	26	Thr	Land Use Planning	AppEx continued.	
	31	Tue	Work Day	Lab Day.	Teams given time to prepare their lessons.
April	2	Thr	Plan Presentations		Presentations
	7	Tue	Plan Presentations		Presentations
	9	Thr	Professional Planning	Guest Lecture from John Howard	
	14	Tue	Transportation	RAT#6	*Curitiba: City of Dreams, *Transit station area principles; *Best Bus Rapid Transit Systems
	16	Thr	Sustainability and Global Change	Guest Lecture- Teresa Salmen	
	21	Tue	Sustainability and Global Change	Lecture	Climate change.
	23	Thr	Sustainability and Global Change	RAT#7	Video: Richard Smith, Population, Politics, and the Environment; Ch14 Levy, Ch15 Levy.
	28	Tue	Sustainability and Global Change	AppEx	

Final Exam: TUESDAY MAY 5TH, 11-1:30. McEniry 117.

*This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. Students will be notified over e-mail when changes have been made to the schedule. Revisions of the syllabus will be re-posted to Moodle.

Reading Guides

Guides for most of the required readings will be posted to Moodle. Although there is no expectation that you submit the reading guides, you are strongly encouraged to use these guides to focus your reading, especially for the more complex chapters and articles. The reading guides are a strong indicator of what you are expected to know for in-class assessments, application exercises, and exams.

Attendance

There is no official requirement that you attend every class session. No official role will be taken, however most class sessions offer specific opportunities for participation that

cannot be made-up in other classes. If, for example, you miss a class with an iRAT, you cannot make up these points. If you miss a class with a team exercise, your team members in class are responsible for deciding whether or not you will receive credit for that exercise on that day. It is therefore as important for you to communicate with your team about absences as it is to communicate with the instructor.

You will not be penalized for missing in-class assignments if you provide timely evidence of illness or family emergency. Other obligations that require you to miss class will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but such obligations should be discussed with the instructor as early in the semester as possible. Last-minute or retroactive excused absences will not be considered.

Outside of class, and office hours

You are welcome to consult both the instructor and the teaching assistant outside of class, at anytime over e-mail. We will do our best to reply to your e-mails immediately but we both handle a lot of e-mail, so if you have not received a reply within 48-hours, please send a follow-up message.

You are also welcome to visit us during office hours.

- Dr. Boyer: Tuesday 1:00-2:30PM or by appointment, room 425 McEniry. If you'd like to schedule an appointment, please e-mail Dr. Boyer with three half-hour time slots that work for you.
- Ms. Smith: Wednesday 2:30-3:30PM, room 430 McEniry.

Special Circumstances and Disabilities

Every effort will be made to work with students with unusual or unexpected obligations outside the course. Students with disabilities or special needs who require any accommodations to facilitate full participation and completion of the course should contact the instructor as soon as possible.