

## UP510 | Plan Making – Urbana Comprehensive Plan | Fall 2023

Department of Urban and Regional Planning

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Time: M, W, 11:00am – 12:20pm

Location: Temple Buell Hall, Room 223

Office Hours: By appointment

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### Course Description

This workshop course (4 credit hours) focuses on the comprehensive plan making process. Comprehensive plans are critical planning documents that act as a statement of policy based on the future vision of a community. Traditionally this vision focused on land use and physical development but newer iterations of these plans address a much broader range of topics. This semester we will be helping the City of Urbana as they undertake a multi-year process of updating their comprehensive plan. Our tasks will be narrowly focused certain phases and aspects of the plan making process to include putting the ideas and themes that have been collected so far into forms that allow for deliberation among the public and key stakeholders. Students will apply concepts and skills from prior courses and work extensively in teams to engage with community members, stakeholders, and decision makers to compile, synthesize, and present information that will aid the City of Urbana in updating their [comprehensive plan](#). The class is designed for learning by doing. There are no prerequisites and students will have ample opportunity to contribute in a variety of ways within the collaborative learning environment. We will work closely with City of Urbana planning staff to define our tasks, with the goal of contributing in a meaningful way to the plan making process, and in the process gaining a deeper understanding of planning through practice. Based on individual interests, students will be organized into teams and work on tasks that are identified during consultation with City of Urbana planning staff during the first two weeks of the semester. Potential tasks might include:

- Creating a "future connections" map and dataset that visualizes aspirational transportation infrastructure to include developing a street and land development typology, mapping this typology city-wide, and creating rendering to communicate these ideas to the public and key stakeholders.
- Creating a "land development capacity" map and dataset based on a variety of natural, built environment, and other characteristics.
- Developing metrics to be used for measuring plan progress once the plan has been adopted.
- Continue developing a web-based ArcGIS tool (aka [PaRIT](#)) to better manage the ecosystem of plans and regulations applicable to specific geographic locations to aid in the plan making process.

### Course Objectives

Throughout the semester, students will:

1. Become familiar with the basic purpose and principles of comprehensive plan making

2. Apply concepts and skills from prior courses to gain a deeper understanding of planning through practice
3. Engage with the local community to make a meaningful contribution “real world” planning efforts
4. Develop a higher level of executive function (i.e., the ability to get things done on time)
5. Improve the capacity to work in groups

#### Course Format

This is a workshop class meaning most class sessions will be work sessions. We will spend some time in the first few weeks discussing readings and background information before agreeing on the tasks to be completed during the remainder of the semester. These tasks will be group efforts. Tasks will include both project management and producing a quality work product for our client to use in their larger plan making process. As students working on a “real world” planning challenge, expect to spend time outside of class accomplishing the plan making tasks. Although some class periods will consist of team work on specific tasks, all students are expected to attend required class sessions in order to receive new instructions, hear status reports from other work groups, or to have team meetings with the instructor. The latter provide an opportunity to review the work plan, member responsibilities, and overall progress towards assigned tasks. If you are not able to attend a class session, please notify the instructor via email in advance.

#### Course Evaluation

Course evaluation will be based on completing assigned tasks and submitting a quality work product to our client. Most tasks will be group efforts worked on in teams. These tasks and timelines will be developed early in the semester and what is listed below are place holders that may change. Deliverables will include a mix of memos, reports, and presentations to members of the community, key stakeholders, planning staff, and decision makers.

#### Assignments:

- Individual Memo on Comprehensive Plan Making in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (10%)
- Group assignments:
  - Memo on Giving Form to Ideas (10%)
  - Weekly Update posts (10 total for 20%)
  - Group milestone memos:
    - Workplan (10%)
    - Assessment and reflection memo (10%)
- Final work product and presentation to client (40%)

Transformation of numerical grade to letter grade will be according to the schedule below:

A 93-100	C+ 77-79.9
A- 90-92.9	C 73-76.9
B+ 87-89.9	C- 70-72.9
B 83-86.9	D+ 67-69.9

B- 80-82.9

D 60-66.9

The general grading rubric for assignments is as follows:

An “A” assignment demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas and sophisticated, cogent analysis. It is clearly written and presented.

A “B” assignment includes above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support ideas. It is clearly written and presented.

A “C” assignment shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to obvious arguments. Writing is competent. It is adequate work.

A “D” assignment misunderstands or misrepresents the material or is so poorly written that it obscures the analysis. It is inadequate work.

### Readings

All readings will be available through the course Canvas site. Come to class on Monday ready to discuss the readings

### Course Policies

**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 <http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/index.html>.

The effectiveness of this course is dependent upon the creation of an encouraging and safe classroom environment. Exclusionary, offensive or harmful speech (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) will not be tolerated and in some cases subject to University harassment procedures. We are all responsible for creating a positive and safe environment that allows all students equal respect and comfort. I expect each of you to help establish and maintain an environment where you and your peers can contribute without fear of ridicule or intolerant or offensive language.

**Special Circumstances:** Due to the participatory nature of this course, please communicate any expected or unexpected absences with the instructor as early as possible. Every effort will be made to work with students with unusual or unexpected obligations outside the course (family emergencies, health issues, participation in University sanctioned activities, etc.) Students with disabilities or special needs who require any accommodations to facilitate full participation and completion of the course should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Please refer to the Disability Resources and Educational Services at <http://www.disability.illinois.edu> for more information.

**Safety and Security in the Classroom:** Emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time. It is important that we take a minute to prepare for a situation in which our safety or even our lives could depend on our ability to react quickly. When we’re faced with any kind of emergency – like fire, severe weather or if someone is trying to hurt you – we have three options: Run, hide or fight. Please refer to the General Emergency Response Recommendations at

<http://police.illinois.edu/dpsapp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/syllabus-attachment.pdf> for more information.

COVID-19 Policies and Expectations: Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Please refer to the [campus COVID-19 website](#) for information. If you feel ill or are unable to come to class or complete class assignments due to issues related to COVID-19, including but not limited to testing positive yourself, feeling ill, caring for a family member with COVID-19, or having unexpected child-care obligations, you should contact the instructor immediately, and you are encouraged to copy your academic advisor.

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### Schedule and Required Readings

This is a tentative schedule that will change based on class discussions and discussions with staff at the City of Urbana.

Overall Timeline:

- Weeks 1 to 2: Background discussions on Urbana, plan making and the comprehensive plan
- Week 3: Developing a work plan
- Weeks 4 to 13: Implementing work plan
- Week 14: Fall break
- Week 15 to 16: Presentations, course wrap up and next steps

Week 1: What is a comprehensive plan and why does it matter?

#### Readings:

- - City of Urbana 2005 Comprehensive Plan.  
<https://www.urbanainllinois.us/businesses/urbana-comprehensive-plan>
  - Urbana Comprehensive Plan Update Road Map & Comments to City Council
  - Herman, B., & White, D. (2016). The 21st century comprehensive plan: *Planning Magazine*, 82(3). <https://www.planning.org/planning/2016/mar/>
    - Substance
    - Role
    - Form

Assigned: Individual Memo on Comprehensive Plan Making in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Due 8/30

Week 2: Giving form to ideas.

#### Readings:

- - [Examine Urbana](#)
  - [Imagine Urbana Community Outreach Summary](#)

Assigned: Small Group Memo on Giving Form to Ideas, Due 9/4

Weeks 3 through 16 will consist of working on your chosen task the plan making process with weekly updates, a mid-term reflection, and a final work product and presentation to the client.

## Assignments:

Individual Memo on Comprehensive Plan Making in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (10 points): Research contemporary approaches to comprehensive plans and plan making by contrasting and comparing the [City of Urbana's 2005 comprehensive plan \(Links to an external site.\)](#) with one of the following plans that have been highlighted by APA as going beyond traditional approaches to comprehensive planning:

1. Seattle, Washington's *Seattle 2035* (<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/CouncilAdopted2020.pdf> (Links to an external site.))
2. Houston, Texas' *Plan Houston* (<http://www.houstontx.gov/planhouston/> (Links to an external site.))
3. Boston, Massachusetts' *Imagine Boston 2030* ([boston.gov](http://boston.gov) (Links to an external site.))
4. Raleigh, North Carolina's *2030 Comprehensive Plan* ([raleighnc.gov/cp](http://raleighnc.gov/cp) (Links to an external site.))
5. Portland, Oregon's *2035 Comprehensive Plan* ([gov/bps/57352](http://gov/bps/57352) (Links to an external site.))
6. Boulder, Colorado's *2015 Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan* (<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/boulder-valley-comprehensive-plan> (Links to an external site.))

Pay attention to the plan purpose, organization, and plan making process, trying to answer the following in your memo:

- What is novel about the contemporary comprehensive plan (form, role, substance...)?
  - How is it organized (by element, values, issues...)?
  - What are some of the issues it addresses?
  - What are the key goals and objectives?
- How is it different than the 2005 Urbana plan?
- How is the traditional function of a comprehensive plan (guiding land use policy) addressed?
- How were any differences from traditional comprehensive plans accomplished?
  - Who led the plan making effort?
  - What were the challenges or obstacles?
  - How is the plan meant to be used or implemented?

Due: August 28th by 11:00am (before class and be prepared to discuss what you found)

Small Group Memo on Giving Form to Ideas (10 points): Teams of 2-3 will review the interactive website "[Examine Urbana](#)" which serves as the existing conditions report for the new comprehensive plan making effort, and the [Imagine Urbana Community Outreach Summary](#). Teams will identify two ideas, themes, or challenges that emerge from reviewing the report and that will be important in creating proposals to be presented to the public and key stakeholders during the next round of public input and deliberation.

Due: September 4th by 11:00am (before class and be prepared to discuss what you found)

Group Weekly Updates (2 point each for a total of 20): Weekly update discussion posts are a chance for groups to share what they are working on, get feedback, and think through next steps. Submit a new post every Friday by noon summarizing what your group has been up to. At a minimum, be sure to address the following:

- What did you accomplish this week?
- What are your next steps?
- What do you want to share with the other groups?
- What resources do you need (that you don't have)?
- What roadblocks are you encountering (if any)?

Only one post per group per week is necessary. Include the group name and week number in the title of the post - e.g. Group Name Week #4. Each group will make 10 posts over the length of the semester. Dates for posts are:

- Week 4: due 9/15
- Week 5: due 9/22
- Week 6: due 9/30
- Week 7: due 10/6
- Week 8: due 10/13
- Week 9: due 10/20
- Week 10: due 10/27
- Week 11: due 11/3
- Week 12: due 11/10
- Week 13: due 11/17

Group Workplan Memo (10 points): Create a draft workplan that guides your group through completion of the community engagement task this semester. The expectation is that this workplan will be revised throughout the semester as new information comes in and schedules are updated.

There is no set format for a workplan but I suggest that at a minimum the workplan should include the following:

- Objectives or what you hope to accomplish and why
- Key tasks/milestones (e.g. engagement strategy, implementation plan, data collection...)
- Schedule (what are you doing and when)
- Roles and responsibilities (who is doing what in the group e.g. communications)
- Resources needed to complete the tasks (what do you need, what do you have, where will you get what you don't have...)
- Deliverables (weekly updates, milestone memos, final report...)
- Etc. (additional material should be added as needed or as is helpful to the group)

Draft Due: September 15th by 5:00pm

Group Progress Assessment and Reflection Memo (10 points): This memo will ask you to assess your progress mid-semester and propose course corrections as needed.

Due: October 13th by 5:00pm

Group Final Work Product and Presentation to Client (40 points): Each group will produce a report that summarizes what was done, data collected, and a preliminary analysis of this data that can be used as input into the next phase of the plan making process.

Due: December 4th or 6th (exact date to be determined)