URBAN PLANNING 357
THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
Tues/Thurs 3:30-4:50
TBH Room 223

The planning practice requires an understanding of the process for developing land. In this class students learn about all the considerations that must go into the process of developing land. This includes an understanding of the physical conditions of land, knowledge about what infrastructure is needed to develop land, and what planning and financial decisions need to be considered to develop land. The course is structured to give students a glimpse into the land development process as experienced by the practicing planner and practicing developer. Most lectures and examples given in class are provided from real-life examples here in Champaign. Several field trips are planned to give a first-hand look at how zoning and land development happens. Students get an opportunity to learn how local planners and developers handle land development cases. Finally, the course allows for some creative thinking as students apply what they learned to propose a development for a given site in Champaign. This final piece of work can become a key ingredient to your growing student portfolio.

This course is broken into four parts and has four main goals. They are:

1. To teach students about **Zoning, Land Use** and **Site Plans** for development. You will get familiar with the type of site plans typically reviewed by practicing planners. This is Part 1.

2. To teach students about the **Subdivision of land** and the **Infrastructure** needed for development. You will get familiar with the type of subdivision plans typically reviewed by practicing planners. This is Part 2.

3. To teach students about the **Roles of the Planner and the Developer** in the process of land development. This includes understanding financial considerations in developing land. This is Part 3.

4. To allow students to create a development proposal for a given site. Students act as a Developer by submitting a **development proposal** in response to a Request for Proposals issued by the City. You will use the skills and knowledge in the first three parts to do this. This is Part 4.

My overall goal for this class is that you finish it with a much better understanding of what practicing planners do in regard to land development. Many former students comment to me that they are actually doing some of the things we learned in class in their first job as a planner (what a concept!)
COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS
My goal with this class is to provide you with practical information and share my experiences as a practicing planner as it relates to land development. I hope that this inspires you more about the planning profession. I also intend for my class to be a little different from most of your theory-based classes. I do this through a variety of lectures, field trips and working assignments. There are no tests, just assignments that prove you can apply to concepts taught in class. My goal is for you to learn in this class primarily from the lectures and assignments. If you commit the effort to engage in class and do the work, you will most likely enjoy the topics and do just fine on the assignments.

Your participation is very important in a course of this type. You will not be able to do the work without coming to class and learning about the concepts. Attendance will be taken at each class and it is part of your grade. Some days will consist of lectures/discussion. Other days (near the end of the semester) will be workshop days, in which you will be free to work on your final project, meet with me for help, or perform field work. Most of the time, we will meet the entire length of the class. I expect you come on time, be ready to engage and be prepared to stay the whole time.

READINGS / VIDEOS
This course focuses more on lectures and project assignments rather than reading assignments. However, there are several short readings and many short videos students will be assigned to read/watch prior to certain classes, mostly early in the semester. In most cases, I will ask you to read staff reports prepared by planners to City Council. This allows you to get a little more familiar with how practicing planners write and present information. There is no official textbook for the class and all readings/videos will be made available to you. They are listed under the various days in the syllabus schedule below.

The only materials you will need to purchase for this class is a set of highlighter markers which will be used early in the semester for the assignments involving reading site plans. Information for that will be given as class begins.

GRADING
The class will total 900 points. Each assignment comes with a detailed Project Prompt that will be reviewed before each assignment. Following is the contribution of each assignment toward your final grade:

**Part 1 – Zoning, Land Use and Site Plans**
1-1 Paper on Positive and Negative Effects of Zoning (100 pts)
1-2 Reviewing a Site Plan – Residential (100 pts)
1-3 Reviewing a Site Plan – Commercial (100 pts)
(300 points total for Part 1)

**Part 2 – Infrastructure and Subdivision Plans**
2-1 Right-of-Way and Street Width Scavenger Hunt (50 pts)
2-2 Creating a Simple Subdivision (50 pts)
2-3 Reviewing a Subdivision Plat – Bristol Place Subdivision (100 pts)
(200 points total for Part 2)

March 10, 2020
Part 3 – Perspectives and Financial Considerations in Land Development

3-1 Paper: Planner/Developer Perspectives (100)
3-2 Preparing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Analysis (50)
(150 points total for Part 3)

Part 4 – Preparing a Development Proposal – Responding to an RFP

4-1 Development Proposal (225)
(225 points total for Part 4)

Attendance and Participation (25 points total)

Reminder: There are no exams for this course – it’s completely assignment/project-based.

GRADING STANDARDS

Below are the grading standards for assignments and your final grade. Please note that I do use “pluses” and “minuses” as described below.

90+%  Outstanding performance, exceeds expectations, minor errors do not affect overall product. 90%-92% is an A-. I don’t use A+

80-90%  Good performance, meets expectations, minor mistakes may affect some aspects of the product, technically and conceptually correct. 80%-82% is a B-, 88%-89% is a B+

70-80%  Fair performance, does not fully meet all expectations, several technical errors, concept is evident but flawed, solution only minimally satisfies requirements of the problem. 70%-72% is a C-, 78%-79% is a C+.

60-70%  Poor performance, barely meets expectations, reflects lack of understanding for the requirements of the problem, serious conceptual and technical errors. 60%-62% is a D-, 68%-69% is a D+.

<60%  Failure, does not meet expectations, unacceptable performance or no performance. No pluses or minuses with a grade under 60%. A grade of “F” will be given.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 5% of the project’s point total for each day the assignment is late. Unless otherwise noted in the Project Prompt, all assignments will be required to be uploaded to Compass. The most common excuse given for late assignments is that the student tried to upload it to Compass but it didn’t work. If there is reason to believe that there is a technical issue with Compass preventing you from uploading your assignment, an exception may be made. Otherwise, expect a reduction in project points. Also, just because you tell me an assignment will be late doesn’t mean a late penalty won’t apply. If there is a valid reason for a late assignment and we
discuss that in advance, I may allow it. I reserve the right to adjust this policy on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Attendance and Participation total 25 points of your final grade. Sometimes, this can be the difference in a full letter grade. For attendance, I excuse two absences – no questions asked - over the course of a semester. Arriving late to class or leaving early can also negatively impact your attendance grade. For participation, students that are engaged and participate regularly will receive higher point totals for participation. Students that are not engaged and do not participate will receive less.

**OFFICE HOURS**

On occasion, you may need help on an assignment, want to discuss grades, or just get career advice. Since I am teaching this course as an Adjunct Instructor, holding set office hours is not practical for me. I do have a full-time job at the City of Champaign. However, I can always make myself available by appointment. Typically after class works best for me. Of course, you can email me at any time and I will respond promptly. Note that during Part 4 there are many class periods where we will have time to meet one-on-one. You are welcome to email or text me with any questions you have as the course goes along. If you text, please give your name with your text.

**ASSIGNED READINGS / VIDEOS**

Please see the attached list of readings and videos. This list is a bit fluid and may change as the semester unfolds.

**DAY BY DAY COURSE SCHEDULE**

Please see the attached day-by-day course schedule. The schedule can also be a bit fluid as unforeseen circumstances can require me to adjust things a bit. This is especially true for days where I hoped we can do a field trip, but weather isn't cooperating. As the schedule changes, a revised schedule will be provided in Compass.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Every effort will be made to work with students with unusual or unexpected obligations outside the course. Students with disabilities or special needs who require any accommodations to facilitate full participation and completion of the course should contact me as soon as possible.

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

From the University Student Code, Article 1, Part 3: Students enrolling in the University assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution and suitable to members of the academic community. Students are responsible for knowing their rights and responsibilities as found in the student code at https://studentcode.illinois.edu/

**COUNSELING CENTER**

The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. The Counseling Center provides individual, couples, and group counseling. All of these services are paid for through the health services fee. The Counseling Center offers primarily short-term counseling, but we do provide referrals to the community when students could benefit from longer term services. https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/
Day by day Course Schedule
Assigned Readings and Videos
Assignments and their Due Dates

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Tuesday, January 21 / First Day of Class
- Introductions
- Overview of Course Syllabus and Expectations
- Exercise on understanding how land development works

PART ONE
ZONING, LAND USE AND SITE PLANS

Thursday, January 23

- THE EVOLUTION OF ZONING AND THE IMPACTS OF ZONING REGULATIONS
  FORMAT: Lecture
  Building on what you have most likely have already learned in other urban planning classes, this lecture will review what zoning is all about, and how it has shaped the design of our cities. The lecture will also look at the planner’s role with zoning regulation.

Preparing for this class:

VIDEO: YouTube – Understanding Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning - (2:50), 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDzbrSvZ7Xs&t=5s

VIDEO: YouTube – How Zoning Laws Are Holding Back America’s Cities. Institute for Humane Studies - (7:38), 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pq-UvE1j1Q

VIDEO: YouTube – Why so many suburbs look the same. Vox - (7:19), 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWhYlu7ZfYM&t=1s

VIDEO: YouTube – Where Manhattan’s grid plan came from. Vox - (6:15), 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaIOfgz8FVY

VIDEO: YouTube – How Minneapolis became the first to end single-family zoning. PBS NewsHour - (10:36), 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mWE9UJDRlw
Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:

**Assignment 1-1:** Paper: The Good and Bad of Zoning Regulation  
Assignment Due on Thursday, January 30th at 3:30PM

Tuesday, January 28

- **REVIEWING SITE PLANS FOR ZONING AND DESIGN**  
  **FORMAT:** Lecture  
  In this class students will learn how planners review site plans for development. This will include an explanation of the differences between design standards, design guidelines and zoning regulations. The discussion will touch on the process for site plan review and approval.

Preparing for this class:


Thursday, January 30

- **ZONING AND THE “IN-TOWN” NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHAMPAIGN**  
  **FORMAT:** Lecture  
  This lecture will highlight the recent issues with zoning faced by Champaign city planners in the “In-Town” neighborhood. Emphasis will be given to recent changes proposed by planners in wake of a controversial project at 402-408 W. Church Street.

Preparing for this class:

  **VIDEO:** CGTV, Champaign Government Television – City Council Meeting on May 23, 2017 – Standards for Multi-Family Development in the In-Town Zoning Districts (Starts at 4:54 and ends at 1:18), 2017  
  [https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4115?channel=1&seekto=294](https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4115?channel=1&seekto=294)

Tuesday, February 4

- **FIELD TRIP (if warm enough) to the Champaign In-Town Neighborhood**  
  **FORMAT:** Walking Tour  
  This class will meet at the Champaign Public Library, 200 W. Green Street, followed by a walking tour to see some of the impacts of zoning in the In-Town Neighborhood, including 402-408 W. Church Street. This class serves as a foundation for looking at the site plan for an infill development. If the weather is not warm enough for the tour, we will have to do it as a lecture at DURP.
Preparing for this class:

VIDEO: CGTV, Champaign Government Television – Plan Commission Meeting on July 17, 2019 – Planned Development for 402-408 W. Church Street (Start from beginning. Ends at 2:19), 2019
https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4717?channel=1

Thursday, February 6

• REVIEWING SITE PLANS FOR ZONING – RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL
  FORMAT: Interactive
  Similar to the class on Tuesday, students will learn how to read and interpret a site plan for a residential development. The class will be interactive with a working example of residential site plans that were submitted in Champaign.

Preparing for this class:

READING/VIDEO: TBD

Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:

Assignment 1-2: Site Plan Review: Commercial and Residential.
Assignment Due on Thursday, February 18th at 3:30PM

*** END OF PART ONE ***

PART TWO
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUBDIVISION PLANS

Tuesday, February 11

• ALL ABOUT SEwers – Sanitary AND storm
  FORMAT: Lecture
  Sanitary sewers and handling the drainage of water are perhaps the two biggest drivers of development. If those two issues cannot be addressed, there isn’t going to be a development. In this lecture students will learn the difference between sanitary and storm sewers and how they work to ensure safe, sanitary and orderly development.

Preparing for this class:

Thursday, February 13

- **Right-of-Way, Streets and Easements**
  FORMAT: Lecture
  Planners need to understand the difference between public right-of-way and private property as well as how easements facilitate utilities needed for development. Understanding the hierarchy of streets is also important. This lecture breaks down the details and shows how they are accounted for on site plans. In this class students will also learn how to use the Champaign County GIS Interactive Public Map.

  **Preparing for this class:**

  **READING:** Planning the Built Environment. The Hierarchy of Streets and Street Capacity; Pages 87-103

  **Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:**

  **Assignment 2-1:** Right-of-Way and Street Width Scavenger Hunt (50 pts)
  **Assignment Due on Tuesday, February 18th at 3:30PM**

Tuesday, February 18

- **SUBDIVIDING LAND AND SUBDIVISION PLATS**
  FORMAT: Lecture
  This class will present the history of land subdivision and how it is important to land development. The class will also look at subdivision plats and understand the planner’s role in reviewing subdivision plats.
Preparing for this class:

**READING:** The Subdivision and Site Plan Handbook, Listoken and Walker. Chapter 1; Background: Evolution of Subdivision Regulation. Pages 129-166.

Thursday, February 20

- **CREATING A SUBDIVISION PLAT**
  
  **FORMAT:** Interactive
  
  This interactive session will work through a scenario where a large tract of land is to be subdivided and planned for development.

**Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:**

**Assignment 2-2:** Creating a Subdivision Plat (50 pts)

**Assignment Due on Tuesday, March 3rd at 3:30PM**

Tuesday, February 25

- **THE STORY OF BRISTOL PLACE RESIDENCES**
  
  **FORMAT:** Lecture
  
  Bristol Place Residences is a new developing neighborhood in north Champaign. It involved a detailed planning process along with a substantial zoning and subdivision process. The entire project touches on many aspects of planning, community development and public engagement. This lecture will provide highlights of the project with emphasis on the land development aspects.

Preparing for this class:

**READING:** Champaign Staff Report to the Plan Commission: Preliminary Planned Development for Bristol Place. June 16, 2017. Read entire Memorandum and Attachments.

**VIDEO:** Champaign Plan Commission Meeting on Bristol Place Planned Development (starts at 4:03) June 2017.

[http://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4140?channel=1](http://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4140?channel=1)

**VIDEO:** Champaign Connection - Bristol Place Neighborhood Process (starts at 7:04). December 2018

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00nVQo4JFpU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00nVQo4JFpU)
Thursday, February 27

- **TOUR OF BRISTOL PLACE RESIDENCES**  
  FORMAT: Field Trip  
  Weather permitting, we will visit the site and see the development progress. Logistical details to be provided.

---

**PART THREE**  
**PERSPECTIVES AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN LAND DEVELOPMENT**

---

Tuesday, March 3

- **PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT: THE PLANNER AND THE DEVELOPER – PART ONE**  
  FORMAT: Guest Lecture: Lacey Rains Lowe, Senior Planner, City of Champaign  
  Planners are good at curating a vision for the future of the community. Ideally, this is done with the input of residents through a well-vetted process. However, can those visions become a reality? After all, planners aren’t the ones building the developments, the developers are. This lecture will present what planners typically consider when thinking about development in the community.

*Preparing for this class:*

**READING:** Curtis Road Interchange Master Plan. City of Champaign.

**VIDEO:** Curtis Road Interchange Master Plan Study Session with Champaign Plan Commission. October 19, 2016. CGTV Online. (31:12)  
[http://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/3955?channel=1](http://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/3955?channel=1)

*Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:*

- **Assignment 2-3:** Reviewing a Subdivision Plat – Bristol Place Subdivision (100 pts)  
  **Assignment Due on Tuesday, March 10th at 3:30PM**

Thursday, March 5

- **PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT: THE PLANNER AND THE DEVELOPER – PART TWO**  
  FORMAT: Guest Lecture: Mike Mallon, Draper and Kramer
Following-up on the lecture from Tuesday, this lecture will pick-up with looking more closely at what developers need to consider when thinking about investing in a project. This is always more than just what the planner envisioned but also what works from a market demand and financial standpoint.

Preparing for this class:

READING/VIDEO: TBD

Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:

Assignment 3-1: Paper: Planner/Developer Perspectives (100 points)
Assignment Due on Tuesday, March 24th at 3:30PM

Tuesday, March 10

• UNDERSTANDING HOW TAX INCREMENT FINANCING WORKS
  FORMAT: Lecture
  Tax Increment Financing is a tool used by planners to improve blighted areas. TIF creates a funding stream through the collection of taxes that can be used not only for public improvements (such as streets and sewers) but as incentive for private development. In this lecture students learn the basics of TIF and how it works.

Preparing for this class:

VIDEO: YouTube: How does a TIF “Tax Increment Financing” work? (2:49), 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH4ulBcj-Y0

VIDEO: YouTube: Curious City: Untangling TIFs with Sharpies (7:06), 2013
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmx4ryRc2Gc

READING: Crain's Chicago Business. Here's when TIFs can and should be used. Jonathan Snyder. June 2019.
https://www.chicagobusiness.com/node/852551/printable/print


Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:

Assignment 3-2: Preparing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Analysis (50 points)
Assignment Due on Tuesday, March 24th at 3:30PM
Thursday, March 12

- NO CLASS
  I will be out of town so there will not be class this day.

Tuesday, March 24

- UNDERSTANDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) AND THE STORY OF 401 NORTH NEIL STREET, CHAMPAIGN
  FORMAT: Lecture
  Requests for Proposals (RFP) is a typical method for cities to solicit development interest on property that is publicly owned. This lecture will discuss RFPs and present an example of a development ready to begin in Champaign as a result of an RFP process. Understanding RFPs is important for Part 4 of the class.

Preparing for this class:

READING: RFP for 401 North Neil Street. City of Champaign

VIDEO: Champaign City Council Meeting on 401 N Neil Request for Proposals (starts at 35:55 and runs to 2:05)
https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/3980?channel=1&seekto=2155

Thursday, March 26

- THE STORY OF BRINGING COSTCO TO CHAMPAIGN (FIELD TRIP)
  FORMAT: Costco Wholesale will begin construction of a Champaign store in 2020. Their decision to locate in Champaign hinged on the promise of tax incentives and other considerations. This class will meet at Marketplace Mall (where Costco will be starting construction). The lecture will focus on their decision to build in Champaign and how planners entertained their requested incentive. The reason for the site visit is because the land across the street from the pending Costco is subject to Part 4 of the class.

Preparing for this class:


VIDEO: Champaign Government Television (CGTV) - Champaign City Council Meeting on Revenue Sharing Agreement with Costco (starts at 37:32 and runs to the end of the meeting). April 9, 2019.
https://champaign.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/4645?channel=1&seekto=2252
Tuesday, March 31

- **INTRODUCTION TO PART FOUR – RESPONDING TO AN RFP / PROPOSING A DEVELOPMENT**
  FORMAT: Lecture
  In Part Four of the class students will put together the concepts they learned about in Parts 1, 2 and 3 and make a development proposal for a specific property. The exercise is set-up as if the student is the developer and is responding to an RFP. This class will explain the project, the expectations and the schedule for the remainder of the semester.

**Assignment Prompt Given at this Class:**

**Assignment 4-1:** Development Proposal (225 points)

**Assignment Due on Thursday, April 30th at 11:59PM**

Thursday, April 2

- **Practicing Planner Career Forum – Part of APA-ISS Conference**
  FORMAT: Panel Forum
  The American Planning Association, Illinois State Section will be holding its conference in Champaign on this day. As part of the conference, our class will host a “Practicing Planner Career Forum” where recent graduates of the Department (and from my class) will come to speak about getting their career started, what they are doing now and offer advice for you. This is a rare opportunity to hear from your predecessors in planning and get some great advice on how to figure out what you can do with your degree and how to get started. Details to come.

Tuesday, April 7

- **CREATING YOUR SUBDIVISION PLAT**
  FORMAT: Instruction
  This class will feature hands-on instruction for creating the subdivision plat required for your final proposal. I will review my expectations for this part of Part 4.
Thursday, April 9

• **ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS**  
  FORMAT: Individual Meetings  
  There is no formal class today. Instead, students will meet with me individually to show me how they are progressing on their development proposal. Details to come.

Tuesday, April 14

• **CREATING YOUR LAND USE / ZONING ANALYSIS**  
  FORMAT: Instruction  
  This class will feature hands-on instruction for creating the land use/zoning analysis required for your final proposal. I will review my expectations for this part of Part 4.

Thursday, April 16

• **ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS**  
  FORMAT: Individual Meetings  
  There is no formal class today. Instead, students will meet with me individually to show me how they are progressing on their development proposal. Details to come.

Tuesday, April 21

• **CREATING YOUR TIF ANALYSIS**  
  FORMAT: Instruction  
  This class will feature hands-on instruction for creating the tax increment financing analysis required for your final proposal. I will review my expectations for this part of Part 4.

Thursday, April 23

• **CREATING YOUR FINAL REPORT**  
  FORMAT: Instruction  
  This class will feature hands-on instruction for creating your final proposal. I will review my expectations for this part of Part 4.

Tuesday, April 28

• **NO CLASS**  
  I will be in Houston, Texas for the APA National Conference.

Thursday, April 30

• **CLASS FORMAT TBD**  
  FORMAT: TBD  
  This will be our last class before the final presentations. We may have a formal class or I may let you work to finish your proposal. We will see how things are progressing at this point.
Tuesday, May 5

- **FINAL PRESENTATIONS**
  Students will present their work and we will celebrate the end of the semester with pizza. This will be the last class since there is no final exam.