

## **Urban Planning and Sustainable Environments** URST-3500 (4 Credits)

### **International Honors Program** **Cities in the 21st Century**

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

#### **Course Description**

The relationship between urban planning, sustainability, and urban space is complex and contradictory. The aim of the Urban Planning and Sustainable Environments (UPSE) course is to critically engage these complexities and contradictions to unpack the challenges and possibilities of urban planning in creating more socially just and sustainable cities. The four cities explored in this course –each taught by a local faculty living in and engaged with that place– offer their own unique insights into how planning processes manifest themselves spatially and what they mean for attempts to create more socially just and inclusive urban spaces.

Since planning emerged as a need during early industrialization in Europe, it has evolved into a dynamic and contested practice across the world. The establishment of planning as a profession in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and the United States is inherently modernist in form and intention. Early ideals of urban planning were focused on protecting “the public interest” through technical and rational interventions, with considerations of race, class or other forms of difference entirely absent. Good city design and planning were largely seen as physical interventions, directed by the master plan, that could create amenity and order.

Approaches to urban planning have evolved considerably since the heyday of the modernist paradigm. An entrepreneurial, economic growth-oriented approach to planning stands –often uneasily– alongside attempts to incorporate a diversity of voices and inclusive spatial interventions towards more sustainable urban forms, spaces, and types of mobility. Contemporary planning approaches also seek to understand the underlying sociocultural and economic processes that shape urban form, and the limitations of the blueprint planning tradition in responding to these realities. Recognition of the need to incorporate the voices of actors with differing agendas, and a deeper engagement with place and power, reflect efforts of urban planning professionals to create more sustainable and socially just urban environments.

Yet this shift towards social justice and sustainability in planning is occurring very unevenly within and across cities around the world. On the one hand, the recently adopted New Urban Agenda (NUA) sees urban planning as a key operational enabler that leads cities towards becoming more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. Increasing amounts of public and private funding are being directed towards planning to address the impacts of climate change. On the other hand, the efficacy of planning in practice to enable decent urban livelihoods and more sustainable cities is questionable. Many cities still use traditional planning approaches that do not address the real needs of racialized, low income and

otherwise marginalized residents. The power of dominant forces in shaping urban space for economic and political gain is instead what predominates in countless cities around the world.

While each city we visit offers its own unique insights into the possibilities and challenges of urban planning in creating more sustainable and just urban environments, the overarching theme that applies to all is the gap between the plan and what actually transpires in urban space.

The **following three themes** are used to interrogate planning processes and urban realities:

- **The evolution of urban form in relation to racial, structural and labor dynamics**

Each city presents an opportunity to gain insight into how city planning systems have shaped space, how racial and structural dynamics impact urban form and how plans have failed, succeeded, or further entrenched the socio-economic processes that make place. This is also an opportunity to expose you to the tools and methods of planning and their limitations. Each city provides an opportunity to explore how global economic processes, racial dynamics, and local political processes relate to the built form.

Urban development processes often have either unintended or deliberate consequences for vulnerable residents, such as gentrification, a concept to be explored in depth in several cities. Processes of displacement often connected to gentrification raise questions of spatial justice, and the economic processes that drive city development, and allow us to explore the roles of infrastructure, work, and housing provision in driving socio-spatial change.

- **The role of infrastructure in city making and the production of urban space**

Networked infrastructure like water and sanitation or social facilities such as libraries, schools and parks are key elements composing urban spaces. Coordinating the location and maintenance of utilities, incorporating transit into spatial planning – as will be explored in sessions in both Jackson and Cape Town – and shaping neighborhood public space are just a few of the tasks of urban planners. Infrastructure planning is also one of the key ways in which planners can have material and symbolic impacts on and respond to the structural dynamics that shape the production of cities.

- **Sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation in urban planning**

Understanding sustainability, urban resilience and the impacts of climate change requires a spatial, social, and ecological engagement with cities. These concepts and approaches have, furthermore, become buzzwords and often lack a critical social justice perspective. In several cities we will consider questions of urban sustainability, both discursively and in practice. In New York and Cape Town we will unpack the existing and potential social and physical impacts of climate change and how urban planning addresses these questions (or not). We will also explore the environmental and spatial justice implications of urban interventions to address climate change, discussing emerging trends around how urban greening and green infrastructure can contribute to processes of gentrification.

### **Course Approach and Learning Outcomes**

There are two learning principles that inform the approach to this course. The first is *experiential learning*. This occurs through in-country deep engagement via site visits, guest lectures, and case studies, experiences that expose you to the ‘everyday’ experiences of urban dwellers in different contexts. With this nuanced understanding of context and firsthand exposure, you gain more than academic insight into the concepts and issues presented in the UPSE course. We seek to enable reflective learning by examining our own mindsets and values in relation to urban processes and dynamics.

The second principle relates to *comparison*. This represents a critical methodological moment for learning about cities and how sets of issues manifest in different contexts. It also confronts the limitations of best practice learning, and the situational realities of people, place and politics. By building on contextual commonalities (urban violence, social fragmentation, income inequalities, cultural diversity) and exploring geographic specifics (local spatial planning regimes, governance frames, local cultural dimensions) of the different cities, you are able to be discerning and pragmatic in how you define key issues, and think through solutions.

The learning outcomes intended with the UPSE module are therefore as follows:

- To understand the role of city planning in relation to contemporary urban dynamics, and the factors that impact the relationship between the making of plans and their implementation;
- To gain critical insight into the social, economic and ecological dimensions of urban sustainability and climate change; and
- To develop a critical awareness of how socio-cultural context and political economies inform local planning processes and implementation.

The methods of instruction and sharing will include field visits, case studies and classroom interaction.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Students will be evaluated on three assignments over the course of the semester. The UPSE local faculty will evaluate the assignment collected in a particular city, with lead Faculty moderating. Each assignment will make up one third of the final grade for the course.

An expanded description of each assignment will be handed out at the beginning of each country program, including the criteria for evaluation. They are summarized below.

City	Assignments	Focus	Weight
Jackson	Photo essay	Suburbanization, white flight/supremacy and redlining	35%
New York	Letter to the editor or a government official	Climate change and social justice	35%
Cape Town	Case study	Food justice	30%

## Course Policies

**Attendance and Participation:** All students are expected to be present at every class session, with the only exceptions being illness. Unexcused absences and habitual lateness *will* result in penalties reflected in your grade. Please inform the instructor if tardiness is anticipated. **All students are expected to come to class on time.** You are also expected to read in anticipation of lectures – required and recommended readings for each class are listed in this syllabus.

**Late or non-submitted work:** In keeping with IHP policy, papers handed in late will drop one point per day (e.g. 1 point out of the 33.3 mark), unless permission is granted otherwise. Due dates of assignments will be provided by each instructor in each city. If assignments are not submitted, students receive a

grade of zero.

**Plagiarism:** All students are responsible for having read the IHP statement on plagiarism. Students are advised that the penalty for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Program Director, subject for approval by the Executive Director."

### Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

### **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

### **Course Sessions and Readings**

*\*Please be aware that topics and site visits may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

Topics covered in each session will draw on site visits, lectures, and other activities, in addition to the assigned readings. The order of the sessions is provisional and may be rearranged to respond to activities or opportunities presented in each country program. Each session will explore a particular debate. A full description of assignments and instructions will be shared upon arrival in each country.

### **Typical course structure in each city**

The teaching module of UPSE uses the city as a living lab to demonstrate competing visions of urban spaces, lived experiences and formal planning aspirations. This module introduces key concepts about theory and practice of urban planning, looking at specific dynamics or processes in a city while keeping

the overarching goals of sustainability and equity (justice) in sight. Each country case is interrogated on its own merits with the issues explored *in situ*.

## **JACKSON, MISSISSIPI, USA**

### **SESSION 1 Introduction to UPSE: From racial capitalism towards radical abolitionist planning practices and ecologies?**

This first UPSE session contextualizes both the discipline of urban planning as well as urban sustainability frameworks from past to present. Both are explored from their origins embedded in histories of racial capitalism and colonial frameworks towards newer, more progressive and radical thinking that deeply challenges the status quo in cities. These include traditions of radical and insurgent planning, and emerging thinking/acting around abolitionist climate justice and ecologies. Such concepts and approaches set a framework for subsequent UPSE sessions in Jackson, New York, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

- Yiftachel, O. 1998. Planning and Social Control: Exploring the Dark Side. *Journal of Planning Literature*
- Miraftab, F. 2009. Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1): 32-50.
- Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans. "Exploring the nexus: Bringing together sustainability, environmental justice and equity." *Space and polity* 6.1 (2002): 77-90.
- Heynen, N. 2016. Urban political ecology II: The abolitionist century. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(6): 839-845.

### **SESSION 2 Suburbanization, white flight/supremacy and redlining**

This session explores how American cities and urban spaces were transformed in the post World War Two period through white flight and ballooning suburbanization. We will discuss the role that redlining – a racist practice of defining areas where banks would avoid investments based on community demographics e.g. the presence of African American residents – played in Jackson and other cities' urban development. This class underlines the role that urban planning played in processes of suburbanization, white flight and redlining, critical not only to understand the historical urban development of American cities like Jackson and New York, but also to begin to understand spatial planning under apartheid in the South African cities we will visit.

- Ross, C.L. and Leigh, NG (2000). Planning, Urban Revitalization, and the Inner City: An Exploration of Structural Racism. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 14(3): 367-380.
- An, B., Orlando, AW. and Rodnyansky, S. (2019). The Physical Legacy of Racism: How Redlining Cemented the Modern Built Environment SSRN <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3500612>
- Hargrove, M. 2009. Mapping the 'Social Field of Whiteness': White Racism as Habitus in the City Where History Lives. *Transforming Anthropology*, 17(2), 93-104.

### **SESSION 3: Sustainable mobility, transportation justice: cars, buses and transportation racism**

As critical approaches to address urban sustainability and climate change, an increasing number of cities are investing in more sustainable forms of mobility: public transportation, congestion charging, cycle lanes and pedestrianization of car-dominated spaces. This session explores questions of transportation

and mobility justice in these new interventions and the unequitable historical legacies they are fighting against in Jackson and beyond.

- Jakowitsch, N. and Michelle E. 2004. "Just Transportation." *Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism & New Routes to Equity*, Ed. B. Robert, G. Johnson, and A. Torres. Cambridge: South End. 161-77.
- Cahen, C. (2016). "More Than Paint on Concrete": The Winding Path toward Bike Equity. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 7(3), pages 1-9. (On Moodle)
- Sheller, M. (2018) Theorizing mobility justice. *Tempo social*, 30(2), <https://doi.org/10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2018.142763>

## **NEW YORK, USA**

### **SESSION 4: Planning, land use, and zoning in NYC – power dynamics and competing interests**

This session will provide an introduction to land use, zoning and urban planning in New York City. It will briefly review the major functions and history of planning and land use in the city, followed by an examination of the discretionary rezoning process in New York City (known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure or 'ULURP') as a lens on the contestation and competing priorities inherent in planning and the processes and actors that are attempting to shape the city's future.

- Agnotti, T. (2016). Land Use and Zoning Matter. In *Zoned Out! Race, Displacement, and City Planning in New York City* (pp. 18 - 44). New York, NY: Terreform.
- Stein, S. (2019). The Rise of the Real Estate State. In *Capital City* (pp. 13 - 41). Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books.
- Woo, R., & Mangin, J. (2009). *What is Affordable Housing?* New York, NY: Center for Urban Pedagogy.
- Woo, R., Mangin, J., Gasper, C., & Torrey, M. (2017). *What is ULURP?* New York, NY: Center for Urban Pedagogy.

### **SESSION 5: Gentrification and beyond: processes, perspectives, prospects**

This session will unpack the different processes behind and ways of understanding gentrification, from the emergence of the concept (Ruth Glass) to more recent explorations of concepts like global and planetary gentrification. We will also discuss the relationship between gentrification and displacement, and emerging discussions about the inadequacies of the term gentrification to address colonial and racial historical injustices. Finally, we will explore grassroots forms of resistance and city strategies that have emerged to combat processes of gentrification in New York City and beyond.

- Lees, L. (2012) The geography of gentrification: thinking through comparative urbanism, *Progress in Human Geography*, 36:2:155-171.
- Roy, A. (2017). "Dis/Possessive Collectivism: Property and Personhood at City's End" *Geoforum*, 80, A1-A11.
- Valli, Chiara 2015. A sense of displacement: Long-time residents' feelings of displacement in gentrifying Bushwick, New York. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39(6): 1191-1208.

### **SESSION 6: Urban sustainability, climate change and resilience planning: Unpacking PlaNYC**

Cities are increasingly starting to plan and take action to address climate change and sustainability challenges. But how do climate adaptation, mitigation and other resilient/green interventions relate to social and spatial justice/equity considerations in urban areas? This session provides an overview of the rise of the urban sustainability and climate change agenda and introduces key concepts to think critically about the climate emergency. We will apply this critical thinking to PlaNYC (New York City Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability), long-term urban sustainability plan launched in 2007 that has been lauded internationally.

- Campbell, S. (1996). "Green cities, growing cities, just cities?: Urban planning and the contradictions of sustainable development. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62.3: 296-312.
- Bulkeley, H., Edwards, G.A.S., and Fuller, S. (2014). Contesting climate justice in the city: Examining politics and practice in urban climate change experiments. *Global Environmental Change* 25, 31-40.
- Fainstein, S. (2018). Resilience and justice: planning for New York City. *Urban Geography*, doi:10.1080/02723638.2018.1448571
- PlaNYC

## **JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

### **SESSION 7: Spatial planning and apartheid in Johannesburg and Cape Town**

This lecture will introduce students to the unique nature of apartheid city planning, and how the political ideology of apartheid is still inscribed into South African cities. It will also discuss the current nature of urban planning in Johannesburg and Cape Town, with students encouraged to draw parallels with what has been learned to date of questions of race in urban planning in the United States.

- Herbert, C. and Murray M. 2015. Building from Scratch: New Cities, Privatized Urbanism and the Spatial Restructuring of Johannesburg after Apartheid. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39(3): 471-494.
- Turok, I. and Watson, V. (2001): "Divergent Development in South African Cities: Strategic Challenges Facing Cape Town". *Urban Forum*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp.119-138.

## **CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

### **SESSION 8: Gentrification and spatial justice in Cape Town**

This session explores some of the property markets trends in Cape Town in more detail, in particular the impact of gentrification in parts of the inner city. The aim is to interrogate the tension that emerges from neighborhood transformation and the more specific need to enable the development of affordable housing in the inner city.

- Development Action Group. 2018. Re-imagining Woodstock and Salt River: A Community-centred approach to neighbourhood regeneration. Cape Town: Development Action Group.
- G. Visser, & N. Kotze. (2008). The state and new-build gentrification in central Cape Town, South Africa. *Urban Studies*, 45(12), 2565-2593.
- L. Wenz. (2012). Changing tune in Woodstock: Creative industries and local urban development in Cape Town, South Africa. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 5, 16-34.

## **SESSION 9: Public transport and urban development in Cape Town – prospects for restructuring through infrastructure-led spatial planning?**

This session will focus on the relationship between public transport and urban settlement patterns in Cape Town. A significant proportion of the population of the city is reliant on public transport on a daily basis, and it is thus a key part of the city's public infrastructure. The City of Cape Town has recently adopted a new development rationale and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) approach to urban planning through the 2018 Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework Review. As part of this, the municipality is attempting to reform the public transport system through the implementation of a new bus system and an Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN). The public transport system includes so-called "formal" and "informal" services, the latter of which responds quickly to new urban development, and acts as an essential service, particularly to the urban poor, yet few formal provisions are made for this system through the City's various transport and planning policies. Key discussions in this session will explore the extent to which public transportation, and the informal economy can contribute to urban restructuring and what the prospects are for that in Cape Town.

- City of Cape Town. (2018). Chapter 4: Directing Spatial Transformation. *Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework Review*. Cape Town: City of Cape Town.
- Schalekamp, H. (2017). Lessons from building paratransit operators' capacity to be partners in Cape Town's public transport reform process. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*. 104: 58 – 66
- City of Cape Town. (2016). Chapter 2: Problem Statement. *Transit Oriented Strategic Framework*. Cape Town: City of Cape Town. 8-11.

## **SESSION 10: Understanding the spatial impacts of climate change (shock?) and how to plan for it**

The recent drought in Cape Town has forced all levels of government to reevaluate their existing policy responses to climate 'shock'. This session looks at the need to consider climate change in spatial planning; using the City of Cape Town's current policy framework to explore the issue from an interdisciplinary perspective. The emphasis is on the spatial impacts of climate change as well as the livelihood implications. How could/should spatial planners address these issues through practical policy interventions resulting in tangible results? Various arguments in relation to recent framings of climate change will be presented and discussed as a class.

- Joubert, L. and Ziervogel, G. 2019. Day Zero: One City's Response to a Record-Breaking Drought. Creative Commons: June 2019. Available: [www.dayzero.org.za](http://www.dayzero.org.za)
- P. Mukheibir and G. Ziervogel. 2007. "Developing a Municipal Adaptation Plan (MAP) for climate change: the city of Cape Town." *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 19, No.1. pp 143-158
- E. Wilson. 2006. "Adapting to climate change at the local level: the spatial planning response." *Local Environment*, Vol. 11, No. 6. pp 609-625.

## **SESSION 11: Cape Town UPSE case study set up**

The final UPSE session will be dedicated to setting up the case study work that constitutes the Cape Town assignment.