

USP 311U Introduction to Urban Planning – Fall 2025

CRN 13640

Class location and time: Monday and Wednesdays 1:30pm to 3:10pm. Fariborz Maseeh Hall (FMH) B128.

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Golub (he/him), Email: agolub@pdx.edu

Office Hours: *Several times during the week arranged directly through my appointment scheduler – just click and reserve a spot – no need to email me – meetings are on google meets (even if I am shown to be on campus). If these times don't work – email me and we can find a time.* <https://calendar.app.google/Qyt245JmWdWwaxrE6>

Please note that this course borrows from the previous work of professors Megan Horst and Norene Hough.

Course Description

USP 311U is a 4-credit course offering an introduction to the history, theory, law and practice of urban planning, with a focus on the US. It begins with an overview of US urbanization and the development of the practice of planning and the formal planning profession. The course then covers historic and contemporary planning theory and practice, addressing challenges faced by urban planners. It focuses on planning challenges and practices in Oregon and Portland due to PSU's location. The class is a U-class, open to all PSU undergraduate students, and incorporates many disciplinary approaches to help understand and improve our urban environments.

Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will understand the

1. forces (including technological, social, economic, and political) influencing urbanization and suburbanization in the United States;
2. general patterns and trends in urbanization and suburbanization;
3. historical development of the planning profession and the legal framework;
4. concepts, tools and techniques employed by urban planners;
5. the role urban planning has/ continues to play in creating structures that benefit wealthy landowners & perpetuate systemic racism;
6. equity planning and public participation as essential tools for current urban planners;
7. roles of various national, state and local actors in planning for urban areas.
8. some of the main current challenges facing urban areas; and
9. how you (as a student, community member, resident, etc) can be actively engaged in planning.

Course learning goals

USP 311U focuses on two of the four [program learning goals from University Studies](#): Diversity, Equity & Social Justice, and Ethics, Agency & Community. By exploring the history and process of urbanization, it looks closely at community power and social justice in historical contexts and contemporary settings. The course also focuses heavily on the process of building community power and agency through both the formal planning process and related the informal community organizing process.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND GRADING

The course will include two meetings per week, required and optional readings, short reaction “worksheets,” in-class discussions, two self-directed field trips, and three longer assignments.

Wednesday Lecture Sessions (Attend anywhere).

It is essential to attend (in-person, at home, or watch the recorded lecture) the Wednesday lecture sessions. I do urge you to **attend in person if you can** – studies show you do learn more attending in-person, and it is easier to

ask questions and for me to understand reactions to the material through non-verbal information. Of course, you can post “reactions” and ask questions via attend anywhere (ZOOM chat), but it won’t be as smooth. Watching the recording is ok too, and feel free to email me any follow up questions if you have any.

Module reaction worksheets

There will be nine module reaction worksheets. These are typically short questions, yes/no or multiple choice questions related to module readings, videos and the previous Wednesday lecture. Worksheets encourage you to prepare for the discussions on Mondays, and you will only receive half-credit if turned in after the start of Monday class. It is imperative that everyone does the module worksheets before the discussions on Monday, as these will inspire more detailed discussion during class where everyone will be asked to contribute.

Monday In-class discussions

Each Monday, we will have discussions to reflect on the previous week’s module (lecture and the module materials). There is nothing to submit - your attendance will be logged and count as your grade for the in-class discussions. Please come prepared by doing the module worksheet and have access to the documents in class (on your computer, tablet, phone, hard-copy – whatever you prefer) as they will be discussed.

Major assignments

Three major assignments will allow you to explore issues and cases of your own interest. The assignments will be uploaded as a Word or PDF files into the appropriate dropbox on the Canvas website. The fourth major assignment is self-guided field trip for you to complete during the term.

The **final class grade** will be calculated in the following manner:

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|---|-----|
| 1. Participating in in-class discussions based on the modules | 30% |
| 2. Weekly modules reaction worksheets | 30% |
| 3. Four major assignments | 40% |

Grading Scale:

A 93.0 % and above ; A- 90.0 % ; B+ 87.0 % ; B 83.0 % ; B- 80.0 % , etc.

COURSE RESOURCES:

A **Canvas website** is set up for the class. The site contains all assignments, discussion boards, required and optional readings, and is where your completed assignments should be uploaded. **There is a no textbook**, physical or virtual for the course.

Note on submitting work online

Proficiency in the use of Canvas, PSU email, and other computer tools such as 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. Reliance on a cellular connection may not provide reliable and fast access to online learning resources. Here are some broadband programs that are free or low-cost:

<https://www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/are-there-government-programs-to-help-me-get-internet-service>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to be ethical not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom. It is in all students’ interest to avoid committing acts of academic dishonesty and to discourage others from committing such acts. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: engages in any form of

academic deceit; refers to materials or sources or uses devices not authorized by the instructor for use during any quiz or assignment; provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any quiz or assignment; engages in Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments – just cite anything you use from someone else (it actually makes your work stronger!). Plagiarism is a serious issue and is a violation of the PSU [Student Conduct Code](#). University policy requires instructors to report all instances of plagiarism and penalize the perpetrator(s) according to guidelines set. Please see me if you ever have any questions about how to cite your work.

CAMPUS SUPPORT FOR RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

As an instructor, students frequently come to me for assistance in matters that are not related to the course material. Please be aware that PSU's policies require instructors to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual and relationship violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to University Officials, who keep the information private. If you would rather share information about these experiences directly with a PSU staff member who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources.

- Confidential Advocates: 503.894.7982, or by [scheduling on-line](#) (for matters regarding sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling ([SHAC](#)): 1880 SW 6th Ave, 503.725.2800
- [Student Legal Services](#): 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, 503.725.4556 For more information, please complete the required student module Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources in Canvas.

[PSU Sexual Misconduct Response website](#) gives you comprehensive information about how to support and/or report an incident.

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 \(CPSO\)](#).

ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers 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 Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.

REPORTING RESOURCES

- Students who have concerns about incidents happening within USP classes or in other PSU-sanctioned spaces related to TSUSP programs may submit confidential reports to the TSUSP School Director [using](#)

[this form](#). All reports received are logged, and depending on the nature of the incident, follow-up with the impacted student(s) takes place.

- The [Office of Dean of Student Life](#) maintains a [PSU Incident Report](#) form where students and other PSU community members can report incidents for review relative to the [Student Code of Conduct and Responsibility](#), including academic misconduct. These reports, once investigated and resolved, are shared with the School Director and corresponding Program Director.
- 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.
- Complaints against Faculty, Staff, or Student Employees of [prohibited discrimination](#) can be reported via the [Employee Complaint Report Form](#) through the Office of Equity and Compliance.
- The [CARE Program](#) can help students experiencing distress and/or other issues that might impact their ability to function at their best in and outside of the classroom. They have a [referral form](#) here.
- The Office of the Dean of Student Life houses the Academic Appeals process. Students who feel they have received a prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation may submit an [Academic Appeal Request](#). Before students submit this request, students must have appealed to the instructor, department chair and appropriate dean. Students should then read the [Academic Appeals Guidelines](#) to see if their grade dispute fits the purview of the Academic Appeal. For more information, please visit the [Academic Appeals website](#), email askdos@pdx.edu, or call 503-725-4422.

For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-prevention-life-safety>) for information.

HOW WAS THIS CLASS DESIGNED?

This class, which has been approved as part of the PSU curriculum by appropriate faculty bodies (School of Urban Studies and Planning, College of Urban and Public Affairs, PSU faculty senate), aims to introduce students to urban planning through discussion, debate, and carefully selected readings and assignments. In accordance with principles of academic freedom promulgated by the American Association of University Professors and affirmed by many universities and court decisions over the past century, the instructor has the authority to set the class syllabus and contents. The contents of this course were carefully curated over the past two decades by several USP faculty who were hired by USP for their expertise in this field. A consensus of experts in this field would likely agree with the way this class was designed and the material presented. Some students may disagree with or be offended by some of the materials presented. While all students and their views will be treated respectfully, no one should expect to be shielded from challenging or even upsetting ideas, since thoughtfully engaging such ideas is crucial to intellectual growth.

SYLLABUS CHANGES DISCLAIMER

All syllabi are subject to minor changes to meet the needs of the instructor, school, or class. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus or schedule changes in class, and through the

CANVAS announcements and class email. Please remember to check your PSU email and the CANVAS messages and announcements often.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week	Date	Mondays – In-class discussions	Date	Wednesdays – Lectures (attend anywhere)
1	9/29	Syllabus, Introductions, What is urban?	10/1	Module 1: Urban history, Urban dynamics, Role of planning
2	10/6	Module 1 Discussion: Urban history, role of planning	10/8	Module 2: Planning fundamentals, Launch assignment 1
3	10/13	Module 2 Discussion: Planning fundamentals	10/15	Module 3: Planning in Oregon, Launch assignments 2 and 3
4	10/20	Module 3 Discussion: Planning in Oregon	10/22	Module 4: Participatory, advocacy planning, equity planning, Launch assignment 3
5	10/27	Module 4 Discussion: Participatory, advocacy, equity planning, Assignment 1 due	10/29	Module 5: Planning for housing for all
6	11/3	Module 5 Discussion: Housing planning	11/5	Module 6: Transportation planning
7	11/10	Module 6 Discussion: Transportation planning	11/12	Module 7: Urban design and physical planning
8	11/17	Module 7 Discussion: Physical planning, Assignment 2 due	11/19	Module 8: Climate adaptation and mitigation
9	11/24	Module 8 Discussion: Climate adaptation and mitigation	11/26	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS (Exchange for time spent on field trip)
10	12/1	Future planning issues (<i>In-class</i> lecture and discussion)	12/3	Final wrap up (<i>In-class</i> lecture and discussion), Assignments 3 and 4 due 12/9