



URSI 661 : LONG RANGE-COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING, -Spring, 2009

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Course Rationale

This course will focus on the principles and methods utilized in long-range comprehensive planning. Specifically, the goal of the course is to help each student develop:

- I. An appreciation of the significance of comprehensive planning for local governments.
- II. An understanding of the structure, format, and methods used in producing a comprehensive plan.
- III. An understanding of principles and practices of other alternative planning tools (such as sustainability plans and visioning)
- IV. An opportunity for students to fine-tune their professional oral and written communication skills.

Course Structure

URSI 661 will follow a **seminar** structure which means that the emphasis of each class session will be on active student participation. Class meetings may include some presentations of new material by the instructor, student-led discussions of issues raised in textbook readings, and exercises and presentations by students of assigned projects . In this regard, each student will need to sign up to serve as a **Lead Discussant** for one of assigned readings where you will describe the major issues/techniques/principles presented in the readings.

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown

Consistently, the feedback we receive from URSI alums working in the field is that urban planners and managers need professional communication skills (e.g. writing analytical memos, making oral presentations, facilitating teamwork and citizen participation, etc.), so the course will include several types of communication assignments. In addition, there will be 2 exams and students will be encouraged to attend the National APA conference. Specifically, the course requirements & grade breakdown will include:

- I. Two written analytical memos: Using the memo format and responding to the questions raised in project assignments, 2 short (approximately 3-5 page single-spaced) written papers will be assigned examining the linkage of practice and theory (30%)
- II. Field Project (team project): Student teams (of 2 students each) will select a city that has produced a recent comprehensive plan, interview a local planner and using the criteria identified in the textbook (pp. 78-82), analyze the adequacy of the plan. (20%)
- III. Participation/Lead Discussant : All students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. In addition, each student will sign up to serve as a Lead Discussant of one of the readings assigned in the course schedule below. Lead Discussants will identify the major techniques and concepts discussed in the reading and issues that he/she found to be most interesting (10%)
- IV. Two exams: Two exams will focus on required readings and class material. (40%)

Accommodations

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and contact the Disability Services office at 389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTV).

URBS 661 Course Syllabus, Spring, 2009

Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Required Reading/Assign. Due |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1/13 | THE PLANNING AGENDA Introduction to Course | For background info, see PRACTICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING (on reserve) |
| 1/20 | Framing the Comprehensive Planning Process: What is it? Why is it needed ? | Berke – Chs. 1 |
| 1/27 | The Sustainability Prism Model as a Guide for Comprehensive Planning Practice | Berke – Ch. 2 <u>APA Journal</u> article - Are We Planning for Sustainable Development ? (reserve) |
| 2/3 | What Makes a Good Plan? Local Government Planning Environment | Berke – Ch. 3 <u>Planning Minnesota</u> article – Good Impressions Start at the Front Door.(reserve) |
| 2/10 | MEMO #1 Discussion of Comp. Planning Case Studies | MEMO #1 DUE |
| 2/17 | EXAM #1 LONG-RANGE PLANNING STUDIES | EXAM #1 (in-class) |
| 2/24 | Planning Support Systems & Environment | Berke – Chs. 4 &6 |
| 3/3 | Land Use and Transportation Systems | Berke – Chs. 7 & 8 |
| 3/10 | NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK | |
| 3/17 | Citizen Participation Process (N.G.T.) | Berke – Chs. 9 & 10 |
| 3/24 | Small Area Plans/Neighborhood Plans | Berke, Ch. 14 |
| 3/31 | MEMO #2 Presentations ALTERNATIVE PLANNING STUDIES | MEMO #2 DUE |
| 4/7 | Residential Land Use Design | Berke-Ch.13 |
| 4/14 | Visioning and Visual Preference Survey | <u>Planners Casebook</u> article – Clifton Future Vision Project (reserve) |
| 4/21 | FIELD PROJECT Presentations | FIELD PROJECT DUE |
| 4/28 | National APA Conference-Mpls. | |
| 5/5 | EXAM #2 | EXAM #2 DUE (take home) |

Course Textbook (available at University Bookstore) : Philip Berke, et al., URBAN LAND USE PLANNING, 5th ed. Univ. Of Illinois Press.

Reserve Readings (available at MSU Library Reserve): P. Newman and J. Kenworthy. SUSTAINABILITY AND CITIES. Ch.1.

C. Hoch, ed. THE PRACTICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING, 3rd ed.

P. Berke. Are We Planning for Sustainable Development ? APA JOURNAL, Vol.66, No.1, Winter,2000

Scott Hickok & D. Welsch.. “Good Impressions Start at the Front Door,” Planning Minnesota, 3/2008

R. Kemp. “Clifton Future Vision Project” Planners’ Casebook

URBS 661 Long Range Planning **Analytical Memo #1 : Comprehensive Planning Case Studies**

Purpose

This project provides an opportunity to analyze the practice of comprehensive planning by reviewing case studies of two very different comprehensive planning projects. Written by practitioners, the case studies describe the planning process employed in Howard County, Maryland (an exurban area between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore) and in Wasatch Canyon area of Utah (a mountain, recreational area outside Salt Lake City).

The Assignment

In this analytical memo, you are to compare the manner in which comprehensive planning was implemented with the principles of comprehensive planning as described in course textbook. On reserve, you will find two case studies which include Howard County General Plan : The Politics of Growth Management by Uri Avin and Donna Mennito and Wasatch Canyons Plan by R. Becker. For your information, the Howard County plan is also discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 63-64) of your textbook.

In your memo, compare and contrast the 2 plans by discussing each of the following issues :

1. Planning Environment. Describe the environment in which the two case studies were done. Why were the plans initiated? What were the critical local issues that the plans were expected to address? What were the political forces supporting or opposing planning in the communities?
2. Planning Theories and Principles. To what extent were planning principles such as growth management and sustainability considered in these plans? How is the “sustainability prism” (see Berke, Ch. 2) reflected in these plans?
3. Planning Processes. Compare the content and process used in the two plans-how were they similar or different?
4. Outcomes. What were the final outcomes of the case studies? In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the two planning projects? For current information on plans in these two communities go to:
<http://howardcountymd.gov/DPZ/landplan.htm> (for Howard County-see video)
and <http://www.co.wasatch.ut.us/planning/2001/general%20plan/titletoc.pdf> (for Wasatch Canyon area)

Memo and Presentation

The memo should be a 3-5 single-spaced report covering the four points listed above and following the memo format. On the due date, there will be an in-class discussion of findings of memo.

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Analytical Memo #2: Analysis of New Urbanism/Smart Growth Developments

Purpose

In Chapter 1 (pp. 15-18), your textbook, the authors describe New Urbanism and Smart Growth as offering “visionary alternatives of desired outcomes compared to the dominant pattern of conventional low density development.” This project provides an opportunity to analyze the practice of implementing New Urbanism designs by reviewing examples of two projects developed by Calthorpe Associates, one of the leading New Urbanist planning firms in the U.S.

The Assignment

In this analytical memo, you are to compare the manner in which New Urbanism was implemented with the principles of New Urbanism and Smart Growth discussed in class and in your textbook. To implement the assignment, go to Calthorpe’s Web site (www.calthorpe.com) and then hit on “Projects” and select two projects from among the many listed in “Urban Revitalization” or “Community Design” sections of site. Make hard copy of information presented on each projects and write a report discussing the following issues related to the two plans :

1. New Urbanism/Smart Growth Principles. What are the key characteristics of New Urbanist designs that separate them from conventional land use development?
2. The two Calthorpe Projects: Provide a brief description of the two projects in terms of land use, open space, transportation, public facilities, etc.
3. Critique of New Urbanism Implementation. Critique the extent to which each of the two projects reflected New Urbanism principles described in your textbook and in class and failed in incorporating New Urbanism principles.
4. Recommendations. Provide three recommendations on how the projects could be improved to better reflect New Urbanism.

Memo and Presentation

The memo should be a 3-5 single-spaced report covering the four points listed above and following the memo format. On the due date, there will be an in-class discussion of the memo.

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Field Project: Comprehensive Plan Analysis (Team Project)

Purpose

In this project, two students will form a team in order to critique a comprehensive plan produced by a Minnesota city.

The Assignment

Select one city in the Twin Cities metropolitan area which operates under the planning guidelines of the Metropolitan Council or select one city in greater Minnesota that has completed their Comprehensive Plan update within the last five years. Obtain a copy of their Plan and schedule an interview with one of their local planners. After reviewing the plan and conducting your interview with one of the city planners, provide a critical review of the plan and all relevant background materials/studies. **In analyzing the plan, complete the “Plan Quality Evaluation Protocol” provided in the Appendix at the end of Chapter 3 of your textbook.** Based on this evaluation, write a report responding to the following issues :

1. Content of the Plan : Describe the substantive areas addressed in the plan ; data gathered on population, land use, development/growth patterns, etc ; data analysis techniques that were used (e.g. statistical analysis, projections GIS, etc.) ; alternative growth scenarios considered ; influence of Metropolitan Council policies on the plan (e.g. affordable housing, growth management) ;
2. Process followed in producing the plan: Describe the plan in terms of who produced the Plan (e.g. consultants, in-house staff), the steps followed and amount of time required, methods used to encourage citizen participation, the involvement of special interest groups (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, neighborhoods, environmentalists), involvement of local officials, distribution of final document in community via internet, printed copies, etc.
3. Visual appeal or whether the plan is user-friendly for the average citizen ,
4. Plan utilization or how local planners are using the plan on a regular basis,
5. Analysis and Recommendations : Are the local planners satisfied with the current plan and the process that the city used ? Why or why not ? Do you think this plan reflects the “best practices” in comprehensive planning ? Why or why not ? Specifically, what are three ways that you would improve the plan or the process used in producing the plan ?

Report and Presentation

Your team should produce a 10-15 page double-spaced report analyzing the assignment issues identified above. Be specific in your description and analysis and attach appendices such as maps, tables, etc. that support your conclusions. In addition, each team should be prepared to make a ten minute oral presentation of your report with appropriate visuals.

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Planning Internet Links-National and Minnesota

American Planning Association : www.planning.org

Urban Land Institute : www.uli.org – see “UrbanPlan” development exercise

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency : www.epa.gov

Minnesota Chapter of ULI: www.minnesota.uli.org

Center for Energy & Environment (Sustainable Minnesota): www.fresh-energy.org

Center for Livable Communities (Ahwahnee Principles) : www.lgc.org/center

Congress for New Urbanism : www.cnu.org

League of Minnesota Cities : www.lmnc.org - See Minnesota City Handbook (11th ed.)-Ch. 14 on Comprehensive Planning and Land use, go to www.lmnc.org/handbook/chapter14.pdf (see pp. 6-8 for comp. plan details)

Metropolitan Council : www.metrocouncil.org (go to “Planning+Development”)

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: www.pca.state.mn.us - go to “Minnesota Sustainable Communities Network”& be put on mailing list

Minnesota Dept. Of Administration/Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis : www.mnplan.state.mn.us – provides population estimates, photos, etc.

One Thousand Friends of Minnesota : www.1000fom.org – citizen group that supports “smart growth.”

Some Minnesota Comprehensive Plans on the Web

Bloomington: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us/cityhall/dept/commdev/planning/longrang/compplan/2008update/2008update.htm.

Burnsville: www.burnsville.org/index.asp?rid=434 – updated in 2008.

Minneapolis: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/comp_plan_update.asp - comprehensive plan called “Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth” & updated in 2008

Minnetonka: www.eminnetonka.com/community_development/planning/comprehensive_guide_plan.cfm - called “Comprehensive Guide Plan”

St. Cloud: www.ci.stcloud.mn.us/Planning/compreplan.htm - called “St. Cloud 2003 Comprehensive Plan”)

Woodbury: www.ci.woodbury.mn.us/planning/complan.html - called “Comprehensive Plan 2030”