

SPRING 2017 -- UENV 3510
Planning Sustainable Cities



Day/Time: Mon, 3:50-6:30 pm
Location: 66 W. 12th St., 502

Faculty: Joseph Heathcott <joseph@newschool.edu>
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Purpose of the course

In the time it takes you to read this syllabus, 3000 people will arrive as newcomers to a city. Over the course of one year, 75 million people will make this journey. And while cities do not cover the planet, their ecological, economic, and cultural footprints extend to every corner of the globe. Our future is an urban one. Yet for centuries, we have viewed our cities as apart from nature, and therefore subject to environmental sacrifice in the name of industrial progress. This view has led to disastrous consequences, including pollution, species extinction, resource depletion, social inequality, and climate change. Over the past fifty years, however, planners, activists, civic leaders, and ordinary citizens have taken an increased interest in the urban environment, first in terms of its ambient quality, and more recently with an eye toward ecological resilience. Thus, while cities often magnify the worst aspects of environmental inequality and destruction, they also concentrate the talent, creativity, networks, and governance required to confront these challenges. If we seek a more sustainable future, then, we must look to the urban systems we have created.

This reading intensive seminar introduces students to issues of urban sustainability across time, space, and scale. We examine efforts by planners, activists, policy makers, and citizens to improve the urban environment over time, as well as the role cities might play in the creation of a more sustainable planetary future. While we look to current practices in the field, we are especially concerned to untangle the multiple, often competing discursive, political, and governance systems that shape urban sustainability work. A central interest of the course is how notions of environmental sustainability relate to questions of social justice, the share of resources, and the distribution of wealth. Students engage readings and other materials from a wide variety of fields, including social sciences, humanities, arts and design. In the end, the course challenges students to reflect on how they might integrate the tools and concepts from this course into their own work.

Course objectives

The main goal of the course is for students to become well-versed in the concepts, debates, and approaches to planning sustainable cities. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and integrate diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives
- Assess the impact of cities on climate, biodiversity, resources, and other factors
- Assess the role and potential of cities as generators of sustainable practices
- Critically analyze scholarly texts for structure, assumptions, argument, evidence
- Demonstrate proficiency in one or more specific areas of sustainability planning
- Communicate effectively with an audience appropriate to the topic
- Present a clear voice as a writer, scholar, and critic

Assignments

The course is organized around a common roster of readings and assignments designed to forward knowledge on a collaborative basis. The success of the course depends on everyone's active involvement. Students will be responsible for checking the Canvas course site frequently, and for timely completion of assignments.

Participation. A seminar is a self-organizing space of collaborative learning based on principles of shared purpose and mutual respect. Students should embody these principles by preparing for class, contributing to discussion, and engaging one another on a civil basis. Disagreements and debates should be expressed in ways that advance rather than hinder the learning process. We should avoid absence, tardiness, and disruptive actions because these diminish our opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding from each other. Following these guidelines, we can create a supportive and potent learning environment. (100 points, 20% of the total grade).

Reflective Practice. Each student will write a reflective practice paper of 5-7 pages. This paper is an opportunity to dive more deeply into a particular topic within the broad rubric of urban sustainability. The main purpose of this exercise is for you to reflect on how the issues and approaches raised in the course might shape your own practice now or in the future. Whether you see yourself as an artist, social researcher, scientist, poet, theorist, political activist, or some combination thereof, this paper opens up a space for critically informed reflection. Papers should reference course materials and discussions, and integrate them into a coherent narrative about your practice. (100 POINTS, 20% of total grade).

Dossier. Every week during Part Three of the course, students will report on planning projects relevant to the topic at hand. Each student will complete two such reports, so that at the end of the course we will have a dossier of ongoing projects in cities around the world. The reports will take both written and oral form; students will load the written report onto Canvas for everyone to read, and will give a brief (10 minute) presentation of the project during class. We will discuss the format for the reports in class. (50 POINTS x 2 = 100 POINTS, 20% of total grade).

Exams. There are two take-home exams. Each exam consists of short answer identification and essays. The short ID's are worth 20 points and the essays 80 points, for a total of 100 points per exam. The essay exam will test your ability to apply your knowledge gained in the course. Simply marshaling facts is not enough. You will be required to explain, contextualize, and interpret complex material. You will need to integrate insights gained from all of the readings and lectures and discussions into your essays. Indeed, the exam is predominantly about comprehension of course materials. The second exam will be heavily weighted toward the second half of the course. (100 POINTS x 2 = 200 POINTS, 40% of total grade).

Grading

I assume that students at The New School are capable of excellent work; however, I will grade each of you on performance rather than potential. Grades will be assigned along a standard academic scale as follows:

- A-/A/A+ Reserved for exceptional work that goes above and beyond the expectations and requirements set forth in the assignment. Student demonstrates substantial achievement in the areas of critical thinking, interpretive connections between texts and ideas, analysis, and flexibility of argument. The argument or point of view that is offered is consistent throughout the paper, and governs the use and interpretation of all examples and source material. “A” papers are very well organized, and are free of grammatical and editorial errors.
- B-/B/B+ These are very good papers and presentations. The work offers a sustained and meaningful approach to a critical endeavor and demonstrates the author’s ability to offer a unique insight, to ask questions of primary or secondary source material, and/or to set up a debate between texts or points of view. The author’s point of view is clear and an argument is sustained fairly consistently throughout the paper. “B-/B/B+” papers/presentations are logically organized, and also respond to the assignment in thoughtful and distinctive ways.
- C/C+ These are average papers and presentations. They will show some success in engaging with the assignment. The student demonstrates an ability to apply key terms or ideas from other texts, to analyze data, to engage in critical thinking, or to pose an interesting problem or question. However, the work does not build substantially on the initial question, or does not follow it through to the conclusion. There might be a variety of possible ideas put forward but with little commitment, coherence, or real insight. “C/C+” papers may also have significant organizational, grammatical and/or editorial errors. These errors impede the reader’s ability to understand the author’s point, or result in a product that seems repetitive or circular.
- C-/D The paper/presentation adheres to all of the minimum guidelines of formatting, page-length, or other terms of the assignment. Written work or audiovisual presentations receiving a “C-/D” grade may be a simple restatement of fact or commonly held opinion. These kinds of papers/presentations also will tend to put forward obviously contradictory or conflicting points of view, or may be unclear. “C-/D” papers may also have serious organizational and grammatical errors in evidence, which may impede the reader’s ability to understand the author’s point.
- F Failing grades are given for required work that is not submitted, for incomplete final projects, or for assignments that fail to follow even the basic requirements (without prior notification and approval). Make-up work or completion of missed assignment may be permitted only under exceptional circumstance with the approval of the instructor.

Course Policies

I want all of you to be successful in this course. The policies listed here provide the structure within which you can ensure success. You are responsible for all assignments, even if absent.

Attendance and Participation

Students will receive a demotion of one-half of a letter grade for each unexcused absence. The only excuses for absence are: an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician; a family emergency, e.g. serious illness; observance of a religious holiday. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Electronic Devices

Students should silence their phones. Laptops are permitted for taking notes, reviewing readings, and making presentations. However, students should not use e-mail or social networking websites during the class. This is only allowed in case of emergencies.

Food and drinks

Students may eat in class, but should respect other students and avoid disrupting the discussions. There will be a mid-point break that students can use for snacks and drinks.

New School Policy on Academic Integrity

It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

The New School's Learning Center offers many resources for students to help with writing. For information on grammar, style, organization, and proper forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2010), *The Craft of Research*, 3rd edition (University of Chicago Press, 2008), or *A Manual for Writers*, 7th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Student Disability Services

Students requesting any accommodations should meet with Jason Luchs in the office of Student Disability Services, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter to you to bring to your professors. Mr. Luchs's office is located in 80 Fifth Avenue, 3rd floor. His direct telephone number is (212) 229-5626, extension 3135. You may also access more information through the University's web site.

Class schedule

PART ONE: TERMINOLOGIES

WEEK ONE, 01.23: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

WEEK TWO, 01.30: -- CITIES

Materials: Kaika, Maria. "Nature as the Urban Uncanny." *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*. Routledge 2004.

Cronin, William. "The Wealth of Nature: Lumber." *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Norton 1992.

Lee, Kai. "An Urbanizing World." *State of the World 2007*. Worldwatch Institute, 2007.

WEEK THREE, 02.06: - SUSTAINABLE -

Materials: Shiva, Vandana. "Resources." *The Development Dictionary*. Wolfgang Sachs, ed. Zed Books, 1992.

Ageyman, Julian. "Introducing Just Sustainabilities." *Introducing Just Sustainabilities: Policy, Planning, and Practice*. Zed Books, 2013.

Rees, William and Mathis Wackernagel. "Urban Ecological Footprints: Why Cities Cannot be Sustainable, and Why They Are The Key to Sustainability." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 16, 4-6 (1996).

WEEK FOUR, 02.13: PLANNING --

Materials: UN-HABITAT, chapters 3 and 4, *Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements*. United Nations 2009.

Campbell, Scott. "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities? Urban Planning and the Contradictions of Sustainable Development." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 62, 3 (1996).

Roy, Ananya. "Urban Informality: The Production of Space and the Practice of Planning." *Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning*. Rachel Weber and Randall Crane, eds. Routledge, 2012.

Regional Plan Association
<http://www.rpa.org>

PlanNYC
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc/html/home/home.shtml>

PART TWO: INTEGRATION

WEEK FIVE, 02.20: CONCEPTS

President's Day. No Class Meeting.

Students should read the following texts. We will discuss them on week 7. This would also be a good opportunity to get caught up on readings that you might have missed in preparation for the first exam.

Materials: McPherson, Timon. "Urban Ecosystem Services for Resilience Planning and Management in New York City," *Ambio* 43, 4 (2014).

Bulkeley, Harriet and Michele Betsill. "Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Multilevel Governance and the 'Urban' Politics of Climate Change." *Environmental Politics* 14, 1 (2005).

WEEK SIX, 02.27: APPLICATION

First Exam will be posted on Mon, Feb 27th and is due Mon, Mar 6th

For week six we will meet at the Newtown Creek Waste Water Treatment Facility for a tour. Students should familiarize themselves in advance with the facility's web site, which also provides directions:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental_education/newtown_wwtp.shtml

PART THREE: THEMES

WEEK SEVEN, 03.06: HOUSEHOLD

Materials: Jenkins, Virginia. "The Growth of the American Lawn Care Industry." *Lawn: The History of an American Obsession*. Smithsonian Books, 2004.

Maniates, Michael. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World. *Confronting Consumption*. Princetn, T. et al, eds. MIT Press, 2002.

Simpson, Andrea. "Who Hears Their Cry? African American Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice in Memphis, TN." *The Environmental Justice Reader*. Joni Adamson et al, eds. University of Arizona Press, 2002.

Clean Air Trust "Personal Emissions"
<http://www.cleanairtrust.org/waste.html>

Household Waste Calculator
<http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/ecoconsumer/calculator.asp>

EPA Carbon Footprint Calculator
<https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/>

WEEK EIGHT, 03.13: BUILDING

Readings: Lessard, Marie and Guadalupe Milián Ávila. "A Contribution to Urban Sustainability: Analco, a Historic Neighbourhood in Puebla, Mexico." *Urban Design International* 10 (2005).

Preservation Green Lab. Realizing the Energy Efficiency Potential of Small Buildings. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2013.

Rebel Architecture: Greening the City
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgQoVbEX8-A>

e2: Affordable Green Housing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxI-42U5_Io

WEEK NINE, 03.20: SPRING BREAKING

Spring Break- No classes on 03.20

If you are traveling for spring break, check out the web site of your destination locality's planning office to see if they have a sustainability plan or if sustainability is integrated into their existing plan. What resources does the city offer the public in terms of sustainability?

If you are staying in New York, spend some time looking over the city and State planning office web sites for resources related to sustainability planning, particularly in solid waste operations, coastal management, and conservation work.

WEEK TEN, 03.27: LAND

Materials: Wolch, Jennifer et al. "The Forgotten and the Future: Reclaiming Back Alleys for a Sustainable City." *Environment and Planning A* 42 (2010).

Ben-Joseph, Eran. "A Lot in Common." *ReThinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking*. MIT Press, 2012.

Dunham-Jones, Ellen. "Retrofitting Social Life Along the Commercial Strip." *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbia*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Brooklyn Queens Land Trust.
<http://www.bqlt.org>

Community Land Trusts, Urban Land Reform, and the Commons.
<http://commonstransition.org/community-land-trusts-urban-land-reform-and-the-commons/>

Draft / Notes on Reflective Practice Due Mon, Mar 27th

WEEK ELEVEN, 04.03: INFRASTRUCTURE

- Materials: UN-HABITAT, chapter 8, Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements. United Nations 2009.
- Simone, AbdouMalique. "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg." Public Culture 16, 3 (2004).
- Orff, Kate. "Shellfish as Living Infrastructure." Ecological Restoration 31, 3 (2013).
- Street Films, "Ciclovía." Transportation Alternatives, 2008.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELa5CHsUepo>
- Extreme Engineering: Boston's Big Dig. Film, 2016.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIQQVfgW_qg
- Holland's Barrier to the Sea, Film 2014.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUqrBV4SiqQ>

WEEK TWELVE, 04.10: ENERGY

For week ten we will meet at the Queens Botanical Garden for a tour. Students should familiarize themselves with the facility's web site, which also provides directions.

- Materials: UN-HABITAT, chapter 6, Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements (United Nations 2009).
- Beatley, Timothy. "Envisioning Solar Cities: Urban Futures Powered by Sustainable Energy." Journal of Urban Technology 14, 2 (2007).
- Paulson, Linda. "Biogas Seen as Waste Solution in Mexico." RWL Water, 28 May 2015.

WEEK THIRTEEN, 04.17: FOOD

- Materials: Losada, H. et al. "Recycling of Solid Wastes in Mexico City in Livestock and Agricultural Production Systems as a Sustainable Alternative." The Journal of Field Actions 5, 5 (2011).
- Black, Rachel. "Eating Garbage: Socially Marginal Food Provisioning Practices." Consuming the Inedible: Neglected Dimensions of Food Choices. Jeremy M. MacClancy et al, eds. Bergham Books, 2009.
- Gottlieb, Robert and Anupama Joshi. "A New Food Politics." Food Justice. MIT Press, 2010.
- Five Borough Farm Project. Design Trust for Public Space.
<http://designtrust.org/publications/five-borough-farm/>
- Majora Carter, Greening the Ghetto, Lecture.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQ-cZRMHfs4>

Reflective Practice Paper Due Mon, Apr 17th

WEEK FOURTEEN, 04.24: WATER

- Materials: Swyngedouw, Eric. "The City in a Glass of Water." Social Power and the Urbanization of Water. Oxford, 2004.
- Wong, T. and R. Brown. "Integrated Urban Water Planning." Resilient Sustainable Cities. Leonie Pearson et al, eds. Routledge, 2013.
- Multiple authors, "Mexico City's Water Crisis: From Source to Sewer." The Guardian, 12 November 2015.
- STEPS Center, "Water and Justice." Short Film, 2011.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vH_ZOXYciI
- NYC Watershed Protection
http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/watershed_protection/index.shtml

WEEK FIFTEEN, 05.01: BIOPOWER

- Materials: Beatley, Timothy. "Preserving Biodiversity: Challenges for Planners." Journal of the American Planning Association 66, 1 (2000).
- Douglas Tallamy, "A Call for Backyard Biodiversity." American Forest magazine (2009).
- "Can Cities Save Bees?" The Nature of Cities magazine (2016).

PART FOUR: PERSPECTIVES

WEEK SIXTEEN, 05.08: ROUNDTABLE REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE

WEEK SEVENTEEN, 05.15: FINAL EXAM

Second Exam Distributed Mon, May 8th and Due Mon, May 15th