

USP 311-U: Introduction to Urban Planning
Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies & Planning
Portland State University
Spring 2025

Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 11:00 am-12:50 pm

Location: URBN 270

Instructor: Yu Xiao, Ph.D., AICP., Associate Professor Email: yxiao@pdx.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, over Zoom or in Urban Center 370 G

Credits: 4 undergraduate hours (This course is a required core course for BA/BS in Community, Urban Studies, and Planning)

Recommended Prerequisite: upper-division standing

Course Website: This class uses canvas (<http://canvas.pdx.edu>) in support of learning. You can log in with your Odin username and password.

Class Description and Objectives

Class Description: An interdisciplinary perspective on planning theories, principles, and practice. Focuses on the planning process, particularly at the local level. Explores the political, economic, social, and legal forces that influence the planning function and the roles of planners. Changing concepts in practice are also considered.

Learning Objectives: by the end of the class, students should:

- Know the history of planning
- Know the contemporary practice of planning
- Know various fields in urban planning
- Understand the political, economic, social, and legal forces that influence the planning function and the roles of planners
- Apply what you learned in this class to discuss how to create a better future

COURSE WORK

Term Project: A Better Future for Portland, Oregon via Urban Planning

Through this project, you will investigate a planning issue of interest in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. You will identify the issue with first-hand information, explore the history of this issue, explore the current planning procedure and practices related to this issue, consider best practices from other places, and provide implementable strategies to address the issue and make the Portland area better.

This project is set as a team assignment because peer learning and collaboration is an important aspect of urban planning. The team size should be 2-4 persons. In rare situations (i.e., tremendous personal difficulties to meet with others in a group), I do allow students to work on this project individually but please discuss this with me early.

(Due on Sunday 4/13/2025, 20 points): *Individual Work*- Identify Issues in Urban Planning

(Due on Sunday, 4/27/2025, 10 points): *Team Work*- Topic for the project, research plan, and team agreement

(Due on Sunday, 5/11/2025, 20 points): *Team Work*- History of the issue and current conditions

(Due on Sunday, 5/25/2025, 20 points): *Team Work*- Current planning procedure and practices related to the issue, best practices from other places, and **implementable** strategies. It is highly recommended that you work with the community members to find the solutions/implementable strategies for the planning issue.

(Due on Sunday, 6/1/2025, 30 points): *Team Work*- Final presentation and report; and peer evaluation (10% of the final project grade will come from the peer evaluation).

Quizzes: 2 points each. 1 point for taking the quiz and 1 point for providing the correct answer. The attendance quizzes will be based on the assigned course materials for that day. So, please come to class prepared. To account for unexpected circumstances that may happen in life, I will dismiss the lowest 2 scores of the attendance quizzes. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up with the course content. I will not answer questions such as “what did I miss from the class?” . However, I will be happy to answer questions related to the understanding of the course content.

Mid-term Exam (on-line): The mid-term exam will be posed on Wednesday, 5/7/2025

Final Exam (on-line): The final exam will be posed in week 11.

Grading (All assignment should be submitted via Canvas):

Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	10%
Term project:	50%
Total:	100%

Course grades will be assigned on a criterion-reference scale as follows:

A: 93-100% A-: 90-92%

B+: 87-89% B: 83-86% B-: 80-83%

C+: 77-79% C: 73-76% C-: 70-72%

D+: 67-69% D: 63-66% D-: 60-62%

F: <60%

In case that a grade is on the borderline, classroom participation will be used to determine the final grade.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class. To be excused the student must notify the instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. Students must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the absence that is satisfactory to the instructor, within one week of the last date of the absence. The instructor will either provide the student an opportunity to make up any graded activities or provide a satisfactory alternative to be completed within 30 calendar days from the last day of the absence.

Classroom participation

Students are encouraged to come to class prepared, make thoughtful contributions to class discussions, respect others' views, and help each other out in collaborative learning groups.

Assignment guidelines

Students are encouraged to have study groups and help each other with the assignment. However, the work specified as individual work must be individual work. Plagiarism will be prosecuted.

Late Submission Policy

In fairness to all students, especially those who work hard to meet deadlines, late assignments will be penalized 5% per day. Assignments and project report more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity Statement

[PSU's Student Code of conduct](#) prohibits all forms of academic misconduct, including but not limited to:

- “a) cheating, such as copying the work of another, allowing another to copy from one’s own work, unauthorized use of notes or sources during an exam, giving or receiving unauthorized information prior to or during the examination.
- b) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer’s ideas;
- c) the buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers;
- d) performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) in another person’s stead;
- e) unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information;
- f) falsification of research data, sources, or other information represented in an academic assignment;
- g) unauthorized collaboration;
- h) using the same paper or data for several assignments or courses without proper documentation;
- i) unauthorized alteration of student records; and
- j) academic sabotage, such as destroying or obstructing another student’s work.”

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

PSU values diversity, equity, 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, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides accommodations in the learning environment.

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 DRC to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC works with students who have physical, learning, cognitive, mental health, sensory, chronic illness, and all other disabilities.

If you already have accommodations: Please contact me to make sure that I have received your Faculty Notification Email, and to discuss your accommodations.

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

Title IX Reporting Obligations

Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and PSU policies prohibit discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex/gender and sexual harassment, which includes sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. We expect a culture of mutual respect in our department and class. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the **Title IX Coordinator**, **Office of Equity and Compliance**, or the **Office of the Dean of Student Life**.

Please be aware that as an instructor, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual and relationship violence and/ or other forms of prohibited discrimination to PSU's **Title IX Coordinator**, the **Office of Equity and Compliance** or the **Dean of Student Life office** and cannot keep information confidential. However, the information will be kept private and only those with a need to know will be provided with what you disclose. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment or sexual and relationship violence to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact a **confidential advocate** at 503.894.7982 or by scheduling **online**. You may also contact other confidential employees found on the **sexual misconduct resource webpage**.

Please complete the required student module **Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources** in Canvas, which provides information about PSU policy and resources.

You may also report sexual and relationship violence to law enforcement on campus with **Campus Public Safety Office (CPSO)**.

Or you may file an **anonymous report with Campus Public Safety Office** or a **Bias Incident report** with the **Bias Review Team (BRT)**. PSU does not typically investigate the reports that

are made through these two avenues. These reports help PSU understand what students and employees are experiencing on and around campus and provide support where needed.

Submitting work online

For assignments that require uploading files to Canvas, it is the student's responsibility to verify that (1) all files are submitted in Canvas prior to the deadline and (2) all submitted files are those that the student intends to be graded for the assignment. Submitting the "wrong" file by accident is not acceptable grounds for a deadline extension. Assignment grades will be based on the file submitted prior to the posted deadline. Files submitted in a format that cannot be accessed by the instructor cannot be graded and will therefore receive a 0. Acceptable file formats are MS Office formats (e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint) or PDF files. Individual assignment instructions may contain a required file format.

Technology access

Proficiency in the use of canvas, PSU email, and other computer tools such as Zoom or part of google suite is required for this course. This course requires consistent access to functioning computer equipment and Internet access throughout the length of the course.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Week 1 (M) 3/31 : Introduction-What is Urban Planning?

Learning objective: know what urban planning is.

Materials:

[Urban planning](#) (Britannica.com)
[I am a planner because...](#) (video, 4 mins)
[What is Urban Planning](#) (video, 6 mins)

Week 1 (W) 4/2: The History of Planning

Learning objectives: understand the history of urban planning and the forces/events that shaped urban planning.

Materials:

[A Brief History of U.S. City Planning](#) (video, 14 mins)
[Urban Geography: Why We Live Where We Do](#) (video, 10 mins)
[Planning History Timeline, American Planning Association](#)

Week 2 (M) 4/7: The Contemporary Planning Process I-Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

Learning objectives: know what is a comprehensive plan; know what is zoning; and be able to tell the differences between the two.

Materials:

[Where did the Comprehensive Plan Come From?](#) (video, 6 mins)
[What is a Comprehensive Plan?](#) (video, 7 mins)
[What is Zoning](#) (video, 2 mins)
[An Introduction to Zoning](#) (video, 6 mins)
[Zoning & Overlays](#) (1 min)

Week 2 (W) 4/9: The Contemporary Planning Process II- Subdivision Regulations and Development Review

Learning objectives: *know what are subdivision regulations and their differences from zoning. Understand the development review and permit process.*

Materials:

[Understanding zoning and subdivision regulations](#) (video, 3 mins)

[City of Portland's Development Review and Permit Process](#) (browse the related pages)

Week 3 (M) 4/14: Planning Ethics and Inclusion

Learning objectives: *know the AICP Code of Ethics and understand what they imply.*

Materials:

[AICP Code of Ethics](#)

[Ethics: Balancing a Business Friendly Planning Environment, Part 2 - The Ethical Challenge](#) (video 8 mins)

Due: Main planning issues in the Portland, Oregon area (*Individual Assignment*)

Week 3 (W) 4/16: Community Development

Learning objectives: *know what community development is and how it is and could be done in planning*

Materials:

[Introduction to Community Development](#) (video, 1 min)

[Sustainable community development: from what's wrong to what's strong | Cormac Russell | TEDxExeter](#) (video, 18 mins)

[HUD Community Planning and Development](#)

Announce: Teams for final project based on Monday's activity.

Week 4 (M) 4/21: Housing

Learning objectives: *know the planning issues related to housing, understand the factors that affect housing and be able to discuss housing issues.*

Materials:

[What is Gentrification?](#) (Video, 9 mins)

[Public Housing Awareness: ReThink Why Housing Matters](#) (video, 4 mins)

[The Controversy Over Accessory Dwelling Units](#) (video, 14 mins)

Week 4 (W) 4/23: Transportation Planning I

Learning objectives: know what is transportation planning and its impacts on cities and know what transportation planners do.

Materials:

[How do cities grow?](#) (video, 9 mins)

[Transportation PLANNER vs. ENGINEER: What's the Difference?](#) (video, 6 mins)

Due (on Sunday): Topic for the project, team work plan, and community agreement

Week 5 (M) 4/28: Transportation Planning II

Learning objectives: know the issues related to transportation planning, understand the complexity of the issues, and be able to discuss them.

Materials:

[\[Private\] Transportation Planning 101](#) (video, 8 mins)

[Why Roads ALWAYS Fill Up, No Matter How Much We Widen Them](#) (video, 3 mins)

[The Life-Sized City - Copenhagen S02E03 - Jan Gehl](#) (video, 5 mins)

Week 5 (W) 4/30: Food Systems Planning

Learning objectives: know what food systems planning is, understand the complexity of the food systems planning issues, and be able to discuss them.

Materials:

[Healthy Urban Food Systems: Planning Retail Facilities - Introduction](#) (video, 6 mins)

[Healthy Urban Food Systems: Planning Retail Facilities - Healthy Food Outside: Farmers' Markets](#) (video, 11 mins)

Vitelli and Brinkley, 2014, The Hidden History of Food System Planning, Journal of Planning History

Lawson et al. 2004, The Planner in the Garden: A Historical View into the Relationship between Planning and Community Gardens, Journal of Planning History

Week 6 (M) 5/5: Economic Development Planning

***Learning objectives:** know what economic development planning is, understand the complexity of the economic development planning issues, and be able to discuss them.*

Materials:

[Economic Development Explained](#) (video, 1 min)

[What is Economic Development?](#) (video, 4 min)

Week 6 (W) 5/7: Midterm Exam, No Class.

Week 7 (M) 5/12: Environmental Planning

***Learning objectives:** know what environmental planning is, understand the complexity of the environmental planning issues, and be able to discuss them.*

Materials:

[What is Environmental Planning?](#) (video, 1 min)

Due: history of the issue and current conditions

Week 7 (W) 5/14): Community Resilience Planning I

***Learning objectives:** know what community resilience planning is, understand the complexity of the community resilience planning issues, and be able to discuss them.*

Materials:

[Introduction to Resilience Planning](#) (video, 3 mins)

[How To Develop a Resilience Plan for Your Community](#) (video, 9 mins)

Week 8 (M) 5/19: Community Resilience Planning II

Materials:

[PrepTalks: Dr. Philip Berke “Planning for Community Resilience”](#) (video, 29 mins, optional)

Week 8 (W) 5/21: Work Session on Project

Week 9 (M) 5/26: International planning

***Learning objectives:** know how planning is done in other countries, and be able to discuss international planning in comparison to the planning in the U.S.*

Materials:

[Why Japan Looks the Way it Does: Zoning](#) (video, 15 mins)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Wanfei Gao, Urban Planning in China

Due: planning procedures and implementable strategies

Week 9 (W) 5/28: Envisioning a better future

***Learning objectives:** know outside-of-the-box approaches to future planning*

Materials:

[How to turn your Neighborhood into a Village](#) (video, 16 mins)

Work Session on Project

Week 10 (M) 6/2: Presentation

Due: Final paper and presentation

Week 10 (W) 6/4: Presentation

Week 11 (Th) 6/12- 12:30 pm to 14:40 pm : Presentation

Exam II: Online

Have a great summer break!