

USP 540: History & Theory of Planning

Fall Quarter 2026

Class location and time: Mondays and Wednesday 3:30 to 5:10 p.m., Cramer Hall 325.

Professor: Dr. Aaron Golub, Email: agolub@pdx.edu

Office Hours: **Online** office hours are offered several times during the week arranged directly through my [appointment scheduler](#) – just click and reserve a spot – no need to email me. The scheduler will make an appointment and place it in your calendar with the meeting link in the invite. We can also speak right after class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

USP540 is a 4-credit course required for the Masters in Urban and Regional Planning degree. It introduces the history, theory, and practice of urban planning, with a focus on practices in the US. It begins with an overview of US urbanization with a focus on post-war suburbanization and contemporary urbanization challenges. That is followed by a review of foundational urban issues regarding governance, capitalist development and space. The course then reviews the history and development of the planning profession followed by series of units exploring various planning theories.

Learning outcomes: This course contributes directly to the following student learning outcomes (SLO) of the MURP program:

SLO#6: MURP students will assess the history, theory and institutional context of planning as a field

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#5: MURP students will assess forces impacting human settlements and interconnections among systems.

Teaching and learning methods: The course will include two sessions per week, outside readings and assignments. Given that the course introduces new concepts and applications in each session, it is essential to come to every class in this course.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND GRADING

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

Wednesday Lecture Sessions (Attend anywhere).

It is essential to attend or watch (in-person, at home, or watch the recorded lecture) the Wednesday lecture sessions. The lecture will happen in person, and the recorded lecture will be posted on Wednesday evening. I do urge you to **attend in person if you can** – studies show you do learn more in-person, and it is easier to ask questions and for me to read reactions to the material through non-verbal reactions. If you attend remote or watch the recording, I won’t be able to monitor the chat or respond to immediate questions in real time.

Weekly reaction ‘worksheets’

There will be weekly module reaction worksheets. These are typically short questions, yes/no or multiple choice questions related to module readings and the previous Wednesday lecture. Worksheets encourage you to prepare for the discussions on Mondays, and you will only receive half of your score if turned in after the start of

Monday class. It is imperative that everyone does the 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). 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 (or your notes) in class (on your computer, tablet, phone, hard-copy – whatever you prefer).

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

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Participating in Monday discussions based on the modules | 25% |
| 2. Weekly reading reaction worksheets | 25% |
| 3. Three major assignments | 50% |

Grading Scale:

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

COURSE RESOURCES:

A Canvas site is set up for the class. The site contains all assignments, required and optional readings, weekly worksheets, and is where your completed assignments will be uploaded.

Textbooks:

Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) (2016). Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 9781119045069

Pojani (Ed). 2023. Alternative Planning History and Theory. Routledge Taylor & Francis. ISBN 978036774389.

I've posted the entire PDF of the books on Canvas and any chapters assigned from the books are posted as individual PDFs as well. If you wish to order the books for yourself, the PSU bookstore (in the Urban Center plaza) has pre-ordered some and can get more and there are e-reader versions and hard and paperback versions available new and used on various sites such as Powell's, Ebay and Amazon.

Grading:

Assignments will be judged for their accuracy, coherence, clarity in writing, and the clarity of documentation (citing the sources you used). Make sure you cite all references and sources of information (for quotes or very specific information include page numbers). Cite in whatever style you wish – footnotes, endnotes, a reference list, etc. Each assignment will have a more specific grading rubric. All assignments should be uploaded as a Word or PDF file into the assignment dropbox on the Canvas. The final grade will be calculated from weighting the assignments by their individual point values. There are around 1000 total points in the term, so that can indicate the relative value of each assignment. For the major assignments, late assignments will be marked off 1% per day late. Late weekly reading worksheets receive only half-score.

Note on submitting work online

Proficiency in the use of CANVAS, PSU email, and other computer tools such as ZOOM or parts 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. 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 http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa_b.htm. 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

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 sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, providing academic support and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including [confidential services](#) and [reporting options](#), can be found on PSU's [Sexual Misconduct Response](#) website or you may call a Confidential Advocate at 503.894.7982 or by scheduling [online](#). You may also report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to the Title IX Coordinator, [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 and relationship violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or discrimination, I have to share the information with the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the information will be kept private and only those with a need to know will be provided with what you disclose.

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.

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.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

TSUSP Conduct and Community Standards Reporting - 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.

Bias-related incidents on campus can be reported to the [Bias Review Team](#). 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.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

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.

ACADEMIC APPEALS

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.

SYLLABUS 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	Monday (Discussions – In person)	Date	Wednesday (Lectures – Attend anywhere)
1	9/28	Course Intro - What is urban, urban history, role of planning and theory?	9/30	Urban history
2	10/5	Urban history	10/7	Fundamentals: Urban growth and capital
3	10/12	Fundamentals: Urban growth and capital	10/14	Fundamentals: Spatial inequality
4	10/19	Fundamentals: Spatial inequality	10/21	History of Planning – Part 1
5	10/26	History of Planning – Part 1	10/28	History of Planning – Part 2
6	11/2	History of Planning – Part 2	11/4	Planning theory: Rational/Incremental
7	11/9	Planning theory: Rational/Incremental	11/11	Planning theory: Communicative/Transactional
8	11/16	Planning theory: Communicative/Transactional	11/18	Planning theory: Advocacy/Equity
9	11/23	Planning theory: Advocacy/Equity	11/25	Planning theory: Radical/Insurgent
10	11/30	Planning theory: Radical/Insurgent	12/2	Looking forward

READINGS

Before each discussion session on Monday, please read the required readings below and respond to the week's reading "worksheet." To help you plan your reading, the length of each reading is noted in brackets.

Urban history [39]

Southall (1998). The city in time and space. Cambridge University Press. pp. 350-389 (Section on United States) [39]

Fundamentals: Urban growth and capital [39]

Smith (2002). New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy. *Antipode*, 34(3) 427-450. [22]

Foglesong (2016). Planning the capitalist city. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [5]

Ashton (1984). Urbanization and the dynamics of suburban development under capitalism. In: Tabb and Sawers (Eds.). Marxism and the metropolis: New perspectives in urban political economy. Oxford University Press. [12]

Fundamentals: Spatial inequality [50]

Gibson (2007). Bleeding Albina: A history of community disinvestment, 1940-2000. *Transforming Anthropology*, 15(1) 3-25. [20]

Hayden (2014) Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space. In: Gieseeking, Mangold, Katz, Low, & Saegert (Eds.). The people, place, and space reader. Routledge. [4]

Choose one:

Golub, Marcantonio & Sanchez (2013). Race, space, and struggles for mobility: Transportation impacts on African Americans in Oakland and the East Bay. *Urban Geography*, 34(5) 699-728. [26]

Pulido (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. *Annals of the association of American Geographers*, 90(1) 12-40. [24]

Extra:

Freund (2019). A Free Market for Housing: Policy, Growth, and Exclusion in Suburbia, 1940–1970. In: Colored Property. University of Chicago Press. [65]

History of Planning – Part 1 [56]

Marcuse (2016). The Three Historic Currents of City Planning. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [13]

Fishman (2016). Urban Utopias: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [30]

Weiss (1987). The Rise of the Community Builders. In: Community Builders and Urban Planners. Columbia University Press. [13]

History of Planning – Part 2 [45]

Jacobs (1962). The Death and Life of Great American Cities. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [18]

Fishman (2000). The Metropolitan Tradition in American Planning. In: Fishman, R. (Ed.). The American planning tradition: Culture and policy. Woodrow Wilson Center Press. [19]

Knight (2013). 40 years on the Oregon land use trail & still working. *The Western Planner*. [8]

Planning theory: Rational/Incremental [47]

Forester (1989). The Politics of Muddling Through. In: Planning in the Face of Power. University of California Press. [8]

Scott (2016). Authoritarian High Modernism. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [16]

Fainstein & DeFilippis (2016). Introduction: The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [13]

Flyvbjerg (1998). Rationality and power. In: Rationality and Power. Democracy in Practice. University of Chicago Press. [10]

Planning theory: Communicative/Transactional [29]

Friedmann (1993). Toward a Non-Euclidian Mode of Planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 59(4) 482-485. [4]

Westin (2022). The framing of power in communicative planning theory: Analyzing the work of John Forester, Patsy Healey and Judith Innes. *Planning Theory*, 21(2) 132-154. [19]

Forester (1985). Designing: Making Sense Together in Practical Conversations. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 38(3) 14-20. [6]

Planning theory: Advocacy/Equity [67]

Davidoff (2016). Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [16]

Bates (2018). Growth Without Displacement: A Test for Equity Planning in Portland. In: Krumholz and Hexter (Eds.) Advancing Equity Planning Now. Cornell University Press. [23]

Bates & Zapata. (2013). Revisiting Equity: The HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative. *Progressive Planning*, No 194. [4]

Manning Thomas (2016). The Minority-Race Planner in the Quest for a Just City. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [19]

Wells (2015). On Equity Planning in Cleveland, Segregation, CDCs and More — A Long Chat with Norman Krumholz, Former City Planner of Cleveland. *Cleveland Scene* (website). [5]

Planning theory: Radical/Insurgent [48]

Marcuse (2009). From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City. *CITY: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action.*, 13(2-3) 185-197. [12]

Carpio, Irazábal & Pulido (2011). The Right to the Suburb? Rethinking Lefebvre and Immigrant Activism. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 33(2) 185-208. [18]

Beard (2003). Learning Radical Planning: The Power of Collective Action. *Planning Theory*, 2(1), 13-35. [18]

Wrap--up and final discussions [44]

Campbell, Tait & Watkins (2016). Is There Space for Better Planning in a Neoliberal World? Implications for Planning Practice and Theory. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [12]

Fainstein (2016). Spatial Justice and Planning. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [11]

Campbell (2016). Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities? Urban Planning and the Contradictions of Sustainable Development. In: Fainstein & DeFilippis (Eds.) Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons. [21]