

**CRP 3820/5820**  
**Introduction to Physical Planning**  
**Syllabus Fall 2012**  
W. Sibley Room B-10  
M/ W 10:10 -11:25AM

Instructor: Silvano De la Lata, Visiting Lecturer  
Office Hours: Sibley 318, M/T 12:30 – 2:00 PM  
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## **I. Course Overview**

Planning processes crystallize in a variety of ways, some materialize and some dissipate. Physical planning deals with the **spatial-material dimensions** of the planning and urban processes. The built environment shapes and is shaped by a number of socio-economic, cultural and political forces. The materialization of planning processes defines how these forces are canalized into the urban realm. Therefore, the physical planner deals with the **interpretation and understanding** of urban texts and contexts in order to be able to **diagnose** and eventually **design or guide interventions** in the built environment. The physical planner needs to be **literate** in the processes that affect the urban space and the mechanisms by which they materialize into the built environment. She/he needs to be able to read, interpret and arrange urban space (**only when there is need for it**). The physical planner needs to be aware that the built environment is the intersection of conflicting interests, visions and aspirations, therefore, she/he needs to be able to mediate, facilitate and inform rather than impose his own vision in order to have truly sustainable, just, livable and efficient cities.

This course is divided in three parts: Reading, Interpreting and Writing the urban text.

### **1. Reading**

History and Theory of Physical Planning. This is an overview of the schools and approaches of the discipline and the instruments of interpretation and design used by each. This section will help the student understand how the urban text has been constructed throughout time and how it is constructed today. The purpose is that she/he learns how urban and planning processes shape the built environment and urban space in different ways.

### **2. Interpreting**

Interpretation of Sites and Contexts: This section provides an overview of different instruments of interpretation and representation of urban space (plans, maps, photographs, etc.). The purpose of this section is that the student becomes able to diagnose and review of urban design plans. This a practical section that applies different instruments of interpretation, learned in the previous section, to real life examples.

### **3. Writing**

Intervention and Implementation. This section uses the experience of the past

two in order to develop criteria to critique plans and to come up with design and planning guidelines to induce the materialization of good urban practices and processes.

## II. Learning Objectives

The Physical Planner will be able to understand, interpret, diagnose and design the built environment — whenever there are planning issues that have to be addressed by material solutions. She/he will need to be able to understand the role of the physical planner and designer and to assess when his work is actually required to improve the quality of life in the city. Not all urban problems are solved by material solutions. In order to do so, he will have to learn:

1. Interpretation and representation tools to become “literate” in the planning processes that eventually shape the built environment (i. e. maps, plans, photographs, video, etc.).
2. Development of a criteria to review and critique plans, design projects or existing urban conditions, considering social, economic, health, democratic and aesthetic values for the city.
3. How to apply review criteria on specific urban cases and to be critical enough to know when the intervention of the physical planner/designer is needed and when is not.
4. Understand the challenges of the implementation and negotiation of physical plans and understand this as a process rather than an outcome.

## III. Readings

The required textbooks for this class are:

- Steiner, Frederick and Kent Butler, eds. 2006. *Planning and Urban Design Standards: Student Edition*. New York: Wiley.
- Larice, Michael and Elizabeth Macdonald eds. 2007. *The Urban Design Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Other readings (on reserve):

- Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (2002). *The Blackwell city reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Low, S. and Smith, Neil (2006) *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge, New York.
- Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life*. London: Routledge.
- Whyte, W. H., Municipal Art Society of New York., Street Life Project., Direct Cinema Ltd., & Bainbridge Brass Quintet. (2005). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Santa Monica, CA: Direct Cinema Ltd.
- film Gary Hustwit's (2012) *Urbanized*. (Not available yet)

Other readings are either available online or will be available as PDFs on line or on Blackboard

## IV. Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to discuss information and concepts covered in class and in the readings with other students. Students can give or receive "consulting" help to or from each other. However, should copying occur, both the student who copied work from

another student and the student who gave material to be copied will receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

## **V. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

## **VI. Participation and Grading**

The student is strongly encouraged to actively participate in class, discussing readings, lectures, films and site visits. She/he is also expected to actively engage in the workshops, group activities and similar dynamics, as Physical Planning is a discipline that requires these kinds of skills.

There are weekly readings and you are expected to do them before class. They will help you and we will discuss them. Short illnesses, family events, etc. should be dealt with using the flexibility of being able to drop paper grades. That is, assume you will be sick some time and don't wait until the end to hand papers in. Late assignments will be docked points according to the schedule in the assignments details section—the first hour is 10%.

Those with religious holidays that make it impossible to hand in something need to inform the instructor in writing at least a week in advance. An illness of a day or two is not an excuse for a late paper. If you do have a significant illness that incapacitates for several days or prevents you from handing in the paper you need to inform the Instructor ASAP and provide appropriate documentation from a medical professional. If papers need to be emailed, e.g. due to a printer meltdown, they must be in on time at the beginning of the class period otherwise they will be late.

### **Grading Criteria**

- Correct application of concepts from readings
- Clear use of graphic material to support text (correctly referenced, readable, etc.)
- Harmonious play between text and graphic material
- Argument Consistency
- Text Coherency
- Correct referencing

### **Grading Percentages**

1. Urban Site Analysis	20%
2. Diagnosis, Review and Critique the Plan for The Ithaca Commons	20%
3. Charter of Urban Design	30%

4. Participation in class  
**TOTAL**

20%  
**100%**

## VII. Description of Assignments

1. Urban Site Analysis: Group Assignment (20%)

**DUE: September 24, 2012. At 10:10 AM in Class. Papers should be physically printed and delivered at the beginning of the class.**

6-8 pages, graphic material and references not included. Students are expected to make extensive use of graphic material.

Choose a piece of urban development among the following examples or similar:

- Nonoalco-Tlatelolco vis-à-vis Downtown Mexico City
- Barcelona's Casc Antic (city core) vis-à-vis The Eixample
- Downtown Manhattan or West Village vis-à-vis The Grid
- Garbatella (Garden City) vis-à-vis Historic Rome
- Or Others (Discuss previously with the instructor).

- Use graphic material, such as maps, plans and drawings to distinguish the different urban typologies in terms of density, form, circulation elements, etc.
- Based on the readings, make a descriptive analysis of the chosen site in relation to its urban context. Describe the historical background of the site as a response to the milieu and how and why the built environment developed in such a way.
- Analyze how or if the site is related to its context (i. e. connected, neglected, integrated, detached, confronted, etc.) and what are the urban elements that establish those relations (i. e. boulevards, corridors, streets, squares, parks, etc.).

2. Diagnosis, Review and Critique the Plan for The Ithaca Commons: Individual Assignment (20%)

**DUE: October 22, 2012. At 10:10 AM in Class.**

4-6 pages for undergrads, 6-8 pages for graduate students, graphic material and references not included. Students are expected to make extensive use of graphic material.

Based on the site visit(s) and the analyzed material, make a critique of the Redesign Plan for the Ithaca Commons.

- Make a description of the actual situation of the site and its context. Consider how the built environment shapes social, economic, cultural and political features of the space and how these features shape the built environment.
- Observe how space is used in terms of circulations, encounter opportunities, rhythms, speeds, etc.

Read and observe carefully how the redesign plan would change the relationships between the built environment and society. Pay close attention to the urban elements and the role they would play in redefining the dynamic of uses.

Make a critique of what role would the plan play in changing the socio-economic, cultural and political environment of the site. Consider issues of exclusion, gentrification, under-representation of users, displacement.

### 3. Charter of Urban Design: Individual Final Assignment (30%)

**DUE: By December 5, 2012.**

5-7 pages for undergrads, 8-10 pages for graduate students, graphic material and references not included. Students are expected to make extensive use of graphic material.

Based on the readings, exercises and experience in class, write a charter with guidelines of design approaches and considerations. Based on analysis on the complexities of today's urbanism, produce a design "manifesto" that responds to these problems. Consider issues of sustainability, social justice, health, equality, etc. Describe overarching principles, methods and processes for the practice of physical planning. Remember that the city is a interconnected system, every change produces effects beyond the site of intervention.

Structure the text in three parts: (1) Describe the problems that you consider the most urgent and fundamental for the socio-economic, politic and cultural construction of a city, (2) Propose design guidelines that you consider would help to ameliorate or solve these problems at different scales (city, neighborhood, etc.). (3) Conclusion and questions for future analyses.

#### **Format:**

Arial, 12 pts, titles 14 pts., double spacing, left-right margins 1.5", top-down 1", cites in APA format. Document design: free.

Students are expected to make extensive use of graphic material.

## **IX. Course Calendar**

### **WEEK 1/ AUG 22 – INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

Introductions, Course Details, Syllabus, Grading/Assignments, Logistics, Calendar, Organization and Required Textbooks/Readings.

Brief Introduction to Physical Planning  
The role of the planner

### **PART 1 – Reading Observing and Understanding The Urban Text**

### **WEEK 2/ AUG 27-29 - What is Physical Planning?**

1. Disciplinary Approach: What is and what is not Physical Planning?
2. Disciplinary Intersections: Where does it start and where does it end?
  - Comprehensive Planning
  - Planning Process/Urban process
  - Urban geography/ Urban Spatial Theory
  - Urban Design/ Landscape Architecture

- Place-making
- 3. The role of the physical planner
- 4. Elements of Physical Planning
  - Urban Processes
  - Site and Context
  - The Built Environment
  - Infrastructure and Services
- 5. Visualization and Representation instruments
  - Maps
  - Plans
  - Aerial Photographs and orthophotos
  - Cadastral and property maps
  - Topographic Maps
- 6. Urban Scale
  - The Metropolitan region
  - The city
  - The district
  - The neighborhood
  - The corridor
  - The street
  - The building

### **Readings:**

Larice and Macdonald:

- Lang “Urban Design as a Discipline and a Profession” pp. 462-478.

Steiner and Butler:

- “Types of Plans” pp. 6-31 (Comprehensive plans, urban design plans, regional plans, neighborhood plans, park plans).
- “Mapping” pp. 320-8 (mapping data overview, aerial photographs and digital orthophoto quadrangles, U.S. geological survey topographic maps, property maps in modern cadastres).
- “Visualization” pp. 336- (visualization overview, montage visualization, three-dimensional visualization, visual preference techniques)

### **WEEK 3/ SEP 5**

Projection of documentary.

### **WEEK 4/ SEP 10-12 -- History of Theory of Planning and Urbanism (Part 1)**

1. What is a city?
2. The Traditional City
  - The organic city
  - The classic city
  - The medieval and the Renaissance city
3. The Modern City
  - Industrialization and Urbanization processes: the factory and the proletariat
  - Urban Control and Hygiene: Hospitals, clinics and prisons.
  - The City Beautiful Movement: Of promenades, boulevards and axiality.
  - The Garden City: Of parks, gardens and greenbelts.
  - Modern Infrastructure: Of transportation, utilities and public services.

4. Modernism and functionalism
5. Mechanicism and mass production urbanism  
Le Corbusier or the city as a machine
6. Different versions of modernism  
Frank Lloyd Wright and Broadacre  
Lewis Mumford and the garden city  
Robert Moses and New York City  
Brazilia, Chandigarh and Dhaka  
Suburbia and the Urban Diaspora

### **Readings:**

Larice and Macdonald:

- (Graduate students only); Berman, “the Family of Eyes” and “The Mire of the Macadam” pp. 17-27.
- Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns” pp. 28-36.
- Sitte, “The Meager and Unimaginative Character of Modern City Plans” and “Artistic Limitations of Modern City Planning” pp. 35-42.
- Perry, “The Neighborhood Unit” pp. 54-65.
- Mumford, “The Garden City Idea and Modern Planning” pp. 43-53.
- LeCorbusier “the Pack-donkey’s Way and Man’s Way” and “A Contemporary City” pp. 66-76.

### **WEEK 5/ SEP 17-19 – History of Theory of Planning and Urbanism (Part 2)**

1. The Decline of Modernism
2. Reactions  
Jane Jacobs. Scale matters: the street, the sidewalk and the neighborhood  
Kevin Lynch. Cognitive dimension of the city.  
William H. Whyte. Public space and the importance of place  
Christopher Alexander. The city as complex system.  
Jan Gehl. The pedestrian as a planning unit.  
New Urbanism
3. Problems in postmodern planning  
Planning the public domain  
Gentrification, speculation and displacement  
Public private partnerships  
Informality, congestion and spontaneous urbanism
4. Community and participation in physical planning
5. Planning and design from the bottom-up

### **Readings:**

Larice and Macdonald:

- Jacobs (Jane) section on “The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact” pp. 83-92
- Relph, Edward, “Prospect for Places: From Place and Placelessness” pp. 119-124.
- Lynch “The Image of the Environment” and “The City Image and its Elements” pp. 153-165.
- Cullen “Introduction to The Concise Townscape” pp. 167-173.
- Alexander “The Timeless Way” pp. 93-97.
- Lynch “Dimensions of Performance” pp. 109-114.
- Congress for the New Urbanism “Charter of the New Urbanism” pp. 309-311.

## **PART 2 – Interpreting Diagnosis of the urban text**

Assignment 1 (See Assignments section)

*Urban Site Analysis*

**DUE: September 24, 2012. At 10:10 AM in Class.**

### **WEEK 6/ SEP 24-26 – Interpreting Contexts and Sites**

1. Context elements
    - Nature and ecosystems
    - The metropolitan region
    - The city as intersecting flows
    - The city as overlapping layers
  2. Understanding the multidimensionality of the context
    - Legal dimension: property rights, land use, building codes.
    - Participatory dimension: planning boards, neighborhood assemblies, citizen associations, etc.
    - Environmental dimension: water, flora, micro-weather.
    - Social dimension: walkability, sociability and spaces of encounter.
    - Political dimension: representative, participatory, deliberative and direct democracy.
  3. Design and Aesthetics
  4. Site Analysis
  5. Site Plans
- Site analysis by scale:
- The Metropolitan region
  - The city
  - The district
  - The neighborhood
  - The corridor
  - The street
  - The building

### **Readings:**

Steiner and Butler:

- “Regions” pp. 223-226.
- “Places and Districts” pp. 227-250 (neighborhoods, neighborhood centers, historic districts, waterfronts, arts districts, industrial parks, office parks, main streets)

Larice and Macdonald:

- Hester “Neighborhood Space” pp377-386.
- Congress for the New Urbanism “Charter of the New Urbanism” pp. 309-311.(Review of the concepts of the charter considering scale and contrast with Le Corbusier’s Reading)

### **WEEK 7/ OCT 1-3 – Physical Planning and Urban Design Approaches (Part 1)**

1. The role of the designer in the planning process: architect, manager, mediator, facilitator or actor.
2. Design approaches and schools



New urbanism  
Landscape urbanism  
Ecological urbanism  
Place-making  
Urban acupuncture  
Guerrilla Urbanism

3. Design considerations: sustainability, walkability, accessibility, social spatial justice.

### **Readings:**

Larice and Macdonald:

- Lozano “Density in Communities....” Pp. 313-325.

Steiner and Butler:

- “Building Types” pp. 119-137 (sections on residential types through schools)
- “Development Types” pp. 251-261 (mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, conservation development, infill development)
- “Implementation” pp. 364-374 (zoning regulation, subdivisions regulation, planned unit development, innovations in local zoning regulations)
- “Design Considerations” pp. 274-295 (safety, walkability, LEED, streetscape)

Screening of *TED Talk* by Jaime Lerner, Major of Curitiba.

### **Resources:**

<http://landscapeurbanism.com>

<http://www.cnu.org/>

<http://ecologicalurbanism.gsd.harvard.edu>

<http://www.pps.org/>

[http://www.ted.com/talks/jaime\\_lerner\\_sings\\_of\\_the\\_city.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/jaime_lerner_sings_of_the_city.html)

[http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical\\_urbanism\\_vol\\_2\\_final?mode=window&backgroundcolor=%23222222](http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final?mode=window&backgroundcolor=%23222222)

<http://pinterest.com/guerrillaurban/guerrilla-urbanism/>

## **WEEK 8/ OCT 10 – Physical Planning and Urban Design Approaches (Part 2)**

Screening of the film Gary Hustwit’s (2012) *Urbanized*.

## **WEEK 9/ OCT 15-17 – Diagnosis, Review and Critique of Plans and Sites (Part 1)**

1. Reviewing strategies and tools

Checklists

Layer analysis: Social, environmental, economic, walkability, accessibility.

2. Historic preservation analysis

3. Aesthetic analysis

4. Participation approaches

### **Readings:**

Larice and Macdonald:

- Scheer “The Debate on Design Review” pp490-499.

### **Week 10/ OCT 22-24 – Diagnosis, Review and Critique of Plans and Sites (Part 2)**

1. Exercise: Case study: Ithaca Commons  
Site visit  
Site analysis
2. Workshop: Review of the Plan for the Plan and Design for the Ithaca Commons  
Application of interpretation and review instruments

### **Part 3 – Writing Designing/Planning the urban text**

Assignment 2 (See Assignments section)

*Diagnosis, Review and Critique of Redesign Plan for The Ithaca Commons*

**DUE: October 22, 2012. At 10:10 AM in Class.**

### **WEEK 11/ OCT 22-24 – Infrastructure Systems**

1. Communication
2. Education
3. Recreation
4. Transportation
5. Social and Community Services

#### **Readings:**

Steiner and Butler

- “Types of Plans” pp. 18-21 (transportation plans).
- “Transportation” pp. 143-181 (sidewalks, hierarchy of streets and roads, street networks and street connectivity, vehicle turning radii, traffic calming, pedestrian-friendly streets, parking lot design, on street bikeways, multiuser trails, transit systems).
- “Traffic Impact Studies” pp. 317-319.

Larice and MacDonald:

- Cervero “Drawing Lessons and Debunking Myths pp. 426-434.
- Jacobs, Allan, “Conclusions: Great Streets and City Planning pp. 388-390.

### **WEEK 12/ NOV 5-7 – Circulation and communication**

1. Urban communication lines
2. Street and streetscapes
3. Design considerations: Congestion, safety, sociability, noise, efficiency.
4. Street scales: the highway, the avenue, the street, the alley.

#### **Readings:**

Steiner and Butler:

- “Types of Plans” pp 27-31 (parks and open-space plans, critical and sensitive areas plans)

- “Parks and Open Space” pp 194-211 (types of parks, greenways and trails, conservation areas, playgrounds)
- “Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Needs Assessment” pp. 308-309.

Larice and Macdonald:

- Metro Portland “Green Streets” pp 406-424.

### **WEEK 13/ NOV 12-14 - Public Space and The Public Realm**

1. Planning in the public domain
  - Space of Strangers
  - Tensions and contradictions
  - Public space paradigms: the commons, the agora, the public square and the park.
2. Public Space and the Public Sphere
  - Spaces of circulation
  - Spaces of leisure and recreation
  - Spaces of encounter and sociability
  - Spaces of assembly and democracy
3. Three case studies:
  - The Tlatelolco’s esplanade (*Plaza de las Tres Culturas*)
  - The Central Park
  - The Bryant Park
  - Barcelona’s Plaza Catalunya

#### **Readings:**

Screening of excerpts of Jan Gehl’s (2008) *Livable Spaces*, The central Park and Protest Encampments of 2011.

Larice and Macdonald:

- Whyte “Introduction”, “The Life of Plazas,” “Sitting Space,” and “Sun, Wind, Trees, and Water” pp348-363.
- Gehl “Three Types of Outdoor Activities” and “Life between buildings” pp 365-370.

From The Blackwell city reader:

Sennett, Richard, The Public Realm in, Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (2002). *The Blackwell city reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

From Low and Smith:

Low, S. and Smith, Neil, “The Imperative of Public Space” in Low, S. and Smith, Neil (2006) *The Politics of Public Space*, Routledge, New York.

### **WEEK 14/ NOV 19-21 - Open/Public Space (Part 2)**

1. Planned and unplanned spaces
2. Everyday life in public spaces
3. Informality and organic order
4. Insurgent, loose and tactical public spaces.

Screening of Documentary: William H. Whyte’s *Social Life in Small Urban Spaces (1981)*

Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. “Introduction” and “Tying down loose space” in Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life*. London: Routledge.

Larice and Macdonald:

- Punter, J. "Design Guidelines in American Cities: Conclusion" pp. 500-516.

## **WEEK 15/ NOV 26-28 – Physical Planning Processes**

Assignment 3 (See Assignments section)

*Charter of Urban Design*

**DUE: By December 5, 2012.**

1. Citizen and democratic participation
2. Democratization of planning knowledge
3. The Physical Planner as a facilitator
4. Can Physical Planning be a bottom-up process?
5. Conclusion

### **Readings:**

Steiner and Butler:

- "Role of Participation" by Henry Sanoff, pp. 32-34.

Larice and Macdonald:

- Carmona et al. "The Communication Process" pp. 480-489.

Purcell, M. (May 01, 2009). Resisting neoliberalization: Communicative planning or counter-hegemonic movements?. *Planning Theory*, 8, 2, 140-165.

- Nick Wates Associates. Community planning handbook: methods.

[http://www.communityplanning.net/results.php?cx=006167280261730165013%3An5592wriq6u&cof=FORID%3A11&q=nick+wates&sa=find&siteurl=www.communityplanning.net%2Fmethods%2Fmethods\\_az.php&ref=www.communityplanning.net%2Fmethods%2Fmethods.htm.%28Selectio ns%29&ss=2879j1297627j11](http://www.communityplanning.net/results.php?cx=006167280261730165013%3An5592wriq6u&cof=FORID%3A11&q=nick+wates&sa=find&siteurl=www.communityplanning.net%2Fmethods%2Fmethods_az.php&ref=www.communityplanning.net%2Fmethods%2Fmethods.htm.%28Selectio ns%29&ss=2879j1297627j11)

### **Resources:**

<http://www.communityplanning.net>