

COURSE OUTLINE

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the governmental structure, legal aspects, and practice of local planning, with special emphasis on zoning and land development regulation. The civic and legal bases for the field of urban planning will be explored at a basic level. More detailed exploration of legal topics as they pertain to planning and the practice of zoning, subdivision/development regulation, and comprehensive planning will follow. The course is intended for advanced undergraduates in Urban and Regional Planning and other related fields. The course provides an introduction for students interested in pursuing more advanced studies in land use law and urban planning. It will also provide practical knowledge for students seeking careers in local government planning. Prior knowledge of urban planning principles is helpful, but not essential.

The course objectives are to understand:

1. The Civic and Legal Basis for Planning. We will look at governmental structures at the local, regional, state, and federal levels as they pertain to the field of planning. We will review the constitutional principles that guide the practice of planning and zoning, including property rights, due process, equal protection, religious freedom, public purpose, and free speech. Students will follow local planning issues to learn about local governments in action. Current topics and issues noted in the media as they pertain to planning will be identified and discussed by students throughout the semester.
2. Legal Topics as they Pertain to the Practice of Planning. We will explore a range of legal topics that pertain to the practice of planning, zoning and development as manifested in the common law. Issues include takings, impact fees, eminent domain, religious freedom, nuisance law, inclusionary zoning, free speech and signage regulation, historic preservation, proper procedures, planning jurisdictions, and environmental law. Current cases that affect the practice of planning in Illinois will be highlighted. Students will study landmark cases that have formed current approaches and will prepare a paper on a pertinent case.
3. The Basics of Zoning. Using the prior units as a base, students will explore the realm of zoning, using the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and "A Better Way to Zone" as a practical guide. Topics to be covered include the origins of zoning, use regulation, development regulations, nonconformities, typical approaches to zoning, and special applications of zoning. We will discuss practical administration of zoning, including amendments, annexation agreements, variances, appeals, and enforcement. Students will conduct a zoning exercise based on a real-life example.
4. An Overview of Subdivision Regulations. Subdivision and development regulations will be explored as an overview. Topics will include the legal basis for the control of land division (Plat Act), linkage to comprehensive planning and zoning, subdivision layout, platting process, and public improvements. Current trends in street, sewer, and storm water management design will be discussed. Students will conduct a subdivision platting exercise based on a real-life example.
5. An Overview of Comprehensive Planning. An overview of comprehensive planning and its role in development regulation and growth management will be discussed, using local examples. We will discuss the legislative basis for comprehensive planning, uniform act, current legislation, and relationship to zoning and subdivision regulations. Different approaches to planning, types of plans, and public participation will be addressed.

This course will provide the student with a general introduction to the study of local government planning and land use law, with special applications to the practice of zoning and subdivision review. The student will have a basic understanding of the relationship of planning to the law and will gain an introduction to major planning law cases. The student will have a better understanding the role of planners in local and regional government and their day to day administrative duties.

ORGANIZATION AND APPROACH

The course is designed as a participatory lecture. The instructor will identify required readings and present lecture materials for each class meeting, but a portion of the class time will be devoted to class participation and short, scheduled presentations by students. Guest lecturers will be scheduled for special topics and some core lessons. You will be required to attend each session, complete all assigned readings, complete all class assignments and quizzes, and participate in class discussions/presentations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student contributions consist of the following:

Attendance

The primary value you can derive from this class will be to attend and to participate. Attendance will be taken. If you cannot attend a class session due to illness or other reason (including religious beliefs, observances, and practices), please e-mail the instructor or Teaching Assistant ahead of time so that your absence can be excused. Perfect or near perfect attendance will enhance your grade, while more than three absences will have a detrimental effect on your grade and can result in the loss of one or more grade letters. Please contact the instructor or Teaching Assistant s soon as possible if you believe you will have difficulty meeting attendance requirements.

Participation

Participation involves discussion in class as well as presentation of assigned oral reports throughout the semester. Both physical attendance and mental engagement are essential to successful participation. When presenting to the class, put yourself “on stage”, be friendly and outgoing, speak clearly, and be respectful and semi-formal with your audience. Audience members in class must reciprocate by listening closely, being respectful, and asking good questions. Well done presentations and active, constructive participation will enhance your grade. Lack of participation could have a detrimental effect on your grade.

Readings

Students will be required to complete identified readings prior to class in order to better follow the lecture materials and to participate more successfully in class discussion. Completion of readings will be helpful for mastery of the regular quizzes and the course final.

Assignments

There will be five assignments that must be completed as part of this class. Assignments will encompass both individual and group responsibilities and will be presented in both written and oral formats. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided separately. Student presentations will be scheduled throughout the semester.

Local Board/Commission Review

Students will work in groups to learn about and to attend a meeting of a local elected or appointed board or commission. Students will report on the quality of the board's service to the public, along with any pertinent legal or planning issues that the Board is addressing. This assignment will involve a group presentation and paper.

Current Planning Issues in the News

Identify current planning and land use law issues in the local, regional, or national media. Select a topic that is of particular interest to you and which relates to topics covered in class. Provide a written summary and oral presentation summarizing the topic, showing how it relates to the course, and encouraging class discussion. This is an individual assignment.

Case Summary Report

This assignment is the most important one of the semester. Choose a landmark case pertinent to the course. Study it closely and prepare a paper (e.g., 7 to 10 pages, with 1 ½ spacing) describing it and analyzing it as it pertains to the field and practice of planning. This is an individual assignment.

Zoning Exercise

Students will be given an exercise requiring the identification and analysis of the zoning requirements for a local development example.

Subdivision Exercise

Students will be given an exercise requiring the analysis of subdivision platting requirements for a local development example.

Quizzes

A short essay/short answer quiz will be administered at the conclusion of each instructional block or group of blocks. Students will have a chance to prepare for the quiz in advance, but the quiz will be administered in class. If you are unable to take a quiz due to illness, you must e-mail the instructor in advance to make alternative arrangements.

Final

A cumulative short essay/short answer final based on the materials covered in the prior quiz reviews will be administered during the assigned exam period. Students may opt to use their combined Quiz scores in lieu of taking the Final. Those students opting to take the Final will be able to substitute their lowest Quiz score with their score on the Final.

READINGS AND ON-LINE RESOURCES

A COMPASS website will be set up for this class for on-line access to readings and other information.

There are two short books that are assigned for this course and should be available for purchase at the bookstore. If the bookstore runs out of copies, the books are also available through Amazon.com or other on-line booksellers. The texts are:

1. Nolon, John R. and Patricia E. Salkin, Land Use in a Nutshell, Thomson/West Group, Rev. Ed. 2006.
2. Elliott, Donald L. A Better Way to Zone, Island Press, 2008.

These texts cover the material for the first two-thirds of the course. Additional readings and other resources for the course will be provided through the course COMPASS site. These additional readings will include relevant case summaries and articles or chapters regarding the course content. Cases and journal articles can also be

accessed through the University of Illinois Library Lexis database. We will review how to access this data base in class.

Copies of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Comprehensive Plan will be referenced during the last three instructional units and are available at www.urbanainillinois.us (under Community Development/Planning Division) or for hard copy purchase from the Urbana City Clerk. One class copy of these documents will also be available during class time. City of Champaign documents are available at www.ci.champaign.il.us Regional planning documents including the Land Resource Management Plan are available at www.ccrpc.org

A helpful resource for relevant readings is located at <http://law.wustl.edu/landuselaw/> This website has been developed by Professor Daniel R. Mandelker, a land use attorney who teaches at Washington University. Information regarding the practice of planning is provided at www.planning.org (look under Resources/Research), the website of the American Planning Association. Information pertaining to Illinois planners is at www.ilapa.org

COUNSELING CENTER

The Counseling Center at the University of Illinois is available for all students who may need assistance developing improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. The Counseling Center provides individual, couples, and group counseling. All of these services are paid for through the health services fee. For further information, please see: <https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>.

GRADING

This class will be graded on a normal scale. Grading will be well distributed throughout the semester and across a number of relatively small assignment and examination opportunities. If you attend the class within the parameters identified above, participate in discussion, and complete all of the assignments and examinations in a timely manner, you will be successful in this class and have a good mastery of the subjects covered.

1. Attendance (required, see guidelines above)
2. Participation (required, see guidelines above)
3. Assignments
 - a. Board/Commission (report and presentation) 15%
 - b. Planning Issue (report and presentation) 10%
 - c. Case Summary 25%
 - d. Zoning Exercise 10%
 - e. Subdivision Exercise 10%
4. Quizzes 30%
5. Final (optional; may substitute for lowest quiz score)

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours with the instructor or teaching assistant will be by appointment, and can be arranged before or after class. The best way to reach the instructor is via e-mail at eh Tyler6@gmail.com The TA can be reached at gmg4@illinois.edu