DESCRIPTION

**City Building** is a newly required course for all MURP students in the Urban Place Making (UPM) concentration. The other two required concentration courses are *Urban Form Theory* and *Comprehensive Planning*. *Urban Form Theory* looks at how social, economic, political and cultural forces shape urban built form while explicitly recognizing the position of design within the urban development milieu. *Comprehensive Planning* deals with the mechanics and methods of planning and plan making.

This course attempts to bridge these two poles and fill a critical gap in the MURP curriculum by providing an understanding of how and why certain policies, politics and powerful interests produce cities and built environments in a particular image. But it moves beyond a singular focus on urban politics and asks what role(s) the planner can play in this production. The course outlines the building blocks of cities and uses extensive case studies to tease out which mechanisms are necessary for building “the good city”. *City Building* is fundamentally important for those planning to enter careers in the private sector (e.g. real estate development, market analysis, planning consultancy) or public sector (e.g. zoning officer, long-range planner, city politics).

This discussion-based course is organized in several sections: urban politics and policy, the planner’s toolbox, the real estate development process, and codes and regulatory action.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

**IMPORTANT:** post all readings to appropriate Discussion Board on Blackboard before 2:30 on day noted.

- **Paper 1: Urban politics and policy paper.** Due at latest by February 15. Worth 10% of final grade.
  - Choose one chapter (not reading) from Kantor/Judd. In no more than 5 pages, discuss how each author might evaluate the statement: “urban politics impacts built form and settlement patterns”. Bring to class to discuss.

- **Paper 2: Denver case study I: 16th Street Mall.** Due March 8. Worth 15% of final grade.
  - Garvin considers the 16th Street Mall a terrific success. Give his assessment a 2010 update. Visit and visually document the Mall yourself. In no more than 5 pages, discuss how you would improve the Mall vis-à-vis at least three of Garvin’s six ingredients for success. Be creative with your solutions!

- **Paper 3: Denver case study II: POPS project.** Due March 29. Worth 15% of final grade.
  - Denver has many privately owned public spaces in its Downtown area. Working individually, complete the form I make available and write up field visit in no more than 5 pages.

- **Final project: Choice of six options.** Due May 13. Worth 40% of final grade.
  - Working in teams of two, submit your project outline to me by April 19. More information below.

- **Attendance/participation.** Worth 20% of final grade (10% attendance; 10% active participation).
  - See notes below on participation and attendance policy.
REQUIRED BOOKS (any additional readings will be made available on Blackboard)


SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>In class: Campbell</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Political economy</td>
<td>Kantor and Judd, Ch. 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Culture and image</td>
<td>Kantor and Judd, Ch. 3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>The new suburbs</td>
<td>Kantor and Judd, Ch. 5 (others on BB)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>City futures</td>
<td>Kantor and Judd, Ch. 6 (others on BB)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Urban planning &amp; development</td>
<td>Garvin, Ch. 1-2; Morgan et al, Ch. 5 (BB)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Trouble with planning I</td>
<td>Ford, Part 1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Trouble with planning II</td>
<td>Ford, Part 2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>Trouble with planning III</td>
<td>Ford, Part 3 (POPS visit in class)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Real estate development I</td>
<td>Rybczynski, Ch. 1-15</td>
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<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Real estate development II</td>
<td>Rybczynski, Ch. 16-29</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>Codes I</td>
<td>Ben-Joseph, Ch. 1-4</td>
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<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Codes II</td>
<td>Ben-Joseph, Ch. 5-9</td>
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<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Zoning innovations I</td>
<td>Elliott, Ch. 1-5</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Zoning innovations II</td>
<td>Elliott, Ch. 6-8 (Park/Elliott lectures)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>A way forward?</td>
<td>Rybczynski, Ch. 5, 9-11; pp. 127-8 (BB)</td>
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* At latest

FINAL PROJECT OPTIONS

- **Option 1: Codes project.**
  - According to its creator, the Codes Project ([codesproject.asu.edu](http://codesproject.asu.edu)) is an "anthology of the codes, laws and related documents that have created, or sought to create, particular urban forms. It is a searchable archive drawn from a broad array of historical documents." Completing this assignment requires you conduct two Synoptic Surveys from the Codes in Real Life page ([http://codesproject.asu.edu/php/your_life.php](http://codesproject.asu.edu/php/your_life.php)). All instructions are listed on the site; follow steps #1-8 for each code. Document the process for both codes and figure out a creative way to present your findings in document and visual form.

- **Option 2: Downtown plan assessment.**
  - Nearly every US city has a “Downtown Plan”. Select one (not Denver). In no more than 20 pages, outline the basic components of the plan, providing some context and history. Note which players were involved in crafting the plan and upon whom the plan relies for its success. How might this reliance impact the quality of life of various parties (i.e. working poor, homeless people, long-time residents, business owners, etc.). Discuss strengths/weaknesses of the plan and evaluate using Garvin’s ingredients for success, but also be sure to ground discussion in the urban policy readings.
Option 3: 21st century infrastructure.
- One of the planner’s major tools is the provision of infrastructure. This is a major topic of import to both localities and the Federal government in the US and abroad. Infrastructurist.com recently published a list of the top 10 infrastructure stories of 2010. In no more than 25 pages, outline one of these stories, and discuss its relevance in light of our class readings and discussions. Why is this such a major development? How might it change the way we live in cities?

Option 4: New master plans.
- One of the most talked about masterplanned cities in recent years is Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, UAE (estimated completion of Phase I in 2015). Another masterplanned city recently arose in Israel called Modi’in, with planning efforts led by Moshie Safdie. While their goals of sustainability and livability remain the same, the way at which these cities were, or will be, built is very different. Compare and contrast the planning process in these two places and the central planning tenets on which these two towns are based. If you would like to contrast Modi’in with another actually built city, please propose this to me before April 12.

Option 5: A great planning failure.
- We can learn from planning failures as much as from planning successes. The town of Vallejo, California recently declared bankruptcy. The town is located 40 minutes from San Francisco, has waterfront access, ferry service directly to the San Francisco Financial District, and (some say) the best weather in the US. What went wrong? What strategies would you propose for the town, related to Garvin’s elements for success and drawing on the planner’s toolbox?

Option 6: Propose your own project.
- This option allows you to explore a topic of interest to you, but the topic must be closely related to the subjects and concepts we have discussed (or will discuss) during the semester. Submit your one-page proposal to me on or before April 12.

PARTICIPATION NOTES

There are two components to your attendance/participation grade. First, attendance is mandatory unless excused for religious holiday or personal emergency. If you plan to miss class, make sure to discuss this with me beforehand. Each unexcused class will incur a deduction of two percentage points from your final grade. Second, participation is a fundamental piece of your experience in this class. Participation does not just mean “showing up” and sitting quietly. It also does not mean participating by responding to each and every question posed (i.e. “effective participation is not measured by amount”). It means actively involving yourself in the discussion by showing up on time every day, completing all readings before class, actively listening to whomever is speaking, asking pertinent and pointed questions, offering opinions respectfully, and otherwise being deeply “present” in class. Remember that your statements do not have to be fully resolved before you speak. Discussing honest questions and true struggles within yourself is often the best way to contribute.

Listening is also participating. If you do not actively listen and share your questions and ideas with everyone, they can’t benefit from what you have to offer. Each of you has important questions and ideas to share that we can all learn from. Therefore, since you all have something important to contribute, you all have a responsibility to contribute it. And asking questions of your classmates or instructor is an important skill. If you have a question that you do not already have an answer for, you will genuinely want to hear what your classmates have to say. The worst thing for discussion is a series of unrelated monologues. What we are shooting for are true dialogues in which you engage the comments and questions of others rather than following them up with unrelated comments and questions. Be curious about what others have to say. If you share your thoughts, concerns and questions in an effort to explore the material in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, you will receive a good participation grade.

OTHER (source: Lori Catalano, Department of Landscape Architecture, UC Denver)

Communication
Unless otherwise noted, I will contact you via Blackboard. In addition, syllabi and readings will be posted on Blackboard. Since Blackboard uses your official school e-mail address (ending with email.ucdenver.edu), please make sure you check this address regularly or have it forwarded to your personal e-mail account.
Students with disabilities
Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS) at UC Denver. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved. Once you provide me with a copy of DRS’s letter, I will provide any accommodations DRS has approved.

Absences, Tardiness, and Homework
Except for documented health or disability reasons, I will not accept excuses for absences, tardiness or papers not submitted. Unexcused absence incurs loss of one percentage point (1 tardiness = 0.5 absence).

Plagiarism
Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another person’s ideas or words without acknowledgement. The following are considered to be forms of plagiarism when source is not noted: word-for-word copying of another person's ideas or words; the “mosaic” (interspersing your own words here and there while, in essence, copying another’s work); the paraphrase (the rewriting of another’s work, while still using their basic ideas or theories); fabrication (inventing sources); submission of another’s work as your own; and neglecting quotation marks when including direct quotes. Please visit the UC Denver Writing Center (http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Centers/writing/Pages/TheWritingCenter.aspx) for assistance on plagiarism and on general writing help. They are a fantastic resource.