Fall 2018
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

11.910 Planning Ideas That Matter

Units: 3-0-3, graded pass/fail
Meets: Thursdays 11:00am-12:30 pm, in 9-217, starting Sept 6
Also: please plan to attend the Faculty Debate on Planning Doctoral Curriculum Matters, to be held in the City Arena on Wednesday, October 17, from 12:30-2
Instructor: Prof. Larry Vale

This seminar brings together DUSP faculty to introduce and debate key issues in applied planning theory, while providing a parallel opportunity for incoming doctoral students to consider a range of ideas and perspectives that cover many aspects of planning and development. Sessions focus on questions of livability, territoriality, governance, and reflective practice. These four overarching ideas form the framework used in the required text, Planning Ideas That Matter, edited by Bishwapriya Sanyal, Lawrence J. Vale, and Christina D. Rosan (MIT Press, 2012). The intent of the seminar is to identify some of the “planning ideas that matter” while opening up the question of just what a “planning idea” might actually entail. Seminar sessions will include visits from several DUSP faculty who will help introduce the department’s six approved PhD “First Fields” (i.e., the ones that students typically choose among when devising their General Exam). These sessions have two goals: 1. To give each student a sense of the things one thinks about when pursuing each of these fields; and 2. To help students connect each of the First Fields to “Planning Ideas That Matter” in a double sense: by showing how each exam field is linked to “Planning” (given that you are enrolled in a “Planning” department) and by asking how/why do (or should) such ideas matter for society. This fall, in addition to our regular Thursday sessions, we will also have a Faculty Debate about doctoral program curriculum issues in planning, open to the whole department.

This seminar cannot be either a full “history of planning theory” or, for that matter, a “theory of planning history,” but instead offers multiple windows into thinking about what such frameworks ought to include. My central goal is to encourage incoming doctoral students to identify the “planning ideas” that matter most to each of you.

Intended solely for first-year doctoral candidates in DUSP, this subject has several goals:
1. Introduce you to a wide range of DUSP faculty in a setting where they are being asked to discuss their ideas;
2. Clarify for you the department’s intellectual range;
3. Improve your facility in developing succinct responses to the arguments made by others, while developing your own intellectual voice;
4. Encourage you to identify unexpected intellectual intersections and foster new areas of excitement as you begin your program;
5. Assist you in thinking about the fields where you may take your exams, by helping you glimpse what the fields furthest from your own interests might offer you.
Assignments:

1. **Readings and questions**

   All 1st-year PhD. students receive the book, *Planning Ideas That Matter: Livability, Territoriality, Governance, and Reflective Practice*, edited by Bishwapriya Sanyal, Lawrence J. Vale, and Christina Rosan (MIT Press, 2012) as a gift during orientation. All other readings will be provided as pdf files or web links to articles. These are hosted on the subject’s Learning Modules site: https://learning-modules.mit.edu/class/index.html?uuid=/course/11/fa18/11.910#info

   Complete the assigned readings in advance of each Thursday’s sessions. And, for the Debate session on October 17, develop at least one good question that you would like to pose to the speakers. Please email me this question (or two) no later than Tuesday, October 16 (by 10pm). I hope that at least some of you will get to ask that question at the Wednesday debate, and we will grapple with the other questions collectively as part of the Thursday follow-on seminar.

2. **Reflection memo**

   After the Faculty debate about PhD Curriculum held on October 17, write a 1 or 2-page reflection memo, including response to the following:
   1) What do you consider to be the key points made in the debate?
   2) What did the debates trigger you to think about in terms of your own curriculum goals at DUSP?

   This response is due in hard copy at the beginning of the Thursday class on October 18. Be prepared to discuss the memo during the first part of that Thursday’s class.

3. **Lead discussion on selected topics**

   I have designated five class sessions for our own collective agenda setting intended to expand and clarify “planning ideas that matter.” At the first of these (September 27) we will collectively propose ideas that are interest to members of the class and, at the fifth of these sessions (December 6) we will collectively try to identify topics that seem to be missing from the realm of planning theory. For the middle three sessions (October 18, November 8, and November 29), I would like each student (working in a group of 2 or 3) to lead a discussion of a “planning idea” that is not otherwise listed on our syllabus. I offer some suggestions below, but am also open to ideas of your own choosing. Some possibilities include:
   1. Authoritarian High Modernism (reading from James Scott, *Seeing Like A State*)
   2. Sustainable Development (reading by Timothy Beatley in *Planning Ideas That Matter*, or other)
   4. Self-Help Housing (reading by Peter Ward in *Planning Ideas That Matter*, or other)
   5. Good Governance (reading by Merilee Grindle, in *Planning Ideas That Matter*, or other)
**September 6:** What is a “Planning Idea” and How Might it Matter?
Reading:

**September 13:** Planning Ideas About Planning Practice
Reading:
- *Changing Cities: 75 Years of Planning Better Futures at MIT* https://dusp.mit.edu/project/changing-cities-75-years-planning-better-futures-mit

**September 20**
Overview of PhD First Field #1: City Design and Development
Guest: Prof. Brent Ryan
Reading:
- And, please look over: City Design and Development, First Field Readings and Field Overview (2014)

**September 27:** Discussion of student-generated “Planning Ideas That Matter;” students divide into 3 groups (containing 2 or 3 students each) to choose topics and plan presentations for October 18, November 8, and November 29 sessions.
October 4: Overview of PhD First Field #2 Public Policy and Politics, and First Field #3: International Development
Guests: Prof. Janelle Knox-Hayes and Prof. Bish Sanyal

Reading:
And, please look over: Public Policy, First Field Readings and Field Overview (2014) and International (Economic) Development First Field Readings and Field Overview (2007, to be updated)

October 11: Overview of PhD First Field #4: Urban Sociology
Guest: Prof. Justin Steil

Reading:
- Justin Steil and Aditi Mehta, “When Prison is the Classroom: Collaborative Learning about Urban Inequality,” Journal of Planning Education and Research (published electronically, October 2017); https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X17734048
- And, please look over: Urban Sociology, First Field Readings and Field Overview (2014)

October 17: Planning Curriculum Matters
DUSP Faculty Debate: What Should All DUSP Doctoral Students Know About Planning?
(Note: this also coincides with our DUSP Open House for Prospective Doctoral Students)
Panel [TBA]:
Moderator: Larry Vale
Reading: TBA

October 18: Reflection on October 17 debate
And Student Led Discussion #1: discussion with first team of a planning idea that matters to YOU.
Reading TBA based on student-driven topic

October 25: No Class due to ACSP Conference in Buffalo (you should consider attending/presenting in 2019 and thereafter); in lieu of our class, you may wish to consider attending Devin Bunten’s class, “Housing Markets, Policy and Social Stratification” 11.S946 (meets in 9-450A)
November 1: Overview of PhD First Fields #5: Urban Information Systems
Guest: Prof. Sarah Williams
Reading:
- And, please look over: Urban Information Systems, First Field Readings and Field Overview (2014)

November 8: Student Led Discussion #2: discussion with second team of a planning idea that matters to YOU.
Reading: TBA based on student-driven topic

November 15: Overview of PhD First Fields #6: Urban and Regional Economics
Guests: Prof. Siqi Zheng
Reading:
- Additional Reading TBA
- And, please look over: Urban and Regional Economics, First Field Readings and Field Overview (2014)

November 22: Thanksgiving: No Class

November 29: Student Led Discussion #3: discussion with third team of a planning idea that matters to YOU.
Reading: TBA based on student-driven topic

December 6: Discussion about: What’s Missing from Planning Theory?
Readings: