Description

This course introduces innovative approaches to improve both processes and outcomes of urban policy-making in different national and cultural contexts. It offers comparative analyses of planning practices and policies around the world, in such areas as mega projects, smart infrastructure and networks, integrated transportation and land use planning, urban agriculture and informal economies, and green cities. The course is organized around three broad themes:

1. Implications of globalization for cities and planning

   We will explore how such global issues as economic integration and competition, immigration and diasporas, and climate change influence cities in different world regions and how urban communities respond.

2. Economic development and urban projects

   We will deepen our understanding of how urban communities foster economic development and competitiveness, through processes both formal and informal. In particular, we will analyze the interplay among various stakeholders, and the genesis and impact of large urban projects.

3. Planning for livable cities

   Cities need not wait for growth alone to improve livability. We will investigate what appropriate policies and institutions can yield significant improvements in land use and transport patterns, housing conditions and community infrastructure, and the ecological footprint and sustainability.

Objectives and expectations

This course will explicitly compare urban policy and planning practice against national and local context. You are encouraged to bring to class your own work and educational experience from different countries.

- To develop conceptual frameworks for understanding key global issues and their impact on cities and urban communities.
• To become knowledgeable of the critical urban and planning issues transcending national boundaries.
• To develop an understanding of how particular social and cultural traditions of places give rise to varying responses to urban problems.
• To think innovatively about alternative planning and policy approaches to improve both processes and outcomes of urban communities.
• To be able to develop meaningful comparative research questions pertaining to international planning practices to potentially contribute new knowledge.
• To become knowledgeable of the major resources for international research and become familiar with key international institutions.

Active learning

The success of this course depends on your active participation in class and contribution to mutual learning. I will conduct the class in an interactive seminar style and have designed a number of ways for active learning:

• Having read and reflected on each week’s readings, you come to class ready and willing to participate in discussions;
• Up to two students will be discussion leaders each week;
• You will learn to develop a research design that incorporates both case study and comparative analysis, and
• You will work in a group setting on a comparative research project.

Readings

Most readings are available through links in Trunk (by clicking on the blue-colored titles). Prior to class, you are expected to read and reflect on the materials. Let me know whenever you have any problem with the readings.

Leading class discussion of one session is required of each student. To prepare for this, you will complete reading notes: 1-2 page, single-spaced (10 – 12 font size), and typed. These notes are meant to provide you with talking points (complete sentences are unnecessary). You must hand them in on the assigned day. You should outline important points in the readings and pose questions/reflections to generate discussion and debate among your peers. You should be familiar with every aspect of the readings and ready to critique the readings on your own terms.

Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on the following. Late assignment without prior agreement with me will be discounted at the rate of 2 points per calendar day.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on readings for one session and leading discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Globalization and city posting</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research project design &amp; presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Country/city case study 25%
Country/city case study presentation 10%
Comparative analysis & presentation 15%
Class participation 10%

Group research project

Students, upon selection of mutually interested topics, will work in groups of two or three. The topic may focus on a substantive area of planning and urban policy, including those covered in the course. Comparative analysis is expected through using case studies of practices and policies in different countries/cities. Your contribution to the project will include both collaborative and independent work:

- Work collectively on a group project design and present to class,
- Work independently on a country/city case study that is part of the project, and
- Work collectively on a comparative analysis of the country/city cases and present to class.

The groups will work together first to determine the topic, scope of the project, key research questions, case country/city for each student, and prepare a presentation on the project design. The groups will meet again towards the end of the research process to pull different country/city cases together to develop a comparative analysis and prepare a presentation on the key findings.

Project design

In working collectively on the project design, it is useful to answer the following questions. Prepare a presentation that takes about 8-10 minutes.

1. What is the main purpose of the proposed research? Is this clearly stated in the presentation?
2. What are the key research questions (these also can be in the form of hypotheses or themes or arguments)? These questions are critical in helping frame the comparative analysis of various country cases down the road.
3. Are there sub-questions to each of the key research questions in 2? If yes, do they correspond to the key questions?
4. What country/city cases have you chosen and why?
5. Are there any concepts or terms that seem unclear to a general audience?

Country/city case study

Depending on the choice of topic and research questions in your group, the country/city case study may focus on practices and policies at the national, regional, or municipal level. In addition to writing up the case study following the instructions below, you will make a 5-10 minute presentation in class.

Contents: Your paper should have an introduction outlining the research questions that will frame the case study. The middle portion should describe the practices and policies in your case country/city. The last part of the paper should be an analysis or a synthesis of the relevant
literature. You are encouraged to draw from the readings to develop key findings that will inform the comparative analysis of your group.

Format of paper: Your paper should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 10 pages, excluding the bibliography. You are encouraged to use forms of presentation other than text in your paper, including tables, graphs, charts, maps, or photos. Grading will be based on the content, organization of the paper, analytical rigor, and writing quality.

References: Any use of anyone else's ideas or factual materials should be indicated by a citation within the paper, even if there is no direct quotation. List all sources of information used in the paper alphabetically at the end.

Comparative analysis
The success of the final stage of the group research project is predicated upon each member having good knowledge of their respective country/city case study (say close to 75 percent done on the country case study by the time of group analysis meeting). As you work together to compare the cases, prepare a presentation that takes about 15 minutes and addresses the following questions:
   1. What would be the collective answers to each of your research questions?
   2. In what ways are the practices and policies in the country/city cases similar?
   3. In what ways are the practices and policies in the country/city cases different?
   4. What country-specific circumstances may underscore the divergence in the practices and policies?

Course Outline

January 22  Introduction and resources in international planning

Part I. Implications of globalization for cities and planning

January 29  Globalization and local practices

February 5  Guest lecture – Planning for a sustainable community in post-disaster Haiti
(Emmanuel Stefanakis, Sustainable Strategies International – to be confirmed)

February 12   Global cities and diasporas

Globalization and city notes to be posted on Trunk by 9am on Feb 12
Summarize the ways in which:
1. A city of your choice is linked to the world through international trade, capital flows, immigration, and/or information networks.
2. Globalization is affecting the city’s economy, labor force, and/or culture.
You will need to substantiate your descriptions with some quantitative information.

Part II. Economic development and urban projects

February 19   Mega projects and economic development

February 26   Smart infrastructure and networks

March 5    Urban agriculture and informal economies

March 12    Group research project design and presentation

March 19    Spring break

Part III. Planning for livable cities

March 26    Integrating land use and transportation (brief presentation of case studies)

April 2    Housing and community infrastructure (brief presentation of case studies)

April 9    Green cities  
(brief presentation of case studies)

April 16    No class – Group research project
April 23    Presentation of comparative analysis
April 30    Country/city case study due (by email)