

# **USP 311 Introduction to Urban Planning Online Syllabus**

Instructor: Dr. Yiping Fang

USP 311U Introduction to Urban Planning is a four-credit course exploring the fundamentals of urban planning. It unravels the history, theories, and practices that shape our cities. This course is open to all PSU undergraduates, regardless of their major or career interests. We'll investigate the diverse stakeholders who influence planning and examine the many roles planners can play. It was taught in several versions led by different instructors. This version, taught by Dr. Fang, takes a broader approach, comparing planning practices in the US and internationally.

This online course uses Canvas to organize all learning materials into accessible modules. Each week, you'll complete assigned readings and participate in two discussion forums, contributing an initial post and replies to classmates. Additionally, you'll submit essays every 2-3 weeks (4 total). Expect to dedicate 10-12 hours weekly to coursework.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By completing this course, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of:

- Explore the historical forces that have shaped the urban development we inhabit today.
- Identify various stakeholders involved in urban planning and understand their power dynamics.
- Analyze planners' roles throughout history and how they may have shifted and continue to evolve.
- Explore the role of communities in planning, and their potential to foster equity and the constraints they may face.
- Gain familiarity with major planning divisions, such as transportation and housing.
- Engage with critical questions about the future direction of urban planning and envision potential solutions.

## **TEXTBOOK, READINGS and TECHNOLOGY**

Textbooks are not required for this course. Instead, we will engage with a diverse array of readings, including articles from prominent newspapers, reports from planning organizations, and authentic planning documents. All assigned readings will be accessible via links on the class Canvas site. Expect to dedicate a substantial amount of time to reading each week. I often reference various magazines to gather international urban planning cases for our comparative discussions, and typically, I provide access to full-text PDFs for everyone. Regular internet access and a computer/laptop/Chromebook are essential for participation in this course.

## **WEEKLY MODULES**

Each week we will examine a specific aspect of urban planning. Here are the weekly topics:

- Module 1: Planning and Planners
- Module 2: History of Urban Planning
- Module 3: Hierarchies of Public Institutions
- Module 4: Planning and Data
- Module 5: Politics in Planning
- Module 6: Equity or remove inequalities
- Module 7: Transportation Planning
- Module 8: Affordable Housing
- Module 9: Community, Civil Society & Participation
- Module 10: Planning in the future

## GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your course grade will be based on the following (small adjustment is possible before week 4):

- **45% Discussion Posts:** (two discussion forums each week for the first 9 weeks, one of the two forums is from an international comparative perspective. Each discussion forum is worth 2.5 points).
- **5% Discussion Moderator Summary:** from Week 4, each student will moderate a discussion forum with a topic of their choice.
- **45%: Assignments** There are 4 assignments, Assignment 1-3 are worth 10 points each. Assignment 4 is worth 15 points.
- **5%:** Course end Anonymous survey

The grading rubric is linked at the end of each assignment. Please read carefully, especially the [rubric for discussion forums](#). It is relatively complicated. Your final grade will be based on 100 and will be converted to a letter grade according to the chart linked. The letter scores will then be converted into a letter grade. You should be able to monitor your grade progress as the course progresses and anticipate how you are doing. All ungraded assignments will show as "0" until graded.

## WEEKLY DUE DATES

Course content (weekly lessons) is located in weekly modules. Each Friday 12:00 AM, I will post the new weekly module for the upcoming week. Each week's content includes reviewing texts in the course module, reading or watching materials with the link provided, and participating in the two discussion forums. All these contents are connected around the concerned topic. You have to review all of them to be able to post in the discussion forum.

Your participation in each discussion forum includes your initial post to the forum's leading question, plus your minimum of two responses to other students' posts. Your initial post is due on Wednesdays by 11:59 pm. Your responses to your peers are due the following week Sunday by 11:59 pm. This suggests that you have some flexibility in going through course materials in a range of ten days (excluding the first and the final week); Weekly participation in all discussion forums in this term together counts for 50% of your final grade.

## CLASS POLICIES

1. Extensions without penalty may be granted at the instructor's discretion, under the following conditions: (a) a written (email) notification must be sent prior to the submission deadline; and (b) only with a compelling, unforeseen circumstance such as a family or health emergency (documentation may be required). We will agree, via email, about an extension date but generally it will be within 2 or 3 days, since this class moves quickly and I want you to stay on schedule as possible.
2. Cheating and plagiarism: It should go without saying that plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. 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. Please be aware that instructors have sophisticated methods for checking for plagiarism or copied material. The use of AI technology in this course, please refer it to the document in Modular Zero. You should NOT copy another person (a web source, a friend, etc) word for word. Instead, you should think about their data and argument and then put things in your own words, and cite them as relevant.
3. Recommendation letters: As you move through your college career, which might eventually involve asking professors to recommend you for graduate programs, jobs, or internships, please be aware that professors are not obligated to write references for any student who asks us. I don't write a reference for a student unless I can write a VERY positive and specific one. Keep in mind that I meet over 100 students every year- so you have to stand out in a good way. Therefore, your job as a college student is to become the kind of student professors can rave about in recommendations — hardworking, collegial, and intellectually inquisitive and honest. Consider maintaining relationships over time with professors, so that they know you well enough to write for you.
4. Class Feedback: I welcome your feedback about the class and your learning throughout the quarter- please visit my office hours or send me an email. Please also complete the course evaluations at the end of the quarter. Tell me what worked and what can be improved.
5. Interested in Planning beyond this class? There are other planning-related courses to take at PSU! Ask your undergraduate program director (Currently Norene Hough) or Dr. Matthew Gebhardt! Also, did you know that PSU hosts one of the nation's top-ranked graduate planning programs, the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program? We host info sessions for prospective students every fall- stay tuned. If this class has led you to an interest in urban planning, keep learning and I would be happy to help you explore other opportunities!

## Disability Access Information Statement

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, chronic illness, 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 DRC Faculty Notification Email so we can discuss your accommodations.

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

### **Statement for Title IX Reporting Obligations**

Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and PSU policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We expect a culture of professionalism and mutual respect in our department and class. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual 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 and cannot keep information confidential. 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. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment or sexual 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 on-line ([psuwrcc.youcanbook.me](https://psuwrcc.youcanbook.me)). You may also contact other confidential employees found on the sexual misconduct resource webpage. For more information about PSU's expectations of our campus community standards and resources for sex/gender discrimination and sexual violence, please complete the required student module Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources in your Canvas.

**Learning goals of general education at PSU:** This is a UNST Cluster course - this means the course will integrate the 4 program learning goals from University Studies: [Communication](#); [Inquiry & Critical Thinking](#); [Diversity, Equity & Social Justice](#), and [Ethics Agency & Community](#).

- Inquiry and Critical Thinking: Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.
- Communication: Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

- Ethics, Agency, & Community: Students will examine values, theories, and practices that inform their actions, and reflect on how personal choices and group decisions impact local and global communities
- Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice: Students will explore and analyze identity, power relationships, and social justice in historical contexts and contemporary settings from multiple perspectives.

Specific Focus in this course:

USP 311U will be dissecting the socio-structural power dynamics in researching cities as part of urban studies and how this process has contributed/ continues to perpetuate institutional, systemic, and structural racism. This is in furtherance of PSU's general education learning goal of Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice.