



COURSE SYLLABUS

PADM 2120

INTRODUCTION TO URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30AM - 10:50AM

Chilton Hall 240

Instructor: Mashrur Rahman, Ph.D.

Office Location: 204J Chilton Hall

Office Hours: 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment

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Course overview

Welcome to urban and regional planning! Planning is a future-oriented profession, concerned with how today's decisions about land use, infrastructure, and spatial design will impact our communities for years to come. Planners are guided by ethical principles and professional codes to serve the public interest – building cities and regions that are more inclusive, livable, and sustainable.

Planning principles help us to understand the complex relationships between people, nature, and the built environment. They offer tools to tackle major challenges such as housing affordability, economic development, environmental sustainability, and transportation access. While planning requires technical expertise and specialized knowledge, it is also deeply political. Planners have to navigate the competing interests of government agencies, community organizations, private developers, and advocacy groups.

This course aims to provide an engaging introduction to urban and regional planning. We will examine the evolution of planning both as a profession and practice. We will explore how cities have grown – socially, economically, and physically – and how these changes shaped planning goals and methods over time. We will discuss the political, economic, social, and environmental forces that make planning both complex and essential. By the end of the course, students will gain a foundation in urban planning and learn how planning tools can be used to improve communities and guide local decision-making.

Learning Objectives

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

1. Understand the history and evolution of planning as a profession and practice.
2. Describe the historical context of urbanization in America and the economic, social, political, and environmental forces shaping today's cities.
3. Evaluate how urban form and design affect city functions.
4. Examine major issues, debates, and concerns in contemporary urban planning.
5. Apply planning concepts and techniques to evaluate real-world urban challenges.
6. Be fluent in planning terminology and define the main sub-field of planning.

Required materials

Levy, J. Contemporary urban planning (11th/12th edition). Routledge. ISBN 9781032270531

Readings

Assigned readings will be uploaded to the Canvas before class. Completing the assigned readings each week is essential for success on assignments and exams. Come to class prepared, with notes on key points, concepts, and examples, and bring any questions for discussion. This preparation will strengthen your understanding of the material.

Course requirements and grading

Assignments	% of grade	Due date
Class participation	5%	
My city essay	5%	8/28/25
Written assignment(s)	15%	9/9/25
Planning in the news essay + discussion board engagement	15%	9/23/25
Planning topic presentation	10%	TBD (after mid-term)
Final paper	20%	12/5/25
Exams	30%	10/9/25

My city essay: You will write a short essay about a city where you have lived, grown up, studied, or been familiar with for a long time. The essay should (1) illustrate your personal experience and memoir of the city, (2) the history and evolution of the city, (3) any interesting or fun fact about the city (e.g., for what it is known for), and (4) any current planning topic of interest related to the city and your reflection.

Planning in the news: For this assignment, you will pick a planning news article and write a short reflection essay.

Discussion board: You are required to post your planning news on the Canvas discussion board along with (1) a summary of the topic, and (2) an open-ended, thought-provoking question to the class. You are also required to respond to at least two questions on the discussion board.

Written Assignment(s): There will be assignment(s) based on course readings, lectures, and class discussions.

Planning Topic Presentation: Each student will prepare a 10-minute presentation on a proposed or completed planning project related to the course lectures. Following the presentation, the student will lead a brief (3-minute) class discussion. You are recommended to talk to your instructor or TA before selecting the topic.

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

Exams: To synthesize the material covered in class, students will take both a midterm and a final exam. Exams will draw from assigned readings, lectures, guest speakers, and in-class media. Formats may include true/false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam will be comprehensive. No make-up exams will be offered.

Detailed instructions for the assignments will be available on CANVAS

Course Schedule

Week	Class	Topic	Assignment due
1	8/19/25	Course overview and introduction: What is urban planning? Why do we need planning? Who are the planners? Readings: Levy Chapter 1	
	8/21/25	Urbanization and Urban Environments Readings: Levy Chapter 2	
2	8/26/25	History of Planning in America	
	8/28/25	Readings: Levy Chapter 3,4 The city (1939 Documentary)	My city (8/29/25)
3	9/2/25	Urban Renewal Efforts (Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs)	
	9/4/25	Legal basis for planning: Navigating the Planning Landscape Readings: Levy Chapter 5	
4	9/9/25	Planning and politics Readings: Levy Chapter 6	Assignment#1 (9/9/25)
	9/11/25	The Comprehensive Plan Readings: Levy Chapter 8	
5	9/16/25	Land use planning process	
	9/18/25	Readings: Levy Chapter 9	
6	9/23/25	Zoning and its critics	Planning in the news (9/23/25)
	9/25/25	Urban form, land use, and transportation systems	
7	9/30/25	Sprawl and suburbanization	

	10/2/25	Urban design Readings: Levy Chapter 10	
8	10/7/25	Reading day	
	10/9/25	Mid-term exam	
9	10/14/25	Transportation planning	
	10/16/25	Guest Speaker: Dr. Farhan Butt Deputy director of transportation division City of Denton	Presentation
10	10/21/25	Transportation planning and land use	
	10/23/25		Presentation
11	10/28/25	Housing and community development Readings: Levy Chapter 11	
	10/30/25	Growth management and sustainable development Readings: Levy Chapter 14	Presentation
12	11/4/25	Planning for metropolitan regions	
	11/6/25	Readings: Levy Chapter 16	Presentation
13	11/11/25	Community participation in urban planning	
	11/13/25		Presentation
14	11/18/25	Planning Theory	Final paper draft
	11/20/25	Readings: Levy Chapter 19	(11/20/25)
15		Thanksgiving holidays	
16	12/2/25	The values and professional ethics in planning: AICP code of ethics	
	12/4/25	Feedback, discussion, and summary lecture	Final paper (12/5/25)
			Final Exam 12/6/25- 12/10/25

Course Policies

Minimum Technology Requirements

To succeed in this course, students should have access to a computer with Microsoft Excel or a similar spreadsheet software and be comfortable using Canvas. Students should also be familiar with presentation and graphics programs (i.e., PowerPoint) and the Internet.

Assignment Policy

Assignment due dates are listed in the syllabus and posted on Canvas. For each assignment, you can find instructions and additional materials on Canvas. All assignments should be submitted via Canvas, unless indicated otherwise.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. 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 student to resolve any issues as soon as possible.

Late Work: All assignments are due by 11:59 PM, the end of the due date. For assignments

turned in within 24 hours of the due time, grades will be reduced by 10%. Assignments turned in more than 24 hours late will not be accepted. If unexpected circumstances prevent assignment completion on time (e.g., hospitalization, emergency travel), email the instructor as soon as possible to make alternative due date arrangements. All assignments will be checked for plagiarism.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. Please send me an email if you are unable to attend a class meeting due to illness, mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Syllabus Change Policy

We reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including augmenting readings and adding activities. Any changes for a specific class meeting will be posted at least one week before the class, with notifications sent out to students via email and Canvas. UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

All written work submitted for this course should be expressed in your own words, except for acknowledged quotations. If you complete a project in partnership with a classmate, this should be indicated on the submitted materials. Students who participate in academic dishonesty or intentional plagiarism may receive a failing grade on the assignment, the course, and/or referral to the Dean of Students, based on the severity of the offense.

Use of AI:

This course emphasizes creative, analytical, and critical thinking as core learning outcomes. All assignments must be completed by you, individually. Use of AI-generated texts in your essays, assignments, and papers is prohibited, will be treated as plagiarism, and will be reported.

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. For additional information, see the [ODA website \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please

refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records, such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course, are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Coursework completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their records; however, information about students' records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent.

Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws, and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination based on sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Getting Help

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustrations that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT, we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 330

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help \(https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC10554-4212710328\)](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC10554-4212710328)

Student Support Services

- [Registrar \(https://registrar.unt.edu/registration\)](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [Financial Aid \(https://financialaid.unt.edu/\)](https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services \(https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services\)](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center \(https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center\)](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center \(https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center\)](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services \(https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services\)](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Student Affairs Care Team \(https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care\)](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [Student Health and Wellness Center \(https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/index.html\)](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/index.html)
- [Pride Alliance \(https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance\)](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center \(https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources\)](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center \(https://success.unt.edu/asc\)](https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries \(https://library.unt.edu/\)](https://library.unt.edu/)

[Writing Center \(https://writingcenter.unt.edu/index.html\)](https://writingcenter.unt.edu/index.html)