

USP 313U Syllabus – Spring 2012

Course Info: Urban Planning – Environmental Issues*
Location: Cramer Hall 71 Course Number (CRN): 64153
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:50PM (4 Credit Hours)

Instructor:	Vivek Shandas Urban Studies & Planning Tel: 503.725.5222 Email: Use D2L Account	<u>Office Hours & Location:</u> Wednesdays, 4 – 5 PM; (and by appointment). Urban Center (URBN) 370L
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Course Description and Objectives

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) describes a planner’s role as developing “long- and short-term plans to use land for the growth and revitalization of urban, suburban, and rural communities, while helping local officials make decisions concerning social, economic, and environmental problems.” While such definitions imply that social, economic, and environmental issues in planning are separate, this course takes an integrated perspective by studying the relationship between humans, their settlement patterns, and the effects of human activity on planetary resources. This course attempts to address three questions regarding humans and their environment:

- (1) What is known about the effects of human activities on environmental conditions?
- (2) How do changes in environmental conditions affect human preferences and decisions?
- (3) How can institutions guide the growth of human settlements and its effects?

To address these questions we will explore current theories of sustainable urban development, the historical context of sustainability discourse, contemporary case studies of ‘model’ urban developments, and the implications for and impacts to human well-being.

The course is designed to meet several learning objectives, consistent with the Community Development undergraduate program and University Studies campus curriculum. The learning objectives include:

- Content Knowledge: Develop a conceptual understanding of the historical, cultural, and ecological characteristics of human settlements;
- Critical Thinking: Describe the meaning and validity of written, verbal, and visual information;
- Team-work: Engage collective knowledge through effective group discourse; and
- Communication: Express ideas in concise and clear form.

In addition this course provides the framework for bridging classroom learning with community participation through addressing ‘real-world’ issues in urban and regional planning. This year we will have the opportunity to work with an emerging approach to urban and regional planning: *EcoDistricts* – more information about this concept will be presented in class.

* *Working Syllabus: While the learning objectives and core requirements will not change over the term, this syllabus may undergo a few minor modifications to assignments, order of presentations, and timing of topics. Modifications will be described in class and students are required to be up-to-date on any changes. Updated: April 2, 2012*

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Required Reading and Materials

- (1) Girardet, Herbert, 2008 (*second edition*). Cities, People, Planet: Urban Development and Climate Change, John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- (2) Articles provided to you in-class or to be downloaded from on-line sources

Course Structure

This course is divided into lecture and interactive discussion sections. Each course meeting begins with a lecture describing historical developments, theoretical foundations, and characteristics of human settlements. Lecture topics are divided into four modules or groups: (1) human settlement patterns; (2) dimensions of sustainability; (3) tools for assessing sustainable development; and (4) social and cultural context of sustainability. Interactive discussion sections consist of student presentations and in-class exercises. Presentations by students are on a specific reading, while group-work sessions enable students to collectively apply lecture and reading materials to address 'real-world' challenges in urban and regional planning. The attached 'Course Outline' table identifies significant dates and discussion topics.

Evaluation Criteria

You will be evaluated on a 1000 point scale, divided into the following criteria:

Exams (400 points, 200/exam):	40%
Journal Entries (300 points):	30%
Final Project (200 points):	20%
Course Participation (100 points):	10%
TOTAL (1000 POINTS)	100%

Late work will be automatically marked down unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Regular class attendance and participation are necessary and expected. Points will be deducted if a student is absent from more than one class. Participation includes: involvement with class discussions (includes listening), asking substantive questions, addressing instructor's questions, working effectively in teams, and sharing relevant news and information.

Exams, Journal Entries, and Final Project

To pass this course you will need to pass two exams, complete journal entries, produce a final project, and participate in class discussions and exercises. Course work is cumulative, assuming that in-class exercises will be helpful in passing the exams and completing the final project. In-class exercises will be given to you each week, and expected to be completed at the end of the class period.

Exams: The aim of the exams is to ensure that you are on track with the basic learning objects in this course. A total of three exams will cover all the major concepts you've learned in class. The exams require that you apply what you've learned (in lectures, readings, and exercises) by addressing several short-answer questions. These exams will be in-class, closed-book, and take place on **April 25** and **May 16**. If you've come to class, paid attention, and participated in the exercises you will have no trouble with the exams.

Journal entries: An essential process in learning about urban planning and environmental issues is reflecting on classroom discussions. Accordingly, one portion of this course requires that you address weekly questions related to lecture and reading topics. On each Wednesday you will be given specific questions to help direct your journal entry, with the expectation of submitting the journal entry the following Wednesday – one week for completing the journal entry. Entries are limited to 2 pages,

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unless otherwise noted, and submitted online using the course management system (described below). Journal entries will be evaluated on content (e.g. have you drawn on substantive evidence to support your claims?), organization (e.g. have you addressed the question in a logical and consistent manner?) and clarity (e.g. have you written your essay in clear English with attention to grammar?). Every effort will be made to provide thoughtful and constructive feedback on weekly assignments, although given the size of this course, each entry will contain three point scores, which reflects the three components of evaluation (content, organization, and clarity).

Final Project: The final project puts into practice the old adage: “*Teach me and I may forget, show me and I may not remember, involve me and I will learn.*” The aim, as a result, is to learn about innovations in urban development by conducting research on a regional environmental planning issue. Course participants will focus on the emerging concept of EcoDistricts. These projects will be helpful for understanding the application of theories and methods to a ‘real world’ challenge in urban and regional planning. By approximately the third week of classes, several teams will form within the EcoDistrict concept, and will be responsible for completing a final project paper and presentation. In addition, weekly updates and journal entries will allow teams to discuss findings, and maintain momentum to complete the final project by the due date. Below is a detailed description of each stage in the final project, and due dates for each phase. While the due dates below are to keep groups ‘on-track’, *only the final report and presentation will be graded – the dates below will be used for providing feedback to groups during the development of the project.* Consider the outline below a suggestion for organizing the final report, and groups are free to develop an outline that best suits their interests. The 200 points attributed to this project will be divided according to your written (150 points), and final in-class presentation (50 points).

- Project Idea – April 16
 - Brief background on the overall concept of EcoDistrict or Climate Action Plan;
 - Describe dimensions of each, including the subsections of each plan
- Background Description – April 30
 - Provide the context of the application of the EcoDistrict or Climate Action Plans
 - Why are EcoDistricts and Climate Plans being considered?
 - What social, economic, and ecological goals do each address?
 - What similar actions are being taken in other regions, and how does this differ?
 - How has the media addressed EcoDistricts or Climate Action Plans?
- The Players – May 7
 - Describe who is involved in the EcoDistricts and Climate Action Plan efforts
 - How many groups (or individuals) are involved?
 - What are their interests?
 - How do the groups/individuals involve themselves?
- Data Collection and Analysis – May 21
 - Do the history and involvement of specific groups/individuals impact the framing of the issue?
 - Describe how the social, economic and ecological characteristics are intertwined?
 - Do we need additional information regarding this issue? If so what, if not, why not?
 - How do you see the EcoDistrict or Climate Action Plan becoming real – what needs to be done, what is missing, and how can each ensure success?
 - What limited your analysis of this issue?
 - If you were the manager of the EcoDistrict or Climate Action Planning efforts how would you move this agenda forward? Can you support your claims?
- Conclusions – May 28
 - Describe how this issue defines sustainability, what steps are taken to achieve sustainability, and what advice you would give the project manager to achieve ‘better’ results. Address the following questions:

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- What is known about the effects of human activities on environmental conditions?
- How do changes in environmental conditions affect human preferences and decisions?
- How can institutions guide the growth of human settlements and its effects?
- **Presentations – June 4 & 6 (regular class time)**
 - 10 minute presentations (8 min. + 2 min. panel review)
 - Focus on the following elements of your project:
 - Background, involvement, analysis, future, conclusions
 - Presentations will be evaluated on content (40%), organization (40%), and effective communication (20%).
- **Final Report – June 11, 2 PM (submitted online)**
 - The final report should include the following sections:
 - *Introduction/Background* - What should the general audience know about the subject matter to help them understand EcoDistricts or Climate Action Planning? Describe when this issue came to the attention of the general public, what social, economic, and ecological characteristics are specific to this issue, what has been done in other geographic areas to address similar issues, and how have the media addressed this issue?
 - *Involvement* – Describe who is involved – the number and nature of the groups (or individuals) – and their interests? How do the groups/individuals involve themselves?
 - *Analysis* – Do the history and involvement of specific groups/individuals impact the framing of the issue? Describe how the social, economic and ecological characteristics are intertwined, what limited your investigation, and if we need additional information about EcoDistricts or Climate Action Plans to move the agenda forward. What limitations do you see that EcoDistricts and Climate Action Plans have in the way of addressing sustainability?
 - *Conclusions* – Describe how EcoDistricts or Climate Action Plans address sustainability, what steps are taken to achieve sustainability, and what advice you would give the project manager to achieve 'better' (or more effective) results. Address: What is known about the effects of human activities on environmental conditions? How do changes in environmental conditions affect human preferences and decisions? How can institutions guide the growth of human settlements and its effects?
 - In terms of length, reports should be no more than 20 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, includes figures). Reports will be graded on how well they have addressed each of the above questions with specific attention to content, organization, and clarity.

Academic Integrity

Portland State University (PSU) takes academic integrity very seriously. To falsify or fabricate the results of one's research; to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own; or to cheat on an examination or project corrupts the essential process of higher education. Students failing to adhere to these principles of academic integrity will be penalized (e.g. reduction of points, fail the course, etc.). For further information please refer to PSU's student conduct code (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html>) or consult the instructor if you are unsure what constitutes a breach of academic integrity.

Disabilities

Every effort will be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Please notify the instructor by the first week of the course so that any necessary accommodations can be arranged. More information can be found at: http://www.pdx.edu/iasc/drc_faculty_resources.html

Web-Based Course Management

We will be using *Design to Learn (D2L) web-based course management system*. You will need to use DTL for several course requirements including: updates to the syllabus, finding supplemental readings, submitting assignments, and communicating with the instructor, TA or other course participants. Using your PSU account name and password, participants in this course can logon to D2L at: <https://d2l.pdx.edu/>.

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Course Outline

MODULE	MODULE OBJECTIVES	Week	Week & Date	Due on Monday	Monday	Due on Wednesday	Wednesday	Final Project Schedule						
1	Explore human settlement pattern, and approaches to sustainable development	1	April 2 & April 4		Course Overview; student background and interests; cognitive mapping exercise	Supplemental Readings (available online)	Historical perspectives of urban development	Explore your interests and how they are linked to issues of urban and regional planning						
		2	April 9 & 11	Select media coverage of one environmental planning issue; Text 1-40	Problems and Perspectives of Urban Development 1; EcoDistricts 2	Journal Entry 1; Textbook 40 - 64	Problems and Perspectives of Urban Development 2; EcoDistricts 2	Group formation and identification of one aspect of an EcoDistrict or Climate Action Plan of interest						
2	Examine dimensions of urban sustainability	3	April 16 & 18	Final Project Idea; Text 64 - 107	Problems and Perspectives of Urban Development -- Climate Action Planning	Journal Entry 2; Textbook 108 - 130	Economic Development and Eco-Technical Systems	Develop outline for addressing all characteristics of the EcoDistrict or Climate Action Plan						
		4	April 23 & 25	Refined Project Idea; Text 131 - 152	Transportation Concepts and Climate Action Planning; Midterm review	Prep for midterm (No Journal Entry Due)	Midterm Exam 1	Identify contacts in the community to learn about the project -- interview if necessary						
3	Apply tools for monitoring and assessing sustainable development	5	April 30 & May 2	Background Description; Supplemental Readings on Blackboard	Liveable Cities	Journal Entry 3; Textbook 153 - 174	Green Building	Research newspaper articles, chronology, and general background of the project						
		6	May 7 & 9	Final Project 'The Players'; Text 175 - 214	Urban Ecology and Environmental Planning	Journal Entry 4; Textbook 236 - 253	Energy and Waste							
		7	May 14 & 16	Final Project Data Collection; Textbook 215 - 235	Carbon in Cities; Water and Wastewater; Midterm review	Prep for midterm (No Journal Entry Due)	Midterm Exam 2	Identify who is involved, their roles, positions (interview if necessary), and knowledge gaps						
		8	May 21 & 23	Final Project Analysis; Textbook 254 - 273	Environmental Justice and Social (In) Equality; Air Quality	Journal Entry 5; Supplemental Readings on Blackboard	Case Studies: Local and Regional Examples	Analyze project details in terms of urban sustainability indicators, and literature						
4	Integrate social and cultural context of urban sustainability	9	May 28 & 30	Final Project Conclusions; Supplemental Readings on D2L	Memorial Day (no class)	Journal Entry 6; Textbook 307 - 316	Case Studies: International Examples	Finalize report, and prepare public presentation						
		10	June 4 & June 6	Prepare for Final Project Presentations	Final Project Group Presentations 1	Prepare for Final Project Presentation	Final Project Group Presentations 2	Present final project to the class and community members!						
			June 11 (2PM)	Final Project Reports due on D2L										
			Apply what you learned this Summer!											