

USP 542 | Land Use Implementation

Fall 2025 Course Syllabus (Revised 9/27/2025)

Portland State University
College of Urban and Public Affairs
Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning

INSTRUCTOR	MEETING DETAILS
Aaron Ray, AICP (he/him) Adjunct Instructor E-mail: aray@pdx.edu (include USP 542 in subject line and <u>do not</u> use Canvas messaging unless instructed.) Office Hours: By appointment, typically Thursdays 4:00-5:00pm via Zoom.	Wednesdays 5:30-8:50pm KMC (Karl Miller Center) 245 In-person attendance is expected unless otherwise specified in the course calendar or in the event of campus closure. Excessive absences could impact your final grade. See Course Policies for details.

Good land-use planning builds on social and economic ways theories. It draws on ecological, geographic, and engineering knowledge. A goal of land-use planning is to shape more socially resilient and environmentally and economically just places. Implementation is how we move forward with actions and investments to realize the type of development envisioned in our plans. **Plans don't get built by themselves.**

This course introduces you to some of the theoretical underpinnings and practical tools available for land-use planning and its implementation. This course will teach you the key concepts framing land-use planning practice in the United States.

Through this course, you will learn:

- How land use planning interacts within political, social, economic, and geographic systems.
- How the process of land-use decision making happens in the United States with a comparison against other countries' processes.
- Practical application of the land use review process in Oregon through class activities, assignments, and research.
- Intersections of land-use implementation processes with equity, systemic racism, environmental justice, and professional ethics.

PREREQUISITES	While there are no formal prerequisites for this course, a general understanding of planning practice will enhance the student's experience. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions or concerns.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES	The learning outcomes for the Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) can be found here at this link. This course will focus on the following Student Learning Outcomes: • SLO #3 MURP students will understand planning as a political act and an act of intervention on behalf of a more desired, collective view of the future. • SLO #4 MURP students will understand planning as a reflective practice, and engage in plan making as reflective practitioners. • SLO# 7. MURP students will design planning processes, make plans, and create strategies for plan implementation.
REQUIRED MATERIALS	One textbook and one paper are required for the class: • Hirt S. 2014. Zoned in the USA: The origins and implications of American Land-Use Regulation. Cornell Press. Ithaca. • American Planning Association. 2022. Equity In Zoning Policy Guide. [available via download and on Canvas] Additional required and/or optional readings will be provided on Canvas and/or through the PSU Library.
COURSE MEETING FORMAT	Most weekly meetings will be in-person, and generally include the following, depending on the course calendar: • Recap discussion of the prior week's topic and written reflection. • Lecture, discussion, and often an in-class activity related to the week's topic, informed by readings. • On many weeks, a guest speaker. • A break midway through the class when possible. Please note that in-person activities are generally not able for make-up if you are absent. Please do not come to class if you are ill. There is generally not an online attendance option, unless otherwise announced. See Course Policies below for more detail.
COURSE CALENDAR	The attached Course Calendar indicates the topic, required reading, and assignment due dates (with the exception of weekly reflections, which are always due at 11:59pm on Sundays). The course calendar and syllabus may be revised by the instructor as needed. Although I will make every effort to alert students of changes, it is the student's responsibility to check the calendar weekly before reading or completing work.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

To maximize the value of our time together, students are expected to:

- Complete all required readings and pre-work before class.
- Actively engage and participate in group discussions and activities.
- Thoughtfully prepare and thoroughly proofread all assignments before submittal. **Unless otherwise provided for in assignment instructions, revised submittals will not be accepted.**

READINGS & PREP WORK

Prep Work: The expectation for a 3 credit class is that you will do 6 hours of work per week outside of class. Some of you may need to do more, some may get by with less.

Readings: This is a reading-heavy course. I expect that you will have prepared so our class time will be most effective. I assume that as a graduate student, you know how to skim and read for key points, not for 100% detail retention.

Read Critically: Don't take course readings as gospel! Professional planners should be methodical of what they are reading and be curious and thoughtful about its interpretation. If you disagree with some of the materials, be prepared to defend your reasoning and evidence. You should also keep an open mind about the information and the resulting discussion.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your final grade in this course is based on these components:

- 20%: Assignment 1 (Zoning Analysis)
- 20%: Assignment 2 (Policy into Regulation Memorandum)
- 20%: Assignment 3 (Staff Report)
- 20%: Weekly Reflections
- 20%: In-Class Discussions, Participation, and Exercises

Final grading uses this rubric:

94/A | 90/A- | 87/B+ | 84/B | 80/B- | 77/C+ | 74/C | 70/C- | 67/D+ | 64/D | 60/D- | 0/F

There will be at least one opportunity for extra credit during the quarter. Extra credit assignments will identify which grade component(s) are eligible for extra credit.

ASSIGNMENTS

Three assignments comprise most of your grade (60% in total), intended to apply concepts discussed in class to practical situations that you are likely to face as a planning practitioner. Assignments are graded on a scale of 0-20. For non-MURP majors, alternative assignments may be provided at the option of the instructor.

On weeks that they are assigned, assignments are due on Tuesdays at 11:59pm. Revisions to submitted assignments are generally not accepted. See Course Policies for policies regarding formats and late work.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Weekly reflections comprise 20% of your grade. Each week's meeting will include a prompt or question for that week's written reflection assignment. Responses are to be written as if you were responding to a colleague in your office about a planning question or issue. Prompts and assignment instructions will be provided in Canvas. Responses are intended to be short (150-250 words, sometimes more) and written in a **professional** style (see below). Responses are graded on a scale of 0-10.

Weekly reflections are always due each Sunday at 11:59pm. Late reflections (like other late work) are not eligible for a "10" mark.

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

20% of your grade is based on your participation in class meeting discussions and exercises. Interactive discussion will be a central part of much of our time together, and most weeks will include a group activity, worksheet, or other exercise to be turned in physically or digitally. If active participation is a challenge for you, please contact me and we can determine alternate options that demonstrate that you are keeping up with course topics and comprehending discussions.

In-class participation is graded each week on a scale of 0-2, where 2 is participation as expected, 1 is partial or ill-prepared participation, and 0 is unacceptable or no participation (including absences). **If you miss class, participation points cannot be made up**, but there will be at least one extra credit opportunity over the course of the term.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Most of your grade in this class is based on written assignments. We will be focusing on **professional writing** in this course, which differs from academic writing and is what you'll typically use in your day-to-day career as a planning practitioner. We will explore this in class, but in general it means a more conversational style, "casually-inline" citations, and a more concise form, while still maintaining a professional and refined voice.

The quality of your writing will have a large impact on your assignment grades. I encourage students to avail themselves of the Portland State University Writing Center and this link for resources focused on graduate students: <https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/graduate-student-resources>

CONTACT VIA E-MAIL & KEEPING IN TOUCH

Unless otherwise directed, please do not e-mail me via Canvas: instead, contact me via e-mail at aray@pdx.edu. I will attempt to reply within 48 hours. From time to time, I may send messages to your pdx.edu e-mail.

Although I will attempt to copy all important messages to the Announcements module in Canvas, I expect that you will also be checking your pdx.edu inbox regularly.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: I hope that you will feel compelled to participate because you find the class interesting and engaging. I encourage you to actively participate in every class as class participation is part of your grade – while doing so thoughtfully and respectfully towards other students.

As an instructor, I believe that graduate school is a time to create opportunities for inquiry and excellence and I hope that you can find a balance to actively participate and work in this class in conjunction with all of your other responsibilities. However, I also recognize that there are intense challenges to find this balance. If you are experiencing challenges to accessing support for your personal wellness, technology, caregiving etc. and these situations are influencing your learning, please communicate with me so we can find an option that works while enabling you to continue to meet the course requirements.

ABSENCES: You are a graduate student and are expected to manage your own attendance, and I hope that you will care enough about learning in this course to attend as often as possible. Should you need to miss class, please contact me in advance via email at aray@pdx.edu. In-class participation points cannot be made up in the event of an absence, but you may use extra credit to earn points in this category. If you miss class, you are still expected to complete the weekly reflection by following the prompt posted on Canvas. Note that some reflections may rely in part on in-class discussion, so I encourage you to work with a colleague to come up to speed on the discussions that took place. See additional notes below about illness and inclement weather.

ILLNESS AND PERSONAL HEALTH MEASURES: Do not come to class if you or a household member are feeling sick or have a recent exposure to a communicable illness, including COVID. Please notify me as early as possible and I will work with you on an accommodation. Although masks are not required at PSU, individuals may choose to wear a mask if they wish. All students are expected to respect a peers' decision to wear or not wear a mask.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND CAMPUS CLOSURES: We will strictly follow all PSU alerts regarding campus operations and observe all campus closures for inclement weather or other emergencies. If time allows, I may shift a class meeting to Zoom, or amend the Course Calendar to accommodate a cancellation. If campus is open but your commute is unsafe due to inclement weather, please e-mail me as soon as possible at aray@pdx.edu to discuss options. Do not attempt an unsafe commute to attend class. Unless otherwise announced, a campus closure will not affect assignment deadlines – all work is expected to be completed on time.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMITTAL AND DEADLINES: Deadlines will be communicated with each assignment, but generally all assignments are due at 11:59pm Pacific time on due dates. Weekly reflections are generally due each Sunday. Assignments are generally due on Tuesdays. Check the assignment instructions for specific details. All work is submitted via Canvas in the Assignments section.

USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS: Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Copilot can be useful in some professions, including planning. Although these tools can be helpful in overcoming writing blocks, exploring different ways to explain complex topics, or just getting ideas on how to structure an argument, they are not a reliable source for generating professional planning writing.

In this course, use of these tools may be acceptable in limited cases as a writing prompt aid only. These tools may not be used to replace your own thinking or analysis, avoid engaging with course content, or write whole portions of your work. **Copying and pasting responses from these tools likely constitutes academic dishonesty without citation, and even if cited are likely to be inappropriate for use in this course.**

Specific assignments may put additional rules on the use of Generative AI. Students choosing to use these tools assume all risk for inaccurate or biased information generated by the tool.

LATE WORK: Assignments may be accepted after the deadline under certain conditions and are subject to penalty. If you are having a medical, personal, or other difficulty that is delaying your work, please contact me in advance of the deadline to make arrangements. Late work submitted without prior communication may not be accepted. Unless other arrangements are made, late work will receive a penalty of 20% per 24 hour period beyond the deadline.

ASSIGNMENT FORMATS: Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are required to be submitted in PDF format. Unreadable assignments will receive a grade of 0. It is the student's responsibility to verify that all files are submitted in Canvas prior to the deadline, that the files are readable and meet all requirements, and that the submitted files are the ones that the student intends to be graded for the assignment. Submitting the "wrong" file is not an acceptable reason for extension, and resubmittals may not be accepted.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS: 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.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Students are expected to be ethical not only in the classroom, but also out of 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 set guidelines. Please see me if you ever have any questions about how to cite your work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT: Portland State University is based in Portland, Oregon in Multnomah County. With this Statement and our actions, we honor the Indigenous people whose traditional and ancestral homelands this includes, including the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, the Tualatin Kalapuya and many other indigenous nations of the Columbia River. It is important to acknowledge these ancestors and to recognize that we are here as a result of sacrifices forced upon them. In remembering these communities, we honor their legacy and their descendants. We hope, that this Statement and our on-going dialog, fosters thoughtful conversations with the Indigenous communities that currently live, work and thrive today in Portland and across Oregon. Note: This Land Acknowledgement statement is the first step in reframing the conversations with Indigenous communities that have been typically held by those in a place of privilege and power.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: We will touch on tough topics throughout this course. Everyone enters the course with a wide range of identities, experiences, and ideas about how to work with people different than themselves. We also bring cultural norms about effective communication, emotional expression, and how learning should take place. We will always work to create an environment where people feel safe to share opinions and ask questions. We will also hold one another accountable for self-teaching where applicable. However, please let me know if the tenor of discussions prevents you from sharing your viewpoints.

FEEDBACK FOR BELONGING, DIGNITY, & JUSTICE COMMITTEE (BDJ) (FORMERLY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION): If you have comments or suggestions relating to this course and these issues, please reach out to the BDJ Committee: uspbdj@pdx.edu. Note: In cases where a concern is raised in relation to me or this course, you can contact the School Director.

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.
Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

TITLE IX AND DISCRIMINATORY POLICY: Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and on-housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at:

<http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a Confidential Advocate at 503- 725- 5672 or by scheduling on-line: psuwrc.youcanbook.me. You may also report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Office of the Dean of Student Life.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life.