



**COURSE SYLLABUS:
PPD 227
URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

USC Sol Price School of Public Policy
Thursdays, 6:00-9:20 p.m.
Fall 2024
Section 51100R
4 units

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Course Description

Successful urban planning requires not only specialized knowledge about planning principles and practice, but also an understanding about the institutions that shape planning decision-making. Urban planning is, in part, a technical process that requires specialized knowledge. But it is also a political process – a process that responds to the complex, often competing demands of government agencies, community organizations, private developers, and interest groups.

Whether or not you eventually choose a career in one of the many fields of urban planning or real estate development, we are all consumers of planning and development—the outcomes (good, bad and otherwise) of countless debates and decisions involving public policy, private investment, community participation, political wrangling, and the messy forces continuously shaping the physical environment of our streets, parks, neighborhoods, buildings, and homes. Planning and development together comprise the city-building process. A basic understanding of the processes and practices at work will help anyone become a better-informed urban citizen, and, perhaps in the future, a trained professional taking part in the action.

This course aims to provide an engaging introduction to planning and development from an interdisciplinary perspective, with a special emphasis on exploring the major institutions, influences, and tools that shape decision-making in urban planning. To expose you to some of the region’s key planning and development practitioners, the course will feature several short presentations from guest speakers – including government officials, land-use consultants, neighborhood leaders, real estate developers, and others engaged in current planning debates. Our in-class examples will draw heavily on the City of Los Angeles because USC is blessed to be located within one of the nation’s most fascinating urban laboratories.

My goal is to create an enjoyable, thought-provoking, and interactive course that brings together academic theories of urban planning with a practical, “real world” perspective.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between urban planning and urban development
- Describe the tools and techniques of professional planning
- Define the major theories informing planning practice and the main sub-fields of professional planning
- Pursue successful strategies for community engagement in the planning and development process
- Identify, analyze and discuss the key stakeholders, stakes, concepts, and techniques at work in planning and development processes and projects.

Course Notes

University-level study is a stage in professional life; everyone should conduct themselves accordingly. This means that the classroom is a workplace where we get things done—hopefully with some enjoyment as we learn. You’re expected to participate in the learning process; to complete assignments on time; to actively participate in discussions; and to treat your colleagues and instructor with courtesy and respect. This expectation of professional conduct extends outside the classroom to any and all correspondence and meetings.

Use of AI

Since creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Brightspace

This course utilizes the Brightspace web platform, <https://brightspace.usc.edu>, where you’ll log in with your USC ID and click on the PPD 227 module. Digital versions of course documents, announcements, and supplementary readings will be posted there.

Course materials such as lecture PowerPoint files, videos, and assignments, are available weekly for class sessions. You will upload your written assignments there. You are responsible for checking Brightspace frequently for updates and notices.

Communication

Email is the best way to contact me. I try to check it frequently, and usually respond within 24 hours. You are responsible for checking your USC email (@usc.edu) frequently. It is that address to which any course-related emails will be sent. While my scheduled office hours are somewhat limited, I can also arrange alternative times to meet by appointment, or via a Zoom appointment. Please communicate any concerns

or problems you may be having as soon as you're aware of them, rather than waiting until later in the semester, when solutions are few or no longer possible.

Required Materials

Textbooks are available at the USC bookstore. (Reading assignments / page numbers are based on these specific editions in print; if you purchase from another source, make certain to get the correct edition. If you opt to purchase another edition, you are still responsible for all assigned material.)

The main readings for the course will be:

- 1) Guide to California Planning (6th Edition), by William Fulton, which is available for purchase or rent at the campus bookstore. The book is an excellent “reality-based” summary of the practice of urban planning in our state.
- 2) Contemporary Urban Planning (12th Edition) by John M. Levy, with Sonia A. Hirt and Casey J. Dawkins, which provides a more national perspective on urban planning, including a stronger emphasis on the history of planning.

Be sure to obtain the most recent editions of each book – the Fulton 6th Edition was released in 2022 and the Levy 12th Edition in 2024 (with a 2025 copyright date), since the chapters and page numbers in the syllabus are keyed to these editions. Both books will be good basic references for you to keep if you pursue further study in urban planning or development. I have also assembled additional readings and links within the syllabus that we will draw upon as the class proceeds.

Reading and Quizzes

Reading of assigned texts is required, and is a prerequisite for doing well on quizzes and exams. You should come to class each week having completed that week's readings. I recommend taking notes on major points, concepts, and examples, as well as jotting down any questions you have—then raising them in class for discussion. Both techniques will help in your comprehension of the material.

To encourage students to keep up with the readings each week, we will have a brief assignment due each week no later than 11:00 a.m. on Thursday. Submit via Brightspace a question that the reading prompted in your mind, or a noteworthy insight or connection to another course topic that intrigued you. Questions might probe deeper on the “why,” “how,” or “what” related to the key topics for the week. Each submission will be reviewed by our course assistant and receive a grade for the week of 0 (incomplete), 1 (for a completed but basic submission), or 2 (for an insightful, thoughtful question or observation). These will be averaged over the course of the semester and represent 10 points out of the 100-point total for the course. The course assistant will also select a few of the top submissions each week for further discussion during class time.

Exams

To synthesize the topics covered in class, there will be a mid-term (on October 24) and a final exam. Both exams will test on material from readings, lectures, and any guest presentations or video clips and programs seen in class. No make-up exams will be given. Exam format may include any combination of

true-false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam will be comprehensive, covering the entire semester.

Class Participation

Attendance and participation in class meetings is required. If you miss (or are late to) class, leave early, are unprepared, do not actively contribute to class discussions, hold private conversations, or are texting, gaming, or web-surfing, you are not participating. Your course grade will reflect your level of participation—high, average, low, or non-existent. Participation and engagement in class is informal, and includes asking questions, making observations, offering examples, and making connections between your experience and class topics, readings, and lectures.

The course will feature a mix of lectures, interactive discussion, guest speakers, and student-led presentations. Since urban planning and land-use issues are full of controversy and require respect for differing points of view, I will be encouraging you to look at issues from competing perspectives.

For these reasons, in-class participation is very important, and will constitute 15% of your overall grade.

Public Hearing Observation

Because nothing substitutes for seeing real urban planning issues and decision-makers in action, the first course assignment is to observe a public hearing on a planning issue. Before September 25th, you should attend (either in-person or virtually) a City Council meeting, Planning Commission, Area Planning Commission, or other public hearing of your choice -- in the City of Los Angeles or another local city -- that addresses urban planning issues. Choose a single issue from the hearing and share a 3-5-minute observation of the meeting at our September 26th class.

Mock Planning Commission Hearing

On November 7, we will be participating in a mock planning commission hearing addressing a hypothetical land-use controversy. Each of you will play a defined role in the commission hearing: as decision-makers, a real estate developer; developers' consultants, homeowner association president, local residents, business leaders, housing advocates, Planning Department staff members, City Councilmembers, environmental leaders, and labor union officials. Which side will prevail when our in-class showdown takes place?

Case Study Reports and Presentation

For your class project, you will pick a current or recent planning or development project or controversy, about which you will write two papers, both roughly 6-8 pages. The first paper will consist a more factual memorandum that summarizes the key issues and parameters of the case. The final paper is meant to bring together what you have learned throughout the course, analyzing the technical, political, legal, and institutional aspects of planning through a single, compelling case study. You will also be making a short presentation on your case study at the December 1 class.

Each assignment will be turned in both (1) online, uploaded to Brightspace, and (2) in class, with a printed and stapled hard copy, on or before the due date and time (listed in the schedule below). It is late if turned

in after that date and time, and will be graded down accordingly. Because writing skills are crucial for professional work, elements such as grammar, spelling, syntax, and clarity will be evaluated.

If you need help with writing, I highly recommend visiting the USC Writing Center (<http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>) early in the semester. It is an excellent resource for those wanting to improve this very important skill set.

Grading (Possible Total of 100 Points – 90=A; 80=B; 70=C)

Attendance and In-Class Participation	15 Points
Reading Questions	10 Points
Planning Hearing Observational Presentation	5 Points
First Case Study Essay	10 Points
Mock Planning Commission	5 Points
Mid-Term Exam	15 Points
Second Case Study Essay	15 Points
Case Study Oral Presentation	5 Points
Final Exam	20 Points

Course Outline

1. August 29, Introduction to Course & Urban Planning and Development What is Urban Planning? A brief history of urban planning

Readings:

Levy, Ch. 3, 4

2. September 5, How Planning Decisions Really Get Made: The major players in the planning process, and the politics of planning

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 1, 4, 5

Levy, Ch. 6

3. September 12, The General Plan – The Cornerstone of Local Government Planning

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 6

Levy, Ch. 8

Assignments:

Attend a public hearing of a planning commission, zoning administrator, or planning case for short in-class presentation on 9/26.

4. September 19, Zoning and Its Critics – The basics of zoning, New Urbanism, and the effects of zoning on racial equity

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 7

Levy, Ch. 9, pp. 152-173

Raitt, Jennifer M., *[Ending Zoning's Racist Legacy](#)*

Planning and Equity: A Commitment to Change: <https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-city-planning-commission/about/planning-and-equity-a-commitment-to-change/commitment-to-change-statement/>

5. September 26 - Community Participation in Urban Planning: Involving the Public Effectively, and the NIMBY Syndrome

In-class discussions of public hearing observations (2-minute presentations)

Readings:

Arnstein, Sherry, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation":

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01944366908977225>

Kiefer, Matthew J., "The Social Functions of NIMBYism" (Planetizen, 2008)

<https://www.planetizen.com/features/34505-social-functions-nimbyism>

International Association for Public Participation, "Public Participation Toolbox":

<https://archive.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/web/pdf/toolbox.pdf>

Local Government Commission, Participation Tools for Better Community Planning,

[https://civicwell.org/wp-](https://civicwell.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Participation_Tools_for_Better_Community_Planning.pdf)

[content/uploads/2022/01/Participation Tools for Better Community Planning.pdf](https://civicwell.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Participation_Tools_for_Better_Community_Planning.pdf)

6. October 3, Environmental Review and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); Sustainability and Climate Change in Planning

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 9, 17

To prepare to write effectively for your upcoming case study memorandum paper:

- Review online "Effective Writing Practices Tutorial" from Northern Illinois University – particularly the entries on grammar and punctuation -- at <https://www.niu.edu/writingtutorial/grammar/index.shtml>
- Review Schuman, Sharon, Ten Tips for Effective Editing: <https://foresternet.lakeforest.edu/live/files/ten-tips-for-effective-editing.pdf>

7. October 10, NO CLASS, FALL RECESS

8. October 17, Exactions, Growth Management, and Specific Plans

Part One Case Study Memorandum due

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 10-12

Levy pp. 304-310

9. October 24, The Legal Basis for Local Government Planning and Mid-Term Exam

Mid-Term exam at beginning of class

Takings, Key land-use law concepts, religious land-use issues

Readings:

Fulton, Ch. 13

Levy pp. 81-92, 96-97

League of California Cities, Planning Commissioner's Handbook, Legal Issues:

https://www.ilgplanninghandbook.org/sites/main/files/12._legal_issues.pdf?1650519966

10. October 31, The Profession and Practice of Urban Planning

The roles of planners; advocacy planning; ethics in planning

Preparation for Mock Planning Commission

Readings:

Levy, Ch. 1, pp. 1-12

Davidoff, Paul, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning": https://pauldavidoff.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ByPD_AdvocacyPlanningandPluralism_1973-1.pdf

American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct: <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/add38c5d-71d4-4915-92d6-650140adf7fbAICP-Code-of-Ethics-and-Professional-Conduct-2021.pdf>

11. November 7, Mock Planning Commission & Discussion

No readings due this week, but start to read ahead for weeks 12-13

12. November 14, The Specializations of Local Government Planning, Part One – Economic Development and Housing

Fulton, ch. 14-15

Levy, Ch. 13

13. November 21 The Specializations of Local Government Planning, Part Two Urban Design, Historic Preservation, Environmental Consulting, Transportation Planning

Fulton, Ch. 19

Levy, Ch. 10 and pp. 244-256

Bernstein, Ken: Final Chapter of [Preserving Los Angeles: How Historic Places Can Transform America's Cities](#) (pdf to be posted in Brightspace)

14. November 28, Thanksgiving: NO CLASS

15. December 5: Presentations and discussion of Final Case Study Memoranda

16. December 12 - Final Exam

Statement on Academic Integrity and Support Systems

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage. Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct. Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Student Counseling Services (SCS) -- (213) 740-7711 -- 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops and crisis intervention.
<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline -- 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.; <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) -- (213) 740-4900 -- 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops and training for situations related to gender based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options and additional resources visit the web site. <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance -- (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants and students around issues of protected class.
<https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and micro-aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assment-response-support/>

Student Support and Advocacy -- (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues affecting their success as a student (Ex: personal, financial and academic). <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

<https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students.