Urban Planning and Policy Development Program, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University

History and Theory of Planning, 34:970:501:01, Fall 2014, 3 credits

Wednesday, 1:10-3:50, Room 112, Civic Square Building, College Avenue Campus

Instructor is Frank J. Popper, Civic Square Building, Room 356, College Avenue Campus, 848-932-2790, fpopper@rci.rutgers.edu or fpopper@princeton.edu. Instructor’s website is policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper.html, where more copies of this syllabus are available.

Office hours: Thursday morning, before or after class, or by appointment.


This course, intended primarily for MCRP students at any stage of their studies, explores the history and theory of city and regional planning over about the last century. The course’s goal is to give you a working knowledge of the field’s origins and underpinnings. The course focuses primarily on the United States, but not exclusively. You will do two take-home exams drawing on the assigned reading and other sources, plus a research paper at the end of the course.

Of the assigned books, Hall gives a broad-brush planning history of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France and elsewhere. Gallagher’s book looks at the past and future of the American suburb. Jacobs’ book, which is not her best-known, offers an original approach to economic development that is compatible with most planning practice. Thus the course moves variously through historical, practical, theoretical and predictive phases.

The course will have three take-home exams, which will draw on the assigned reading and other sources. But you only need to do two, which you choose, and you don’t have to explain your pick to me. You will also do a research paper on any topic that you propose and I approve. Thirty percent of your grade comes from each of your two take-home exams, and thirty from the research paper. The exams and paper must use sources beyond the assigned readings and my class presentations. Ten percent of your grade comes from class participation and general conscientiousness, including getting work in on time.

For the exams and the papers you’ll find no shortage of material from which to choose topics and approaches. Hall’s third edition, for instance, has a 75-page bibliography. You should use your imaginations to develop adventuresome analytic--not solely descriptive--subjects and treatments. The paper should be 12-15 pages, not counting notes, references and graphics.
To help class communications I’ve formed a closed Facebook group, “Planning History and Theory, Popper, Fall 2014,” which you should join. Go to it, ask me to let you in and I will. If you don’t want to join, perhaps because you’re uncomfortable with Facebook, please let me know, and we’ll make other arrangements.

All written work should be typed double-spaced. I want it to meet graduate-school standards of writing and will lower the grade if it does not. If your first language isn’t English, I may not hold you to this standard.

You should attend all classes and do the reading for them carefully. If you must miss a class, please get in touch with me.

I expect the exams and research paper to be original products written for this course only. I expect you to know, understand and meet Rutgers’ standards of academic integrity explained at academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity. See also plagiarism.org. If you have a question about these standards, please get in touch with me. Rules of thumb: if you think may be doing something academically dishonest, you probably are because your conscience or sense of safety is telling you so. To avoid plagiarism, do original work.

Schedule

September 3  Introduction.

September 10  Beginnings: the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: Hall, Chapters 1-4.

September 17  Early strength: the interwar period: Hall, Chapters 5-6.

September 24  Consolidation: the early postwar period: Hall, Chapters 7-9.

October 1  The contemporary period: Hall, Chapters, 10-13. First take-home exam handed out.

October 8  Exam due at class, which will discuss the approaches you took to it.


October 29  Exam due at class, which will discuss the approaches you took to it.

November 5  Economic development theory: Jacobs, pp. 3-121.

November 12  Economic development practice: Jacobs, pp. 122-end. Third take-home handed
out.

November 19  Proposal due at class, which will discuss the approaches you took to it.

November 26  Thanksgiving vacation.

December 3   Exam due at class, which will discuss the approaches you took to it.

December 10  To be decided.

December 17  Research paper due in instructor’s office at noon.

A note on sources


Nearly every major American city has had a planning/environmental history written about it. This literature shows particular emphases on New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta. (Note the regional balance.) Detroit, with its long-term shrinking population, empty spaces, diminishing services, racial tensions, innovative January 2013 plan and July 2013 bankruptcy, has drawn a good deal of attention; see, for instance, John Gallagher Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City (2011), George Galster, Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respect in the Motor City (2012) and more generally, Brent D. Ryan, Design After Decline: How America Rebuilds Shrinking Cities (2012). There are planning histories of the


There are large historical, theoretical and practical literatures on specific planning issues such as environmental problems, zoning, regional matters, public health concerns, globalization, gender experiences, Native, African and Hispanic American and other ethnic and racial problems, and urban, suburban or rural development. In particular, suburban sprawl has long attracted mindshare in Robert Bruegmann, Sprawl: A Compact History (2005), Alan Ehrenhalt, The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City (2012), Anthony Flint, This Land: The Battle Over Sprawl and the Future of America (2006), Dolores Hayden, A Field Guide to Sprawl (2004) and Robert Lang, Edgeless Cities: Exploring the Elusive Metropolis (2003).


Often the best source to find out fast about an American place is the biennial *Almanac of American Politics*, put out by the *National Journal*. City and regional encyclopedias can be good places to start research, and in the last few years fine ones have appeared on, among other places, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York City, New Jersey, the Great Plains, the Midwest, the Northeast, the South and the West. Rachel Weber and Randall Crane (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning* (2012) is excellent. Jordan Yin, *Urban Planning for Dummies* (2012) is good too, but probably unassignable in graduate school.

The nation’s best journalist on urban planning is probably Neal Peirce, whose columns and other writings are at *citistates.com*. New planning blogs, especially local ones, appear all the time. The American Planning Association (APA), the nation’s leading professional association in the field, offers a free membership to all first-year MCRP students. It publishes *Planning*, a monthly magazine, and the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, an academic quarterly, plus a variety of technical publications that appear on its website, *planning.org*. More disclosure: the instructor served two terms on its board. Useful sources are *PlaNetizen.com* and *planninghistory.org*, the latter run by the International Planning History Society.

Wikipedia, other encyclopedias, and dictionaries, on-line or off-, are good places to begin research and bad places to end it. Use them as jump-off points if you wish, but please don’t cite them. It always makes your work look bad.