

PADM 2120: Introduction to Urban and Regional Planning

Instructor's Information

Name: Emmanuel Kems Bigodza (Teaching Fellow)

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This syllabus can change in response to UNT policies. If a were to occur, students will be given advanced notice and a copy of the changes.

Class Meeting Arrangements:

Class Type: Face-to- Face

Meeting Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays - 9:30am to 10:50am

Class Location: Chilton Hall, Room 160C

Course Overview

I am delighted to have you in this course and look forward to our time together as we explore the dynamics of urban and regional planning. This course provides an introduction to urban and regional planning, focusing on how planners and policymakers develop, analyze, and implement policies and practices to address contemporary social, environmental, and economic challenges. The course begins with an overview of cities and regions, including the spatial organization of urban areas, the evolution of urban planning as a profession, and the roles and responsibilities of planners.

The course then examines the legal, institutional, and social foundations of planning, along with the tools and processes used to create and enforce plans and related public policies, such as land-use controls and development regulations. Students will explore key functional areas of planning through historical and contemporary urban issues, using case studies to illustrate planning responses across different contexts.

The course concludes by addressing emerging challenges and opportunities in urban and regional planning. Throughout the semester, students will compare and contrast planning practices across the United States and other countries, as well as across different historical and political contexts, to critically examine varying perspectives on livable cities and effective planning.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the social, economic, environmental, and technical factors that influence how cities form, function, and thrive;
2. Describe how urban planning evolved and distinguish contemporary planning practices from earlier approaches;
3. Demonstrate fluency in key terminology, major issues, and ongoing debates in urban and regional planning;
4. Understand the distinctions in major areas of planning;
5. Assess how planning tools, policies, and decision-making processes can be used to guide change and address community needs.

Required Materials

Textbook (Required)

Levy, J. M., Hirt, S. A., & Dawkins, C. J. (2025). *Contemporary Urban Planning* (12th ed.). Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-1032270630

Alternative Edition

Levy, J. M. (2016). *Contemporary Urban Planning* (11th ed.). Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-1138666382

Students may use either the 11th or 12th edition of *Contemporary Urban Planning*. The course will draw extensively from this text to provide a foundational understanding of urban and regional planning concepts, terminology, and practice. The textbook offers a comprehensive overview of the major themes addressed throughout the semester.

Additional required readings, videos, and other instructional materials will be provided through Canvas.

This syllabus outlines several expectations of you, me, and UNT and how we will work together to make this a powerful experience for you and your classmates. Let us start with a list of the most important topics on which to focus:

- Familiarize yourself with the course and syllabus.
- Commit to engage and learn.
- Engage in mutual respect.
- Communicate effectively and work to avoid miscommunication.
- Be ready with your technology.
- Comply with UNT policies.
- Find the support you may need.

Commit to engage and learn

Teaching Philosophy

I am eager to engage students who are independent learners and critical thinkers and who are eager to improve their understanding of urban planning and regional development. My style of teaching is best described as “*experiential*” as I like to share my experience with the academic materials covered in class.

Course Requirements and Schedule

To maximize your learning, there are a variety of learning formats including class discussions; experiential learning activities, including individual and group work; quizzes; written assignments; and a final exam. Instructions, expectations in quality, grading rubrics, and due dates are provided in each to ensure that you have the tools to complete each of the requirements. Each activity, quiz, and assignment explores specific concepts in an assigned chapter(s). Each unit will be assessed by a unit quiz, and the final exam is cumulative.

We will follow this schedule unless there is a need for revision. Errors and unforeseen circumstances may occur, and it is in the instructor’s and UNT’s discretion to make changes that support student learning. Any changes to the schedule will be reflected in this syllabus and the relevant modules in Canvas.

Expectations

- **Coming to class prepared**

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, videos, and other materials before class. This course involves substantial reading, and preparation is essential for informed discussion, meaningful participation, and successful completion of assignments.

- **Attendance and active participation**

Students are expected to attend class consistently and arrive on time, because much of the course learning occurs through discussion and in-class activities. Active and constructive participation is a critical component of the course. Students should be willing to engage thoughtfully by asking questions, sharing ideas, and offering perspectives, including those that may differ from others. Participation should demonstrate respect for diverse viewpoints, connections between course materials and prior knowledge or experience, and engagement with evidence from readings and lectures.

- **Timely completion of assignments and use of feedback**

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with questions about assignments at least one week before the due date. Feedback provided on assignments is intended to support learning and improvement, and students are expected to apply this feedback to subsequent work throughout the semester.

Course Requirements and Grading

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date
Attendance and Participation	10%	Throughout the semester
My City Essay	15%	Sept. 13
Exam	20%	Oct. 8
Planning Meeting Memo	10%	Oct. 16
Walkability Audit	10%	Dec. 1-3
Planning Topic Presentation	15%	TBD (after midterm)
Comprehensive Plan Review	20%	Dec. 1-3

The following is a short description of the assignments. Full details of each assignment and due dates will be available on Canvas.

1. My City Essay:

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to delve in-depth into a topic of interest. You will write a historiographical essay of a city that you have lived, grown up, or studied for at least six months. It has to be a city that you know well and is personally important to you. The essay should (1) illustrate your personal history and memoir of the city related to any topic of your interest in planning; (2) discover planning histories of the city; and (3) conclude with a discussion of the lessons learned about urban form and/or planning practice.

2. Planning Meeting Memo:

You will attend a planning meeting (ex. planning and zoning commission) in a DFW municipality of your choosing. After attending, please provide a short memo that summarizes the major issues or topics discussed.

3. Exam:

A mixture of short-answer and long-answer questions based on the readings, lectures, and in-class activities. The exam will be during our regularly scheduled class time. You are not allowed to refer to your notes or books or use any online resources. Exams must be taken individually.

4. Walkability Audit:

You will conduct walkability audits in two different neighborhoods and compare and discuss the differences/similarities using the knowledge you learned from the course.

5. Planning Topic Presentation:

Each student will prepare and deliver a presentation and lead a class discussion on a proposed or completed planning project of their choice that is related to the lecture. The presentation should also have an accompanying newspaper article that can be distributed as background reading to the other students prior to the presentation.

6. Final Paper.

Each student will select a city within the DFW region and review its comprehensive plan, focusing on a topic of interest (ideally the same as their presentation topic). The final paper will involve reading, analyzing, and critiquing the plan.

Course Schedule and Required Reading

Week	Date	Topic & Activities	Required Reading	Assignments
1	Aug. 18	- Self-Introduction - Syllabus discussion. - Course Overview & introduction		
	Aug. 20	Introduction to Urban Planning	Ch.1 – An Overview	
Part 1: Background and Development of Contemporary Urban Planning (Chapters 2-4)				
2	Aug. 25	Urbanization and Metropolitan Growth	Ch. 2 – The Urbanization of America	
	Aug. 27	Urbanization and Metropolitan Growth	Ch. 2 – The Urbanization of America	
3	Sept. 1	Part I: Origins of Planning	Ch. 3 – The History of Planning	
	Sept. 3	Part II: Modern Planning History	Ch. 4 – The History of Planning	
Part II: Structure and Practice of Contemporary Planning (Chapters 5-9)				
4	Sept. 8	Planning Law	Ch. 5 – The Legal Basis of Planning	
	Sept. 10	Politics and Decision-Making	Ch. 6 – Planning and Politics	My City Essay (Sept. 13)
5	Sept. 15	Equity and Social Dimensions of Planning	Ch. 7 – Social Issues	
	Sept. 17	Equity and Social Dimensions of Planning	Ch. 7 – Social Issues	Presentation Topic Selection
6	Sept. 22	Comprehensive Planning	Ch. 8 – The Comprehensive Plan	
	Sept. 24	Comprehensive Planning	Ch. 8 – The Comprehensive Plan	

7	Sep. 29	Land-Use Regulation	Ch. 9 – The Tools of Land-Use Planning	
	Oct. 1	Land-Use Regulation	Ch. 9 – The Tools of Land-Use Planning	
8	Oct. 6	No class: Prepare for Exams		
	Oct. 8	Exam		Exam
9	Oct. 13	Walkability Audit		
	Oct. 15	Walkability Audit		Planning Meeting Memo (Oct. 16)
Part III: Fields of Planning (Chapters 10 onward)				
10	Oct. 20	Urban Form and Design	Ch. 10 – Urban Design	
	Oct. 22	Housing Policy & Community Development	Ch. 11 – Housing and Community Development	Presentation
11	Oct. 27	Housing Policy & Community Development	Ch. 11 – Housing and Community Development	Presentation
	Oct. 29	Transportation and Mobility	Ch. 12 – Transportation Planning	Presentation
12	Nov. 3	Transportation and Mobility	Ch. 12 – Transportation Planning	Presentation
	Nov. 5	Local Economic Development	Ch. 13 – Economic Development Planning	Presentation
13	Nov. 10	Sustainability and Environment	Ch. 14 – Environmental Planning	Presentation
	Nov. 12	Regional, State, National & International Planning	Chs. 15 & 16	Presentation
14	Nov. 17	Planning Theory		
	Nov. 19	The Values and Professional Ethics in Planning: AICP Code of Ethics		
15	Nov. 23 – 29	Thanksgiving Break		
16	Dec. 1 - 3	Walkability Audit report due		
	Dec. 3	Comprehensive Plan Review final report due		

Grading

The standard scale below will be used for grading:

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 500-599

Bonus points -

Student completion rate of SPOT survey and other activities described in the course schedule *may* create opportunities for bonus points.

Activity & Assignment Policy

Students may use their course text and all online course content to complete activities and assignments. Students are expected to engage in class activities to complete activities and assignments. Activities and assignments may differ each week. Due dates and specific assignment instructions will be given. These may differ each week.

Academic Integrity Guidance on GenAI Fall 2026**Introduction and Overview**

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to software systems and platforms that create new content, such as text, images, audio or video using generative models. These models identify patterns from large datasets, enabling them to generate data in response to specific prompts, which in many ways can resemble human-created content.

At the University of North Texas, we value creativity and aim for all members of our community to thrive in an ever-changing world. In line with these values, it is critical that we prepare our academic community to embrace AI literacy by intentionally incorporating the use of GenAI into relevant learning experiences.

The following guide is intended to support our community in creatively exploring the benefits of GenAI in the teaching and learning process, while mitigating inappropriate or detrimental use of GenAI, such as students' reliance on automated content without critical engagement.

Class Policy

In this course, the use of GenAI tools is limited. Any additional use requires explicit permission, proper citation, and authentic student work. What this means is that students are allowed to engage GenAI in some cases such as assignments, consultations, and other responsible uses. However, this limited use is subject to evidence of not more than 20% of your submissions based on

Turnitin's GenAI detection tool by UNT. Tasks such as quizzes and exams should be completed independently without any reliance on GenAI.

Penalties

Penalties for unauthorized use of GenAI and violation of these policy guidelines will result in the following

Loss of 20% of points if there is evidence of 20% or more GenAI.

Loss of 35% of points if there is evidence of 50% or more GenAI.

Loss of 70% of points if there is evidence of 65% or more GenAI.

Loss of 100% of points if there is evidence of 80% or more GenAI.

Quiz and Examination Policy

Students may use their course text and all online course content to complete quizzes and exams. Students may not share information or seek assistance or information from each other, other persons, or other materials. Each quiz or exam is timed and has a deadline for completion.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty that prevents students from completing a time-sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the students to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Late Work

I base decisions regarding acceptance of and credit for late work consistent with UNT and course policies. An extension may be given under limited circumstances, including but not limited to, the student's or a close family member's illness or injury; death of a close family member; or other major life event. If a student believes they will miss or has missed assigned coursework, **the student must contact me within two (2) days after the coursework's due date has passed.** The student must provide written documentation of any such event upon request. If a student fails to contact me timely and/or provide the requested documentation, the student will not be given additional time to complete the assigned coursework and will receive no credit for the assigned coursework. The work missed may be difficult to make up because class activities and discussions cannot be fully replicated. Any makeup work is at the discretion of the instructor.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to engage in class activities regularly and to abide by the policy established for the course.

Course Videos & Recordings

Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management

System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Engage in mutual respect

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and abilities be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.
- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated. I will respond to acts of disrespect through individual conversations and, if appropriate in my discretion, will take further steps consistent with UNT and department policies.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual's experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people's ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as "YELLING!"
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using "text-talk" unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

Communicate effectively and work to avoid miscommunication.

Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback

I am committed to providing students with an excellent learning experience that you can integrate into their personal and professional worlds. I make every effort to provide clarity, meaningful guidance, and practical feedback to you. I believe that students are rewarded for

their efforts and that they earn the grades they receive. I make myself available to support, guide, and instruct to ensure students' needs are met.

For all course-related questions, please read this syllabus carefully before seeking assistance.

- For face-to-face communication, please make an appointment or drop by during office hours.
- For digital communication, please send a message in Canvas or through my email.
- For phone conversations, please call the office number.

Students can expect a response from me within 24 hours of sending a message *during business hours*. Messages may not be answered during the weekend. If your concern is urgent *during business hours*, please call the office number provided and speak with me by phone or leave a message. If you leave a message *outside of business hours*, you can expect to receive a response no later than one full business day after the message is left.

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. The SPOT survey will be available **at the end of the semester**.

Cheating or Plagiarism

In accordance with UNT policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>), cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the course. Any work submitted for a grade should be the original work of the student. Remember, plagiarism is a violation of acceptable student conduct. Long quotations should be avoided. Text or unique ideas taken directly from an author (quoted or paraphrased) should be cited and that citation should include a page number for the text. Violations will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see the professor if you have any questions about academic integrity in general or as it relates to particular requirements for this course.

Syllabus Change Policy

We reserve the right to change, modify, add to, alter, delete, and otherwise rearrange the syllabus to make the learning process accessible and in response to changes in a situation. If this were to occur, students will be given advanced notice and a copy of the changes.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members

have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.