

## **USP 512 Syllabus - Fall 2024**

# **NOHAD A. TOULAN SCHOOL OF URBAN STUDIES & PLANNING**

**Portland State University**

**Environmental Planning Methods (USP 512) Fall 2024**

**3 Credits**

**Class Time:** Wednesdays 12 PM – 2:40 PM

**Class Location:** Zoom (virtual)

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

**Instructor: Sachi Arakawa**

**Email:** [sachi@pdx.edu](mailto: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 30th 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 20th, final draft due December 11th 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 6th, final presentations December 4th, final draft due December 11th at 5pm.***

**Reading Response Participation: (15%).** 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 December 4th at 5pm***

**In-Class Participation: (15%).** 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 December 4th at 5pm***

## **Course Content and Schedule**

### **Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Planning**

**Class date: October 2nd**

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.

*Weekly To-Dos:*

- Online Survey: What areas of environmental planning are most intriguing to you?
- Read: A Trail Across Time: American Environmental Planning From City Beautiful to Sustainability (Daniels)

- *Post a reading response on Canvas*
- *Students will be assigned one era from the Daniels reading. Prepare a slide with at least two images that you think are representative of your era, and come to class ready to briefly summarize your era and what implications it had for environmental planning.*
- *Listen: Growing Oregon Podcast, episodes 1, 2, and 4.*  
<https://www.opb.org/pressroom/opbs-new-growing-oregon-podcast-series-examines-the-history-and-impact-of-oregons-strict-land-use-laws/>*Links to an external site.*
  - *Post a reading response on Canvas*

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

**Class date: October 9th**

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.

*Weekly To-Dos:*

- *Read: The Rise of the American Conservation Movement, Dorcetta Taylor - Part 1*
  - *Post a reading response on Canvas*
- *Listen: Resources Radio, Dorcetta Taylor.*  
<https://www.resources.org/resources-radio/challenge-diversity-environmental-movement-dorceta-taylor-rebroadcast/>*Links to an external site.*
  - *Post a reading response on Canvas*
- *Read: Another Game Changer In The Making? Lessons From States Advancing Environmental Justice Through Mapping And Cumulative Impact Strategies, Charles Lee*
  - *Come prepared to discuss in class*

## **Week 3 Environmental Justice and Equity**

**Class date: October 16**

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.

*Weekly To-Dos:*

- *Listen: Can Cities Go Green Without Driving Gentrification?*  
<https://www.npr.org/2022/12/22/1145090530/can-cities-go-green-without-driving-gentrification/>*Links to an external site.*
- *Read: Christine Carmicheal, The trouble with trees? Social and political dynamics of street tree-planting efforts in Detroit, Michigan, USA*

- *Post a reading response to both of these on Canvas*
- *Submit two project topic ideas for the Final Project (Assignment 3) to the discussions section in Canvas*

## **Week 4 - Climate Action, Green Infrastructure and Urban Greenspace**

**Class date: October 23**

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.

*Weekly To-Dos:*

- *Read:*
  - *Kotek's Housing Advisory Council Proposes Suspending Tree Codes to Speed Development:*
    - [https://www.wweek.com/news/2023/08/11/koteks-housing-advisory-council-proposes-suspending-tree-codes-to-speed-development/Links to an external site.](https://www.wweek.com/news/2023/08/11/koteks-housing-advisory-council-proposes-suspending-tree-codes-to-speed-development/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)
    - [https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Documents/Codes%20and%20Design\\_Trees%20in%20Design%20Recommendation.pdfLinks to an external site.](https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Documents/Codes%20and%20Design_Trees%20in%20Design%20Recommendation.pdfLinks%20to%20an%20external%20site)
    - Review the City of Portland's response to the HPAC's proposal: [https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/documents/bps-ppr-response-hpac-proposal/downloadLinks to an external site.](https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/documents/bps-ppr-response-hpac-proposal/downloadLinks%20to%20an%20external%20site)
    - *Compose a letter of at least 300 words to the Governor's HPAC either in support or against this proposal. Include an explanation of what is contained in the proposal, and your rationale for why you either support or oppose the recommendations. [Note - this is an educational exercise, you do not have to actually send these letters to the HPAC, though you are welcome to if you would like!]*

## **Week 5 - Data Communication Pt. 1**

**Class date: October 30th**

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!

### Weekly To-Dos:

- *Read: Some resources for data visualization:*
  - <https://www.storytellingwithdata.com/blog/a-wordy-slide-makeover>Links to an external site.
  - <https://policyviz.com/2018/08/07/dataviz-cheatsheet/>Links to an external site.
  - <https://ladder.io/blog/data-storytelling>Links to an external site.

### Week 6 - Data Communication Pt. 2 (+ Student Presentations\*\*)

**Class date: November 6th**

Part 2 of data communication - exploring data in Excel.

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

### Weekly To-Dos:

- *Read: Anatomy of Brownfield Redevelopment.*
- *You will be assigned one brownfield project to report back to the class on.*
  - [Riverfront Park - Spokane, WA](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Rainier Court - Seattle, WA](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Golden Girl Group Home - Ceredo, West Virginia](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Festival Beach Food Forest Austin, Texas](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Frankford Creek Urban Revitalization Housing Project](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Coal Mine Trails - Luzerne County, Pennsylvania](#)Links to an external site.
  - [First Americans Museum, Oklahoma City](#)Links to an external site.
  - [Kendall Yards, Spokane, WA](#)Links to an external site.
  - *Prepare a ~3 minute presentation on your brownfield redevelopment project*
    - *Describe the location of your site. What state and city (or county) is it in? Is it in a rural or urban location? Is it near any notable geographic features (like a river or a freeway)?*
    - *What was the site previously used for? What was the source of pollution or contamination?*
    - *What was the site redeveloped into (what is the current use)?*
    - *Who oversaw the redevelopment (ie a City government entity, a non-profit, a private company, or some combination of those in partnership)?*
    - *How was the redevelopment funded?*
    - *Would you consider the project a success?*

### Week 7 - Brownfield Redevelopment and Municipal Flood Management

**Class date: November 13th**

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.

**\*\*Student presentations of brownfield projects in the second half of class.**

Guest Speaker: Collin Rowan, Urban Flood Safety and Water Quality District

*Weekly To-Dos:*

- *Nothing this week - work on finishing your data story!*

### **Week 8 - Data Story Presentations**

**Class date: November 20th**

Data story student presentations and critique.

Guest Speaker: Nik Desai, Portland Urban Forestry

*Weekly To-Dos:*

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

### **Week 9 - TBD**

**Class date: November 27th**

Class agenda TBD.

*Weekly To-Dos:*

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

### **Week 10 - Final Assignment Presentations**

**Class date: December 4th**

Student presentations of final projects. *Final projects due Dec. 11th 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.