

USP612: Community, Planning and Ethics

Course Syllabus

Fall 2026

Lecturer:	Ian Carlton, Ph.D.
Office:	Urban Center Building, Suite 350
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Class date and time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30 to 7:10pm
Classroom:	Karl Miller Center Room 465
Delivery / Modality:	Hybrid (<i>predominantly in-person class sessions; some Zoom-only, live class sessions on dates to be announced</i>)
Office Hours:	By appointment (remote or in person)

Course Description:

This introductory course provides an overview of the history and theory of community development in the United States, the theory and practice of urban planning in the United States, and the ethics of civic and business practices linking the public, private, and non-profit sectors. It examines the tensions among market-based development, community action, and public intervention. Topics cover a wide range of actors, including individual households, private builders and developers, reformers, nonprofit organizations, and governments. The course will focus on plans as the outcome of political processes with specific consequences for different constituencies within the city.

Objectives of the Course:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be:

- Able to understand the basic history, theory and practice of community development and planning in the United States;
- Conversant in the language and terminology of planning practice;
- Familiar with the conceptual, practical and ethical dilemmas inherent in development;
- Capable of analyzing and interpreting community development, planning and real estate development practice in light of history, theory, and ethics.

Course Materials:

No textbook is required for the course. All readings will be available on the course Canvas site.

This course requires consistent access to functioning computer equipment and Internet access. Proficiency in the use of Canvas, PSU email, Google suite, Zoom, and other computer tools are required for this course. Please ensure you will have sufficient internet access. If participating remotely, reliance on a cellular connection may not provide reliable access to learning resources.

Method of Instruction:

This course is taught through a twice-weekly lecture/seminar scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays between 5:30 and 7:10pm. Class sessions will involve a variety of teaching methods including lectures, discussions, case studies, guest speakers, and group activities. Students are expected to participate in every session unless arrangements have been made with the instructor *prior to the class session*. Students are also expected to read all required readings and come to class prepared to discuss that week's topics with the class and the instructor. As noted below, attendance and participation will be reflected in your final grade.

This is a hybrid course. In-person class sessions will occur in room 303 of the Urban Center building. Some course sessions will be organized as video conference calls using Zoom. When joining remotely, you will join using a Zoom link shared prior to class. You should install Zoom and login using your PSU credentials so that the instructor can manage breakout groups.

Enrollment in this section serves as acknowledgement that you will need to be able to access the University's online delivery platform and any assigned supplemental platforms and may be required to participate in live video conferences, collaborate digitally with classmates, and/or be remotely proctored during examinations. These components are essential for creating an online learning environment that works with students' schedules while maintaining high academic rigor.

In-class discussions will be a critical aspect of the course and your own class notes will serve you best if you need to recall something shared during the term. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, I encourage you to compare notes with classmates in addition to thoroughly reviewing readings and discussions found on Canvas.

Attendance in person is required on the first day of class and for lectures with student presentations, except if you are not in the Portland metropolitan area. If you are unable to attend the first lecture in person, please contact the instructor before the start of the quarter. If you are unable to attend student presentations in person, please contact the instructor regarding your situation.

Assignments and Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the assignments and examinations listed below. Each assignment's score will be weighted for your final grade by the percentages listed next to the item. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas. All assignments are due prior to class on the dates identified below. The following represent summaries of the assignments; further guidance will be provided during class sessions and/or via Canvas.

- **TIMELY COMPLETION:** Assignments, exams, and other materials should be submitted in a timely fashion based on the deadline set by the instructor. Grades for discussions, assignments, and the final exam will be penalized 10% for being late and 10% for each day it is late thereafter (out of 100%). Extensions without penalty may be granted at the instructor's discretion, under the following conditions: (a) an 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.
- **ONLINE SUBMISSIONS:** All assignments and the final exam require uploading files to Canvas and 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. 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 zero (0%). Acceptable file formats are MS Office formats (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint), PDF files, or other formats specifically specified in assignment instructions. Note that assignment briefs may specify a required file format.

GRADES

Students will be graded on a relative performance basis and using the following scale:

A-Grade	A	94 to 100%	C-Grade	C+	78 to 79.9%
	A-	90 to 93.9%		C	72 to 77.9%
B-Grade	B+	88 to 89.9%		C-	70 to 71.9%
	B	82 to 87.9%	D-Grade	D+	68 to 69.9%
	B-	80 to 81.9%		D	62 to 67.9%
D-				60 to 61.9%	
			F-Grade	F	Below 60%

Assignment 1: Development Profile (5%)

Purpose: To understand and describe an ongoing or recently completed development project, including the actors involved.

Task: For this assignment, you will identify and summarize the details of a controversial development project in Portland (or make a special request to evaluate a project outside of Portland). You will describe the project and identify the players involved, including those with financial interests in the project, those opposed to the project, and others supportive of the project. The key is to identify a development project that involves some level of public disagreement (hint: almost all projects involve controversy, but only some make it into the public record).

Deliverable: Slides

Due: 10/12 at 4:30 (prior to class session)

Assignment 2: Planning Regulation Analysis (10%)

Purpose: To learn about the regulatory environment that governs a property, specifically, the provisions of zoning, the most ubiquitous land use control.

Task: For this assignment, you will use Portland Maps (www.portlandmaps.com) and other resources to describe the policy constraints applicable to the property analyzed in Assignment One. You will investigate the zoning provisions that govern this property and compare these regulations to the prior land use(s) and the ongoing development.

Deliverable: Slides

Due: 10/26 at 4:30 (prior to class session)

Assignment 3: Neighborhood / Community Profiles (10%)

Purpose: To understand and describe a neighborhood which provides the context for a development project and the basis for engaging local residents.

Task: For this assignment, you will research the location of the development you evaluated in Assignments One & Two. You will elaborate on the communities relevant to the project and discuss the context-specific interactions between planning, community, and real estate development.

Deliverable: Slides

Due: 11/16 at 4:30 (prior to class session)

Assignment 4: Development Ethics Presentation (10%)

Purpose: To understand the ethical considerations of real estate development.

Task: For this assignment, you will prepare a brief presentation about the development case study you have created over Assignments One through Three. Your presentation will highlight the most salient ethical concern associated with the development. You will submit the presentation on Canvas and be prepared to present your findings to the class.

Deliverable: Slides

Due: 11/30 at 4:30 (prior to class session)

Capstone Assignment (15%): There will be a final assignment covering course themes. The assignment will be available following the last lecture and will be submitted via Canvas no later than the end of the course's final exam period.

Readings and Canvas discussions (29%): Graded reading responses on Canvas will be an essential part of the course. Readings will be assigned prior to most class sessions. All readings

are available online or via PDFs provided on the course Canvas site. No books are required for the course.

Students who do the readings will be prepared for subsequent class sessions. Class time will be dedicated to discussing and applying the readings, not reviewing the readings. Canvas discussions will be due the same days as class sessions at 4:30pm.

The contents of your Canvas discussion posts should address one or more of the following topics:

- Share connections between the assigned reading(s) and your personal academic and/or professional experiences
- Ask questions about parts of the assigned reading(s) that you find confusing or conflicting with your personal and/or professional experience, potentially identifying items that you would like to discuss with your classmates during an upcoming class session
- Connect an idea from the assigned reading(s) to prior discussions in class or prior discussion posts about your personal and/or professional experience

Guidance for Canvas discussion posts:

1. Write with purpose, furthering your understanding and the knowledge of others.
2. Reference readings and other class materials to support your points.
3. Contribute long before the final deadline to allow for further discussion.
4. Write clearly and concisely.
5. Keep focused on the topic and be aware that humor and sarcasm seldom come across as intended in an online environment.
6. Be supportive and considerate when replying to others' posts. Avoid jargon and inappropriate language. If you disagree with a post, do so with respect and provide clear rationale or evidence to support your alternate view.
7. Try to use correct spelling and grammar and proofread your submissions (don't create a new or duplicate post to correct errors).
8. Return to the discussion to review comments and respond.

Attendance, Participation, and Effort (21%):

You will be expected to attend class sessions (in person whenever possible) and productively participate, particularly during discussions of assigned readings. Veterans must comply with attendance standards set by the VA. Athletes must provide their list of class conflicts before their first absence.

At several points throughout the term there will in-class activities that highlight key themes from that day's topic. These activities may include written work that will be turned in at the end of the class period. Your participation in class discussions and the written output of in-class activities will be used to assess participation.

When you are in class, you will maintain an engaged and non-disruptive presence. During this course, all voices will be heard. The course requires professional standards of respect, tolerance, and consideration for one another. Any guest speakers will be addressed professionally.

As noted above, should a student need to miss a class session, please inform the instructor in advance of the class session. This advance knowledge is essential for the instructor to prepare productive breakout groups and other in-class activities.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Read+Canvas Discussion Before Class Session	Turn in Before Class Session
Week 1- Sept 28	Course introduction	N/A	N/A
Week 1- Sept 30	Pre-Planning	Hall (1996), "The City of Dreadful Night"	Discussion
Week 2- Oct 5	Post-Planning	Swan (1920), "Does Your City Keep Its Gas Range in the Parlor and Its Piano in the Kitchen?"	Discussion
Week 2- Oct 7	Visions and Dreams	Rohe (2009), "From local to global: One hundred years of neighborhood planning"	Discussion
Week 3- Oct 12	Legal Basis for Planning	Duerksen et al (2009) The Citizen's Guide to Planning: Chapter 7	Discussion + Assignment 1
Week 3- Oct 14	Why Plan?	Jacobs and Paulsen (2009), "Property Rights: The Neglected Theme of 20th-Century Urban Planning"	Discussion
Week 4- Oct 19	Planning Tools	Duerksen et al (2009) The Citizen's Guide to Planning: Chapter 5	Discussion
Week 4- Oct 21	Development Process	Duerksen et al (2009) The Citizen's Guide to Planning: Chapter 6	Discussion
Week 5- Oct 26	Oregon Planning	Adler (2013), "Introduction to Oregon Plans" + Seltzer (2004), "It's Not an Experiment: Regional Planning at Metro"	Discussion + Assignment 2
Week 5- Oct 28	Achieving Goals	Downs (2005), "Smart Growth: Why We Discuss It More than We Do It"	Discussion
Week 6- Nov 2	Outcomes	Gibson (2007), "Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment 1940-2000"	Discussion
Week 6- Nov 4	Who Plans	Arnstein (1969), "A Ladder of Citizen Participation"	Discussion
Week 7 – Nov 9	Community Development	Green and Haines (2012), "The Role of Assets in Community-Based Development"	Discussion
Week 7 – Nov 11	NO CLASS – Veteran's Day	No class session or readings	N/A
Week 8- Nov 16	Three E's	Campbell (1996), "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities?"	Discussion + Assignment 3
Week 8- Nov 18	Equity	American Planning Association (2019) Planning for Equity	Discussion
Week 9- Nov 23	Developer Trust	Einstein et al (2022) "Developing a pro-housing movement"	Discussion
Week 9- Nov 25	NO CLASS – Day b/f Thanksgiving	No class session or readings	N/A
Week 10- Nov 30	Final Presentations	Prepare to present	Assignment 4
Week 10- Dec 2	Final Presentations	Prepare to present	N/A
Week 11- Dec 7	Final Exam Period	No in-person session. Turn in Final Assignment via Canvas prior to the end of exam period - 5:45-7:35pm	Final Assignment

Student Resources and Policies

USE OF GENERATIVE AI

All submissions in a course, whether in draft or final form, must be the student's own work and must clearly acknowledge (typically through citations) any source(s) that contributed to the work product. The use of generative AI programs, such as ChatGPT or others, must be clearly cited if used in completing an assignment. This includes for example, but is not limited to, creating or editing any text, presentations, images, audio, or video. Students are responsible for all content submitted, including that created by generative AI programs, and the citation must describe the program used and the date retrieved. For examples of how to cite Generative AI using APA style or MLA style please refer to the citation guidelines of the PSU library (<https://guides.library.pdx.edu/cite/AI>). The submission of content created by generative AI for an assignment without a citation is a potential violation of the PSU Code of Conduct.

No course material provided on Canvas or class may be uploaded to generative AI programs such as ChatGPT and other programs. Furthermore, the use of Otter.ai or similar recording plug-ins is not allowed at this time. Students should check with the instructor if they have any questions about the use of generative AI.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

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 integrity is a vital part of PSU's educational experience.

The [Student Code of Conduct & Responsibility](#) is the university's policy on academic dishonesty. Remember to cite anything you use from someone else and to also cite the use of AI. Please use the resources provided by the [PSU library](#) if you have any questions on how to cite. For more information on academic misconduct, please refer to <https://www.pdx.edu/dean-student-life/academic-misconduct>. A confirmed violation of that code in this course may result in failure of the course. University authorities have the ability to escalate matters to the level of expulsion. Make sure you keep electronic copies of all your assignments also outside of Canvas so that you can produce them should the need arise.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please review the Student Conduct Code ([Student Code of Conduct & Responsibility](#)). As the instructor of this course, the University has given me the authority to require compliance with these policies. If you do not comply with these requirements, I may ask you to leave the classroom, or I may need to cancel the class session entirely.

In addition, failure to comply with these requirements may result in a referral to the Office of the Dean of Student Life to consider charges under PSU's Code of Conduct. A student found to have violated a university rule (or rules) through the due process of student conduct might face disciplinary and educational sanctions (or consequences). For a complete list of sanctions, see Section 14 of the [Student Code of Conduct & Responsibility](#).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend class regularly, either in person or remotely. Veterans must comply with attendance standards set by the VA. Athletes must provide their list of class conflicts before their first absence.

ACCOMMODATIONS

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 ([Disability Resource Center](#)) can be reached at (503) 725-4150 or drc@pdx.edu. If you already have accommodations: Please contact me to make sure that I have received your Faculty Notification Email, and to discuss your accommodations.

INCOMPLETE GRADES POLICY

Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when these criteria are met:

- Required satisfactory course completion/participation
- Reasonable justification for the request
- Not sought as a substitute for a poor grade
- Presence of a written agreement (such as an incomplete contract)
- A plan in place to resolve Incomplete status

The Office of the Registrar's website has [the full Incomplete Grades policy](#).

TITLE IX

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.

STUDENT HEALTH AND COUNSELING (SHAC)

Mental Health Emergencies: If you are having a mental health emergency and need to speak with someone immediately, come in to SHAC at ANY time during SHAC hours of operation. After hours and weekends call the Multnomah County Crisis Line 503.988.4888.

PSU CARES: Connects students with resources when they are experiencing distress or other concerns that might impact their personal or academic success.

Call PSU CARES: 503-725-4422

Email PSU CARES: askdos@pdx.edu

BASIC NEEDS AT PSU

It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance:

Basic Needs Hub: basicneedshub@pdx.edu

Portland State Food Pantry: psufp.com; pantry@pdx.edu

The Writing Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>

Financial Wellness Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/student-financial/financial-wellness-center>

LECTURE RECORDINGS

We may use technology and Zoom AI for virtual meetings, recordings and transcriptions in this course. The use of such technology is governed by FERPA, the Acceptable Use Policy and PSU's Student Code of Conduct. A record of all meetings, recordings and transcripts is stored securely by PSU. Lectures with guest speakers and case studies will not be recorded.

Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings or transcripts outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.** All class recordings will be deleted at the end of the quarter.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The following list of tools encompasses the technology you will encounter in this course if you are joining remotely. It is your responsibility to obtain access to these in advance of your first assignment.

- Functional webcam
- Microphone (internal or USB)
- Google Chrome browser
- Reliable internet connection

If you have technical questions/problems related to using Canvas or obtaining an ODIN account, contact the OIT Help Desk at help@pdx.edu or by calling (503) 725-4357.