

FALL 2011 / 1121: FIRST SEMESTER CORE URBAN PLANNING STUDIO

Department of Urban Planning and Design
Core Studio: 8 credits
Tuesday 2:00 - 6:00
Thursday 2:00 - 6:00

Course Instructors

Kathy Spiegelman, Coordinator, Core Urban Planning Studio, Design Critic in Urban Planning and Design; Kathy.Spiegelman@gmail.com
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:00 am to 11:00 am or by appointment

David Gamble, Design Critic in Urban Planning and Design + Principal, Gamble Associates; david@gambleassoc.com
Office Hours: Thursday, 9:00 am to 11:00 am or by appointment

Ana Gelabert-Sanchez, Design Critic in Urban Planning and Design; ana.m.gelabert@gmail.com
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm or by appointment

Kathryn Madden, Design Critic in Urban Planning and Design + Principal, Madden Planning Group; kmadden@maddenplanning.com
Office Hours: Tuesday noon to 2:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description

The first semester core studio of the Master of Urban Planning program introduces students to the fundamental knowledge and technical skills used by urban planners to create, research, analyze, and implement plans and projects for the built environment. The studio operates in conjunction with GSD 3329: GIS and Representation for Planners, which introduces students to spatial analysis and representation techniques to communicate planning analysis and ideas. The studio will use the City of Boston as the students' planning laboratory and students will be expected to understand the city through the lenses of planning elements such as demographics, economic attributes, market forces, character and built form, and public and private stakeholder interests, all of which shape the city and inform decisions about land use, development, and infrastructure.

The studio is organized into four parts, each representing a fundamental stage of the urban planning process.

- Part 1 explores the importance of ideas as the basis for urban planning. Students will be exposed to the power of ideas as reflected in the kind of city Boston is today. An emphasis is placed on identifying sources of creative thinking, how ideas are expressed, and how they link to urban planning outcomes.

- Part 2 explores research skills and analytic tools used by urban planners to understand the built environment. The integration of learning from GSD 3329 will provide techniques for recording and representing the results of the research.
- Part 3 explores the making of plans for the built environment. Using the creative and research skills developed in Parts 1 and 2 of the studio, students prepare functional urban plans, addressing land use, related building types, infrastructure requirements, open space needs, and other aspects of physical plans.
- Part 4 focuses on the strategies that planners use to implement their ideas. Students explore the range of implementation tools necessary to realize a plan, including zoning, development guidelines, phasing, sources and uses of funds, public engagement, and respective roles and responsibilities, among others. Throughout the semester the principles of urban planning with regard to equity, environment, and economics are explored with regard to planning proposals.

Through this studio, students will be exposed to a wide range of planning approaches, current planning issues, and physical elements of the urban environment through hands on studio projects. Students will also learn the importance of creative ideas, rigorous observation and research to support ideas, and strategic thinking to affect change that balances multiple interests in complicated settings. Through the studio format, the ability to communicate creative ideas will be developed, using graphic, analytic, and oral presentation skills to form a cohesive argument.

Studio Exercises

Students will complete four exercises that correspond with the four parts of the course.

- **Exercise 1** asks students to investigate the ideas behind the seminal plans that have shaped Boston (2 weeks)
- **Exercise 2** asks students to research and analyze eight local neighborhoods (3 weeks)
- **Exercise 3** asks students to make plans that contemplate the future of the Kenmore/Fenway/Longwood area in the City of Boston. (5 weeks)
- **Exercise 4** asks students to prepare implementation strategies that would be necessary to implement the plans developed in Exercise 3 (4 weeks).

Readings

There is no one assigned text. Readings will be provided for each exercise, and are chosen specifically to support the tasks being undertaken.

There are, however, general manuals and encyclopedias of planning practice that students may benefit from consulting periodically. It is not necessary to purchase these items, rather they are included here as general introductions to practice that

merit review as representative of conventional approaches and traditions. These include:

- The American Planning Association. 2007. *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. New York, NY: Wiley. A student version of this book is also available.
- Hoch, Charles J., Linda C. Dalton, and Frank S. So, eds. 2000. *The Practice of Local Government Planning* (aka “*The Green Book*”). Washington, DC: The International City/County Management Association.
- So, Frank S, Irving Hand, and Bruce D. McDowell, eds. 1986. *The Practice of State and Regional Planning*. Washington, DC: The International City/County Management Association.
- Watson, Donald, Alan Plattus and Robert Shibley. 2003. *Time-saver Standards for Urban Design*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Kelly, Eric Damien. 2009. *Community Planning: An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan, second edition*. Washington: Island Press.

Also, you may find these links useful:

<http://www.planning.org/pas/reports/>
<http://www.planning.org/ZoningPractice/>
http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/about_sg.htm#principles
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>

Grading

The GSD does not use a numerical- or letter-based grading system. The range of passing grades is: “pass” (P), “high pass” (HP), “distinction” (DIS), and “low pass”. “Pass” is for satisfactory work, “distinction” and “high pass” are reserved for work of clearly exceptional merit, and “low pass” indicates a performance, that although deficient in some respects, meets minimal course standards. Typically, “distinction” is awarded to approximately the top 10% of the class, “high pass” to approximately the top 10-25% of the class, and “pass” to the remaining 75%.

The four exercises in this studio are weighted in the final semester grade as follows:

- Exercise 1: 10%
- Exercise 2: 20%
- Exercise 3: 40%
- Exercise 4: 30%

Grades will not be given until the end of the semester but at mid-semester there will be a chance for 2 way feedback on how things are going. The exact date for this will be forthcoming.

Workload

Students should expect to devote approximately 1 to 2 hours of time outside of class hours for every hour of scheduled core studio time, with the time commitment varying with the rhythm of reviews. This amounts to 8 to 16 hours per week in addition to the 8 scheduled hours. Individual preferences will vary.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, and may only be excused with permission of the instructors.

Additional Assignments

In addition to the studio exercises and readings, each student will be expected to attend at least two public meetings in Boston, preferably related to an area or issue in one of the exercises. Students will submit a one-page summary of each meeting describing observations and outcomes.

During the semester each student will keep a bound journal (not a 3-ring binder type) that contains notes and ideas from pin-ups and reviews plus any helpful information gathered from work in the studio. This will then provide a record to refer to as work progresses.

Teaching Assistants

Second year MUPs will serve as teaching assistants (TAs) for the studio course. The TAs provide assistance outside of class hours to help you at your desks. Over the weekends prior to major reviews, the TAs will be asked to offer additional hours or arrange help by appointment. More information about their regular "desk" hours will be forthcoming.

In addition to regular TA office hours, the instructors of GSD3329 will hold a regular help section on Wednesday nights at 7:00 in room 508.