

Portland State University

Environmental Planning Methods (USP 512) Fall 2023

3 Credits

Class Time: Wednesdays 10 AM – 12:40 PM

Class Location: Zoom (virtual)

Office hours: email to schedule in 30 minute increments. 4pm - 6pm Thursdays

Instructor: Sachi Arakawa

Email: sachi@pdx.edu

*** Please note that this is a 'working syllabus', which means that while the learning objectives and core requirements will not change over the term, there may be minor modifications to assignments, readings, order of presentations, and timing of topics. Modifications will be described in class and course participants are required to be up-to-date on any changes.

Course Overview

Examination of the patterns and processes that impact the natural environment in human-dominated landscapes, and the tools we use for understanding human behavior and decision making. The course will have three components: (1) environmental planning and policy context (2) environmental planning research – involving exploration, discovery, and knowledge building; and (3) decolonizing environmental planning methods – consisting of critically evaluating the assumptions and expectations for applying specific methods. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about and apply these methods to 'real world' environmental challenges that center justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). Recommended prerequisites: USP 531 or Geog 488/588.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Understand what contemporary environmental planning is and how we got here
2. Understand the policy landscape that shapes and impacts environmental planning
3. Identify the range of processes used in environmental policy and plan making
4. Identify the range of tools being used in environmental planning practice
5. Evaluate and critique environmental plans
6. Utilize data to assist in making comparisons, discovering patterns, and evaluating decision making processes

Class Format and Readings

Please note that there may be adjustments to the syllabus throughout the course. I will do my best to let you know at least a week in advance if any shifts need to happen in the syllabus. This course will mostly be synchronous learning using Zoom with activities and discussions during class.

All readings will be posted on this course Google Drive or web links will be provided to you via Canvas. If there are interesting articles or readings that you'd like to share with the class for discussion via Canvas or during class relevant to participatory planning, please let me know!

Assignments and Grades

Your final grade will be based on 3 assignments and 10 reading responses, along with in-class participation. All assignments should be submitted in a professional format including your name, information about the assignment, titles, headings, page numbers, proofread, etc. I will provide more directions and requirements for each assignment during class and some additional context as needed.

Environmental Plan Critique: (20%). Evaluate and critique a completed (and adopted) environmental plan. The purpose of the assignment is to think through how to structure an “effective” or “successful” environmental plan. Elements of the plan you are expected to

critique include organization and plan layout, design/visuals, and data communication. You will wrestle with the roles that diversity, equity, inclusion play(ed), if at all, and address whether a process can be described as effective or successful if inclusion and equity are not achieved. I encourage you to interview someone involved in the participation effort or a participant although not required. ***Due October 25th - in class presentations 10am-noon, annotated presentation slide deck due same day at 5pm.***

Data Story: (20%). One of the most important roles of a planner is to be able to translate data and information into a compelling story. You will create a simple story using an excel file that contains a neighborhood-by-neighborhood database of census variables for a to-be-determined city. Pick an element of what is in that dataset to create a "data story". The "data story" should fit on no more than three PowerPoint slides and provide an interesting narrative, backed up by data. The data story should be designed to be accessible to the general public and other non-technical audiences. You can use charts, graphs, maps, photos, text, or some combination of those to tell the story. There is no requirement for how you explain the data, just that it has a clear story behind it. ***In-class presentations and critique November 15th, final draft due December 6th at 5pm.***

Final Project: (30%). The aim of the final project is to learn about innovations and applications of planning methods to environmental challenges. Course participants will develop a final project idea and use one or more environmental planning methods to address a 'real world', environmental problem. More details will be provided on the first day of class. ***Project topic presentations November 1st, final presentations November 29th, final draft due December 6th at 5pm.***

Reading Response Participation: (20%). Post reading responses on Canvas. Topics will be based on a reading, podcast, or article or newsworthy event. 200 word minimum. You will be graded on clarity, originality (no copy/pasting content), critical thinking, grammar, and word count. ***Due November 29th at 5pm***

In-Class Participation: (10%). In addition to your reading responses, you will be expected to participate in in-class discussion and activities on both reading response topics and other readings or class topics. ***Due November 29th at 5pm***

Course Content and Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Planning

Class date: September 27th

What is environmental planning and how did it come about? We will begin to examine the historical context of the American environmental movement and the resulting policy and planning efforts that exist today. We will discuss how racism and classism both in society at large and within institutions and government have shaped the way environmental decisions are made.

Week 2: Land Use Planning and Growth Management, Environmental Policy, Plan Making

Class date: October 4th

This week we will talk about how land use planning and environmental policy inform environmental planning, including a discussion of how this is being applied in Oregon's new Climate Friendly Equitable Communities rules. Ahead of Assignment 1, we will also review some examples of environmental plans.

Week 3 Environmental Justice and Equity

Class date: October 11

We explore how diversity, equity, and inclusion fit into environmental planning, including the social inequities historically seen in environmental decision making. We discuss different frameworks for equity that can be used in environmental planning.

Week 4 - Climate Action, Green Infrastructure and Urban Greenspace

Class date: October 18

A climate action plan (CAP) is a strategy for measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and related climatic impacts. Green infrastructure planning typically entails inventorying green assets like trees, bioswales, green roofs, and other urban greenspace, ensuring habitats are connected, and identifying opportunities for protection and/or restoration of these assets. CAPs and green infrastructure plans are increasingly being

adopted in cities around the United States. Today we discuss how these two topics intersect with planning and policy efforts.

Week 5 - Environmental Plan Critiques

Class date: October 25

Student presentations of environmental plan critiques.

Week 6 - Data Communication (+ Student Presentations)**

Class date: November 1

Data has become an important part of how we understand environmental issues, but communicating complex, data-driven topics is challenging. We discuss how data can be used to help us ask “what if” and explore the impacts of policy and planning on the environment. We also look at best practices, tips, and tricks for data communication. Because numbers mean nothing if they don’t tell a story!

**The second half of class will be student presentations of final project topics.

Week 7 - Planning for Natural Hazards

Class date: November 8

In many states including Oregon, local governments are required to plan for natural hazards to reduce risk to people and property. Hazards like wildfires and floods are becoming an increasing concern in our state and around the country. We examine what planners are doing to help prevent and mitigate natural hazard risks, and include the public in the planning process.

Week 8 - Data Story Presentations

Class date: November 15

Data story student presentations and critique.

Week 9 - Brownfield Redevelopment

Class date: November 22

It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties can have many benefits including taking the development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and improving and protecting the environment. We will explore the process of assessing brownfield sites, types of sites and contaminants reported at brownfields and community actions for their cleanup and reuse.

Weekly To-Dos:

- *Nothing this week - work on finishing your final projects!*

Week 10 - Final Assignment Presentations

Class date: November 29th

Student presentations of final projects. *Final projects due Dec. 6th by 5pm on Canvas.*

Ground Rules For Online Learning Environment

Building an inclusive learning environment requires us to work together to listen (reading carefully and reflecting in the online environment), and make room for all to have a say (asking questions and interacting in an encouraging way); to support each other to find our voice; and to recognize and anticipate a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, experiences, identities, and ways of being in the world.

I hope that we can begin from a place of mutual respect– taking each other where we are at each day, offering the benefit of the doubt, and being aware that the workings of power and privilege impact different communities and individuals in different ways. These are difficult times and we are all experiencing the Coronavirus pandemic and its impacts in different ways - please be gentle with one another and do not make assumptions about what anyone is going through. We can all promote safe and inclusive learning by listening

deeply (including reading carefully and reflecting) and being ready to learn from those around us.

In an online learning environment, it is important to work to write clearly, thoughtfully, and respectfully (take your time and consider the impact of your words). Please learn and use the correct pronouns for your classmates, please do not make assumptions. I will work to support you in learning how to engage online in respectful and encouraging ways; begin from the knowledge that behind each comment and profile is a person who deserves to be treated with respect and care. The quality, thoughtfulness, and clarity of your posts will be considered in assessment.

Class Policies

Attendance: You will receive credit for attending class and participate in discussions, and attendance at every class is expected barring unforeseen circumstances. You may reach out to me if you need to be excused from a class or if you are not able to complete an assignment.

Please try to keep your video on during class if you can. With classes being online and students learning from home, I understand some distractions may occur during class. Please mute yourself and turn off your video if something comes up.

Correspondence: You can email me at sachi@pdx.edu. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. I will send emails to the class at your pdx.edu accounts as needed.

Extensions: Extensions may be allowed with a compelling, unforeseen circumstance such as a family or health emergency.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. "Academic dishonesty," according to Section 570-031-0136 of the [PSU Student of Code of Conduct](#), refers to as "the act of knowingly or intentionally seeking to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or participation in such acts." This encompasses both egregious acts of cheating like copying the answer to someone else's exam, but also more mundane acts like lifting reference material from websites without attribution. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct such as plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment and could result in stronger, university-level sanctions. Don't do it!

Access and Inclusion For Students With Disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; My goal is to create a learning environment that is accessible, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. I am committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. Additionally, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. The DRC works with students who have physical, learning, cognitive, mental health, sensory, and other disabilities.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations.

If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received your faculty notification letter from the DRC so we can discuss your accommodations.

The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, Suite 116. You can also contact the DRC at 503-725-4150 or, drc@pdx.edu. Visit the DRC online at <https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center>.

Providing Academic And Employment Support To Students

PSU is committed to providing students with an educational environment where students may thrive in their educational pursuits. Incidents of interpersonal violence or sexual harassment may create barriers to students completing their education. We at Portland State support students to help them overcome these barriers. PSU's Dean of Student Life, Title IX Coordinator, Interpersonal Violence (IPV) Advocates and CARE team are committed to assisting students who have experienced any form of sexual harassment or interpersonal violence.

[Title IX of the Educational Act of 1972](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

requires educational institutions (PSU) to provide academic and employment support to students and/or employees, including student employees, who experience sexual harassment, sexual assault or any other form of interpersonal violence. Academic and employment support includes, but is not limited to,

- Providing additional time to complete assignments or to take exams;
- Completing the course without attending the lectures;
- Providing academic support, such as tutoring;
- Arranging to have extra time to complete or re-take a course or withdraw from a course without an academic or financial penalty;
- Providing a No Contact Order (NCO) between the victim and the alleged perpetrator, where the victim and the alleged perpetrator may not contact each other;
- Changing the alleged perpetrator or the victim's course to prevent both students from being in the same course;
- Providing excused absence from employment with PSU for a reasonable time; and
- Changing hours of employment or department of employment at PSU.

PSU must provide these academic and/or employment supports whether or not the student decides to report the matter to the Office of the Dean of Student Life or the Office of Equity and Compliance. An IPV Confidential Advocate, the CARE Team Case Manager, the Assistant Dean/Director of Conduct and Community Standards or the Title IX Coordinator may contact a faculty member/instructor and/or a supervisor to arrange for academic and/or employment support for a student or employee who has experienced interpersonal violence. If a faculty member or supervisor has any questions about providing the academic or employment support, the faculty member should contact PSU's Title IX and 504/ADA Coordinator, Julie Caron, at jucaron@pdx.edu or 503.725.4410.

TITLE IX

If you have any questions about Title IX, please contact PSU's Title IX Coordinator, Julie Caron at titleixccordinator@pdx.edu or 503-725-4410. Julie's office is located at 1600 SW 4th Ave, In the Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center RMNC - Suite 830. Title IX

pertains to any form of sex/gender discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment or sexual violence.