CRP 386: Sustainable Land Use Planning Spring

M/W 9:30-11:00 (SUT 2.112) Paterson (AM Session) & 2:00-3:30 PM (WMB 4.118) Lieberknecht (PM Session)

COMPUTER LAB (ALL WEDs) Starting Mid-Semester

Instructors: Professors Bob Paterson, rgfp@austin.utexas.edu /1.301C Sutton Hall and Katherine Lieberknecht, klieberknecht@utexas.edu / 4.114 Sutton Hall

Teaching Assistant: Stephen Zigmund, office hours Wed 12:30-2 pm, SUT 3.114 and by appointment via e-mail stephen.zigmund@gmail.com

Office Hours: Paterson, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11:00 and by appointment via e-mail. I will post a meeting time signup genius link first week of class.

Background

This course presents the nuts and bolts of land use planning as practiced in the US today. This year the class will be focusing on one of the Imagine Austin centers to explore alternative land use scenarios for an area that is the size of a typical district plan (as found in most US cities). We will be using the Envision Tomorrow Plus software system created through UT CSD to explore alternative land use configurations and their implications for one of Northeast Austin's future growth centers. The class begins with readings/discussion on contemporary land use planning and plan making issues which will include, but is not be limited to, an overview of sustainable cities, smart growth, and new urbanist city planning orientations.

Most students have or will be taking GIS simultaneously with this class, by mid-semester we will be using GIS extensively. I encourage all to commit themselves to gaining proficiency with GIS software as it is pretty much expected of all planners (no matter what your concentration or interests). The ability to map and spatially analyze land use, environmental, transportation, housing, economic, and social justice issues (and more) is core to planning practice these days.

The class is divided into two main parts: Part 1 provides background information on the history, institutional frameworks, purpose, principles and values inherent in land use and comprehensive planning (as well as scenario planning as the latest development in physical planning practice). Part 2 covers the analytic and participatory knowledge, skills and abilities used in land use planning. The class will use the Wells Branch/SH 130 Neighborhood Center as a learning vehicle throughout the entire class, but we will also
look at planning through lenses of other city plans and settings. We will look at how a City synthesizes its values, vision and analytic information through an iterative scenario planning process to create a final future land use map and its comprehensive plan components.

**Course Objectives/Outcomes**

Much of our focus will be on what constitutes land use planning for a land use element of a comprehensive plan; the principles of plan-making; where to start, specific steps to take, information needs; and how to choose methods to accommodate a range of community planning situations. Students will learn analytic and synthesis skills as well as practice oral, graphic, and written communication skills.

This course was envisioned by the faculty as a survey of sustainable land use planning theories, methods and practices at district, city and regional scales (site level physical planning is covered elsewhere in the curriculum). We will initially meet in the classroom for the first month and half, thereafter we will divide sessions between the classroom and the computer lab.

With our readings, we will review how to assess existing and emerging conditions; how to formulate plan goals, objectives, and policies; how to translate projections of economic and population change into their land use implications for land, location, and community services; how to determine the suitability of land and locations for various land uses (taking into account market priming forces and environmental constraints); how to apply computer technology to specific plan-making tasks such as map presentations, land suitability analyses, analytics such as sustainability indicators, and sketching plans.

Because there will be some different levels of GIS capabilities across the class, we will undertake a preliminary assessment of GIS skills among the students enrolled and will try to ensure a fairly even distribution of those skill levels across teams to make the GIS compatibilities of each team as balanced as possible. This is never perfect, but we ask you to bear with us on this as we do the best we can. The actual GIS component of the course will require a moderate level of skill for the most part, and we have coordinated with the CRP GIS instruction to have those aspects of GIS covered in the first weeks of the semester in Viz Com.

**Course Sequence**

In Part 1 of the course we will discuss the history of land use planning, the importance of sustainable development as an organizing theme for land use and comprehensive planning, the pro’s and con’s of the various institutional arrangements under which land use and comprehensive planning operate in states and regions throughout the US, and some of the competing visions and values that focus land use and comprehensive planning efforts today.

In Part 2 of the course we will review key planning support systems that allow planners
to take stock of a city’s current conditions and trends. The accurate and transparent transmission of that information enables planners to collaboratively identify a community’s major opportunities, constraints and desired futures through a participatory plan making process. We will review the uses of population and economic analysis and forecasting, environmental analysis, and infrastructure system capacity/policy as it relates to a community’s physical development choices. We will also look at the interrelationship of the “plan vision” and “plan implementation” through development management system planning.

Because we have had a serious drop in people actually doing the readings over the last decade, there is a quiz at the end of each section of the class – Part 1 and Part 2. I apologize to those who are conscientious readers of assignments, but this is necessary for everyone’s sake since so much of the class is team based projects. The Chapter readings are foundational, so when you enter class you are ready to apply concepts in lab and in discussion.

**Required texts and readings**

Readings tend to focus on medium and large city plans (although we will discuss rural and small town contexts at various stages of the course). The course draws from several texts including: Urban Land Use Planning, and Environmental Land Use Planning and Management. **Readings in the syllabus with a star by them are mandatory – the others are useful. ALL textbook chapters are mandatory readings.**


Many professional planners keep the above texts as references.
Grading

You must complete all assignments and attend class regularly (notify me if you will be absent – you have team members counting on your full participation). In the professional world you cannot pick and choose who will be on teams assigned for projects, so treat this as an opportunity to hone professional skills in interpersonal communication and conflict management. You are actually beginning to establish your professional reputation here in graduate planning school, make a commitment to yourself to be the person on your team -- that members sing praise for because of your diligence, timeliness, carefulness and camaraderie.

Grade distribution for all course work is as follows:

Assignment 1: 20% Plan Evaluation Exercise (Handout provided in class)
Assignment 2: 30% Physical Activity Center – Status and Trends Report/Poster/Presentation
Assignment 4: 30% Physical Activity Center – Scenarios Electronic Presentation, GOPs and Presentation
Assignment 5: 20% Readings Quizzes (10% for each quiz)