

USC Price

Sol Price School of Public Policy

PPD 529: Legal Environment of Planning Units: 2
Spring Semester, Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.

Location: RGL 101 or online via Zoom Link embedded in Brightspace, as indicated.

Instructor:

Office: Off campus; when on campus, I am at the Faculty Club.

Office Hours: Thursdays 5-6 or by appointment. Please feel free to call! You can also email my assistant, Alescia Ellis, at alescia@collaborate-la.com if you want to book directly. If you come to Office Hours or I meet you at a restaurant or coffee house, the food and drinks are always on me.

Contact Info: nkuklok@gmail.com, 818-468-1983 (if you text, please identify yourself)

Course Description

This course is where the “rubber meets the road” for urban planners. This is about the conversion of ideas into reality in the context of legal framework. In other words, it is about urban planning ideas turning into policy and laws and ensuring those concepts and laws comply with existing laws. We discuss ideas and concepts and the way that policies are structured, and why they are structured that way. Why don't great ideas always make great policy? Why do laws get in the way, and why are those laws there in the first place? We are going to start thinking about these ideas critically, because all the great concepts you are learning in Planning School are only as good as the legal policies you can implement within the existing legal framework when you are out in the real world.

Learning Objectives

1. To provide a working knowledge of key legal concepts relevant for urban planners.
2. To familiarize students with the players and processes that shape laws.
3. For students to learn to “issue spot” legal issues and to apply known legal concepts to predict outcomes.
4. For students to think critically about historical and current issues in the law as they relate to urban planning.

Course Notes

Each week's work, including Asynchronous digital material, readings, and homework assignments, is posted as a separate file on Brightspace and is detailed in this syllabus. Any additional materials other than the required book purchases will be located on Brightspace. This course has been modified to accommodate hybrid learning and may change as classroom and online instruction continues.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Books:

- Understanding the Law of Zoning and Land Use Controls, Third Edition, Barlowe Burke, published by Lexis Nexis, 2013.
- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, Isabel Wilkinson
- Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities, Jessica Trounstein

Description and Assessment of Assignments and Assessments

Assignments are to be submitted as follows:

Planning Commission Assignment: Each student is required to attend a Planning Commission hearing; no two students may select the same hearing and hearings are selected on a first-come, first-

served basis. This hearing can be located in any City or jurisdiction. Students must submit a two-page report of their observations during the hearing and must attach (1) a copy of the agenda, and (2) a copy of a staff report. This assignment must be submitted prior to the administration of the Final Exam.

Public Hearing Presentation: Each student will prepare a short, 5-7 minute presentation on observations made during the Planning Commission Hearing to be recorded and uploaded for grading. Professor will choose 10 presentations for in-class presentation.

Caste Book Quiz: 10 question closed book quiz.

Segregation by Design Book Quiz: 10 question closed book quiz.

Comprehensive Planning Assignment/Zoning Assignment: These assignments will be distributed in the corresponding Brightspace unit.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Caste Book Quiz	10	10
Segregation by Design Book Quiz	10	10
Planning Commission Assignment	10	10
Comprehensive Planning Assignment	10	10
Zoning Assignment	10	10
Planning Commission Presentation	15	15
Final Exam	35	35
Total	100	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

Printed assignments should be submitted at the beginning of the class at which they are due. Submittal by email prior to the beginning of the class at which they are due is also acceptable. Late assignments are accepted with a 10% penalty. If you need extra time, just let me know before and I will generally waive the penalty for good cause.

Grading Timeline

Assignments are typically graded and returned the following class. Appeals of grade issued by the will be accepted by the Professor only if accompanied by a coherent argument as to why the grading should have differed. Argue your case!

Additional Policies

Students are expected to attend all classes and participate as requested and expected. When on Zoom, our **camera should be on** and your microphone should be muted if you are not speaking. If a class is to be missed, please notify the Professor as soon as possible and obtain notes from a classmate to ensure you are up to speed with class material. Late assignments will be accepted with a 10% penalty. Please pay attention in class and minimize use of phones as possible. It's just courteous.

Can we talk about ChatGPT and its cousins a bit? I get it. It's easy. But it's a tool, not a solution. I cannot stop you from using these tools as representing your own work. But in the workplace, which is where you are headed, using these tools incorrectly can get you fired and even make it hard to get hired elsewhere. Do yourself a favor and use this academic safe space to grow your skills before you get into the real world by not cheating yourself of an opportunity for growth and development.

Final Exam

Final exam is given on the day proscribed by the school following the end of the semester. It is closed book.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics	Asynch, Readings, and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 1-16-2025	Introduction and Basic Legal Theory	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: None	While it is not required, it is <i>strongly suggested</i> you select your Planning Commission hearing date this week!
Week 2 1-23-2025	Real Estate Law Basics and Origins of Land Use Law in the US	Asynch: None Readings: Burke, Chapter 1: pp. 3-12; Chapter 6: 85-95; Chapter 19: 349-363 Homework: None	
Week 3 1-31-2025	Master Plans	Asynch: Century City Video Readings: California General Plan Guidelines Chapters 1 and 2 Homework: Caste Book Assignment	
Week 4 2-6-2025	Comparative Land Use Law and Civil Case Law Basics	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: None	Caste Book Quiz to be given.
Week 5 2-13-2025	Guest Speaker: Holly Williams		
Week 6 2-20-2025 ONLINE CLASS	Fair and Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation	Asynch: None Readings: Burke, pp. Chapters 15 and 16: 279-309	
Week 7 2-27-2025	How to Read Codes and Cases	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: Zoning Assignment	

Week 8 3-6-2025	Zoning	Asynch: None Readings: Burke, Chapter 7: pp. 97-114; Chapter 10 sections 1 and 2: 157-172; Chapter 12: 201-217 Homework: Comprehensive Planning Assignment	Zoning Assignment is due prior to class.
Week 9 3-13-2025	Takings and Subdivision and Infrastructure	Asynch: None Readings: Burke, Chapter 2 pp. 13-29; Chapter 3 and Chapter 4: 31-67; Chapter 14: 235-274. Homework: Segregation by Design Assignment is due after Spring Break!	Comprehensive Planning Assignment is due prior to class.
Week 10 3-20-2025	SPRING BREAK	Homework: Have fun, be safe, and please do not hesitate to call me if you need help or are feeling unsafe!	
Week 11 3-27-2025	Community Outreach	Asynch: None Readings: Blackboard Article Homework: None	Segregation by Design Quiz to be given.
Week 12 4-3-2025	Controlling the Location of Growth: Redevelopment, In-Fill Development, Moratoria and Growth Controls Entitlements and Vested Rights	Asynch: None Readings: Burke, Chapter 9: pp. 133-154 ; Chapter 21: 379-399	
Week 13 4-10-2025	California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA")	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: Written Public Hearing Assignment is due for all students next week.	
Week 14 4-17-2025	CEQA Litigation	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: None	Written Public Hearing Assignment (for all students) is due prior to class.
Week 15 4-24-2025	Public Hearing Presentations	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: None	
Week 16 5-1-2025	Summary/Final Review/Q&A	Asynch: None Readings: None Homework: None	
Final Exam 5-8-2025	Mandatory In-Person, Closed Book Final Exam		

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

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 website: <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 microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

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

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>