
Course Title:	History of Urban Planning & Design
Course Number:	UAP 5624
Term:	Fall 2008
Credit Hours:	1

Class Time:	10/31, 5pm-9pm & 11/01, 9am-5pm
Class Location:	TBA

Instructor:	Sonia A. Hirt, Ph.D.
Office:	Virginia Tech, Blacksburg
Telephone and fax:	540-231-7509/540-231-3367
E-mail:	shirt@vt.edu
Webpage:	www.uap.vt.edu/uapFaculty/hirt.html



Course summary:

This graduate seminar introduces students to the most prominent urban design and planning movements in the ‘Western’ world since the 1850s. The course begins with the origins of modern planning and design as a response to the urban crisis of the mid-19th century. It then discusses how planners and designers attempted to alleviate the urban crisis by either radically restructuring the city and eradicating its history (e.g., the Modernist City), or by abandoning the city and replacing it with new settlements (e.g., the Garden City). The course compares and contrasts these proposals and poses the question of why so many of them have at least partially failed. It also critically examines the traditional planning idea of following some grand, master-minded vision of good urban form—form which often ends up disadvantaging many urban citizens (e.g., women and minorities). Finally, the course discusses how history shapes contemporary influential ideas in urban planning and design, such as New Urbanism and Smart Growth.

At the end of the course, students will be able to compare and contrast the philosophical assumptions and the strategies employed by the main historic planning movements. They will also be able to evaluate the impact of history on contemporary planning thought.

Readings:

There is one required book, which covers the history of urban design and planning from the Renaissance to the 1980s. We will pay particular attention to Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Barnett, Jonathan. 1986. The Elusive City: Five Centuries of Design, Ambition and Miscalculation. New York: Harper & Row Publishers and Icon Editions.

Please note that this book is currently available from sites such as www.amazon.com and www.ebay.com for as little as \$3.40.

There is also one recommended book, which places one of today’s leading urban design/planning movements (New Urbanism) in a historical perspective.

Talen, Emily. 2005. New Urbanism and American Planning: The Conflict of Cultures. New York and London: Routledge.

Course structure and requirements:

The course comprises presentations on the history of urban planning and design by the instructor, free class discussions, and student presentations on history topics suggested by the students and approved by the instructor (please also see the schedule on p. 4).

Each student is required to select a topic related to urban planning/design history and present a preliminary version of this topic in front of the class. Using visuals such as PowerPoint slides, handouts and posters in the presentation is desirable and encouraged but not required. Students must also prepare a final written report on the topic of about ten double-spaced pages, excluding graphics and references.

Student presentations should last about 15 minutes each and will be followed by a 15-minute class discussion. They will be scheduled between 3:00 and 5:00 pm on Saturday, November 1.

Students are expected to choose topics focused on clear research questions such as:

“What has been the impact of the City Beautiful on the planning of Cleveland”?

“Did the Federal Policy of Urban Renewal fail or succeed”?

“What was the influence of Haussmann’s Paris on the planning of Havana”?

“Why does Jane Jacobs dislike the New Urbanists”?

However, very broad and general topics are strongly discouraged. Examples include:

“History of the City Beautiful”;

“The Urban Renewal Era”;

“History of planning in Havana”

“Principles of New Urbanism.”

Students must suggest their research topics no later than September 25. Brief draft reports should be emailed to the instructor by October 23. Final reports are due December 4.

Grading:

Attendance and participation: 50%

Presentation: 15%

Final report: 35%

Time Schedule:

Friday, 31 October 2008, 5:00-9:00 pm

5:00-5:15 pm	Introductions
5:15-6:00 pm	Pre-industrial traditions and the Industrial City
6:00-7:00 pm	The Monumental City
7:00-7:15 pm	Break
7:15-8:15 pm	The Garden City
8:15-9:00 pm	Machine-age Cities

Saturday, 1 November 2008, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

9:00-10:00 am	The Modernist City
10:00-11:00 am	The Broad-acre City
11:00-11:15 am	Break
11:15-12:00 noon	Critique of the 'grand masters' in planning and design
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00-1:45 pm	Evolution of the planning process
1:45-2:30 pm	New Urbanism, Smart Growth and history
2:30-3:00 pm	Break
3:00-3:30 pm	Student presentation
3:30-4:00 pm	Student presentation
4:00-4:30 pm	Student presentation
4:30-5:00 pm	Student presentation