MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Course 11.360
Community Growth and Land Use Planning

Syllabus (Registration Day Version)

Course Meetings: MW, 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

Faculty: Jeff Levine
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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.
Please email to set up a time if possible

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Course Description:
This class will focus on how to take students’ academic learning and apply it in a real-world setting. Students will be participating in a group effort to develop a strategic plan for the Broadway corridor in Arlington, MA. Working with Town of Arlington staff, the public, and faculty instructors, students will learn important practical skills in local urban planning, including professional memorandum writing, time and project management, public outreach and participation, applied land use analysis and mapping, and similar “real world” tools and techniques.

Class Participation:
This is a project-based, collaborative course. Students should be well prepared to participate actively in class discussions and contribute actively to the work of the team. The quality of your participation will make up 15% of your final course grade.

Assignments:
Requirements and grading are as follows:

• In-class participation (15%). Be prepared, participate, ask questions, listen to each other, contribute to the work of the team.
• Brief professional memoranda of 250 words each (30%). Mark Twain once famously said “I would have written less but I ran out of time.” These assignments will focus on complex issues and ask students to outline their findings and recommendations in a professional memorandum on a topic of one page! The responses will be graded on a √+, √, √- scale. A “√+” will count for 5 out of 5 points, a “√” 4 out of 5 points, and a “√-” 3 out of 5 points. Longer memos run the risk of being graded on the first page only (in the real world, your boss will only have time to read one page!)

• Weekly team assignments (30%). Each week the class will complete team assignments leading to the creation of the final plan. We expect the class to break up into teams and divide the work of each assignment among the teams and then to assemble those pieces into a conceptually and visually coherent whole.

• Final Plan (15%). In the final weeks of the course, the class will revise and assemble the final plan, incorporating feedback from the community engagement and the public presentation. The final plan should include a printable book and could also include online components. The book should include the following sections: Executive Summary, Planning Context, Planning Process, Plan Vision and Goals, Plan Framework, and Plan Implementation sections.

• Final Presentation (10%). In the final week of the semester, the class will present its proposals to the client and the public in Arlington. The presentation will be evaluated on its content, organization, and delivery.

Note that the final plan and presentation schedule may adjust based on the real world needs of your client, as will often happen in planning practice.

Grading Rubric
The following grading rubric will be applied to evaluate submissions:

I) Does it answer the question or fulfill the requested deliverable? (40%)
   i. Does it have a clear thesis that is responsive to the question?
   ii. Does it support this thesis with appropriate evidence?

II) Does it incorporate concepts and methodologies from assigned readings, class discussions, and community engagement? (30%)
   i. Does it interpret and apply the readings accurately?
   ii. Does it respond to the information gathered in community engagement?

III) Does it present a compelling, well-structured argument? (30%)
   i. Does it have a logical structure that supports the development of the thesis?
   ii. Does it engage with alternative viewpoints, counter-arguments and acknowledge weaknesses?
   iii. Is it well supported by qualitative and quantitative data?
Grading Scale
Grades are assigned using the following scale:
A   96-100
A-  91-95
B+  86-90
B   81-85
B-  76-80
C+  71-75
C   66-70
C-  61-65
D+  56-60

Late submissions
All submissions should be submitted via Stellar.
In the event that medical or other personal circumstances arise that interfere with your
ability to complete assignments on time, extension requests can be made to the Office of the
Dean of Graduate Education (http://odge.mit.edu). If the ODGE decides that an extension is
warranted, they will send a generic note that your assignment deadline should be extended
without penalty. This policy is intended to preserve your privacy.
Any assignment submitted after the deadline, without a request for an extension that
was approved by ODGE, will be marked down 5 points out of 100. Any assignment more than
3 hours late will be marked down a further 10 points. A further 10 points will be deducted for
each day the assignment is late.

Writing help
The MIT Writing and Communication Center (WCC) offers free one-on-one
professional advice from communication experts. The WCC is staffed completely by MIT
lecturers. All have advanced degrees. All are experienced college classroom teachers of
communication. All are published scholars and writers. WCC lecturers have a combined 130
years’ worth of teaching here at MIT (ranging from 1 to 26 years).
The WCC works with undergraduates, graduate students, post-docs, faculty, staff,
alumni, and spouses. The WCC helps everyone strategize about all types of academic and
professional writing as well as oral presentations and slide design.
No matter what department or discipline you are in, the WCC helps you think your way
more deeply into your topic, and helps you see new implications in your data, research, and
ideas. The WCC also helps with non-native speaker issues, from writing and grammar to
pronunciation and conversation practice. To make an appointment, go to
https://mit.mywconline.com and register with our online scheduler. The WCC is at E18-233,
50 Ames Street.

Academic integrity
Fundamental to the academic work you do at MIT is an expectation that you will make
choices that reflect integrity and responsible behavior. Honesty is the foundation of good
academic work. Do trust the value of your own intellect and credit others for their work. Do
not copy ideas or phrases without citing them appropriately. Do not submit projects or papers that have been written for a previous class. See https://integrity.mit.edu/.

**Safe and Equitable Learning Environment:**

MIT is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the Institute. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Title IX Office. This is important for the safety of the whole MIT community. Violence Prevention & Response’s hotline, 617-253-2300, provides 24/7 confidential support. Please visit https://titleix.mit.edu/ for more information on reporting options and other resources.
Part I: Site Research and Community Engagement

1. Introduction
   (Wednesday, September 4)
   a. Class Agenda
      i. About the course
      ii. What is land use and what affects it?
      iii. Writing a Professional Memorandum
      iv. Developing a Work Plan
      v. Introduction to Arlington
      vi. The project site and project
   
   b. Assignments
      i. Professional Memorandum 1
         1. What do you need to know in order to develop a plan? How might you gather this data and background?
      ii. Background research as a team
         a. Census research
         b. Other background research
   
   c. Readings
      Portland’s Plan 2030 (https://portlandsplan.me)
      Background readings on Arlington:
      Master Plan (2015)
      Housing Production Plan (2016)
      Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015-2022)
      Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan (2019)
      Arts and Culture Action Plan (2017)
      Review 117 Broadway and 10 Sunnyside applications, 117 Broadway decision, and ARB meeting minutes from 2/25/19
      North Union Street playground CPA project
      Arlington Housing Authority Life & Skills Building project
      Recent ZBA and Conservation Commission decisions and orders of conditions for properties in neighborhood
      BRT results, news articles 2018-2019
      Eskar Host Community Agreement application for adult-use marijuana at 23 Broadway
      https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/rappaport/files/arlington.pdf
2. **Site Visit to Arlington**  
(Monday, September 9 with a return trip on Wednesday, September 11)

a. **Class Agenda**
   i. *Meet with client (tentatively 9/9 at 4 pm.)*
   ii. *Visit site*
   iii. *Form groups to focus on some or all of the following topics:*
      1. Land use
      2. Housing
      3. Economic development
      4. Public realm and open space
      5. Mobility and transportation
      6. Resilience and environmental systems
   iv. *Site documentation*
      1. Take photographs, sketch areas of interest, take field notes on site conditions.
      2. Bring a base map and annotate places and features you want to remember.

b. **Assignments**
   i. *Professional Memorandum 2*
      1. What did you find useful in developing an understanding of the place?
   ii. *Document initial research questions and ideas, individually*
      1. Write down or outline questions about Arlington and its land use that you want to explore further.
      2. Write down ideas you have of priorities or interventions or sites that might be relevant to the project.
      3. Photograph, sketch, and record early observations of the place.
   iii. *Create Work Plan, as a team*
   iv. *Develop a Public Engagement Plan, as a team*

c. **Readings**
   Szold, Terry, "Merging Place-Making and Process in Local Practice," in Lloyd Rodwin and Bish Sanyal, *The Profession of City Planning:*
3. **Neighborhood Planning** (Monday, September 16 and Wednesday, September 18)

   a. **Class Agenda**
      
      i. **Place**
      
      ii. **Land use and equity**
      
      iii. **Participatory planning (guest lecture, Caesar McDowell)**
      
      iv. **Class discussion of engagement strategies for Arlington**

   b. **Assignments**
      
      i. **Professional Memorandum 3**
         
      What will make the community engagement successful or not successful? What do you anticipate will be difficult? What are your steps forward to meaningfully engage community residents and other stakeholders?

      ii. **Begin community engagement process, as a team**
         
      1. Conduct initial engagement as a class or in small groups.
         
      2. Begin documenting your findings.

      iii. **Complete Planning Context section, as a team**

   c. **Readings**


      Seidman, Karl. 2004. Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities: A Practitioner’s Guide to Urban Main Street Programs, the Fannie Mae Foundation, September 2004. Chapters 5-8
4. **Law and Politics of Land Use Regulation**  
(Monday, September 23 and Wednesday, September 25)  
a. **Class Agenda**  
i. The power to regulate land use  
ii. Takings and regulatory takings  
iii. Exactions  
iv. Land use and housing equity (Guest lecture, Jesse Kenson-Benanav)  
v. Land use and economic development  
  
b. **Assignments**  
i. Continue community engagement process, as a team  
ii. Start drafting Planning Process section, as a team  
  
c. **Readings**  

5. **Land Use, Transportation, Politics, and Plans**  
(Monday, September 30 and Wednesday, October 2)  
a. **Class Agenda**  
i. Power and urban politics  
ii. Land use and plans  
iii. Land use and public value capture  
iv. Land use, climate change, and resilience  
v. Transportation and Land Use (Guest Lecture, Fred Salvucci)  
  
b. **Assignments**  
i. Continue community engagement process, as a team
ii. Complete the Planning Process section, as a team

c. Readings


Review Complete Streets policies from several communities in the U.S.


6. Urban Design
(Monday, October 7 and Wednesday, October 9)

a. Class Agenda

   i. Perception of place (Guest Lecture : Prataap Patrose, Sr. Advisor for Long Range Planning, BPDA.)
   ii. Urban design
   iii. Streets

b. Assignments

   i. Professional Memorandum 4
      One page work explanation of how to develop plan goals
   ii. Write Arlington plan vision and goals, as a team
   iii. Meet with client to review draft vision and goals

c. Readings


Jacobson, Justin and Ann Forsyth, "Seven American TODs: Good practices for urban design in Transit-Oriented Development projects," *Journal of Transport and Land Use* 1:2 (Fall 2008) pp. 51-88
7. **Form-Based Codes, Performance Zoning, and TOD**  
(Monday, October 14 and Wednesday, October 16)  
   a. **Class Agenda**  
      i. Form-based codes  
      ii. Performance zoning  
      iii. Land use, transit equity, and transit-oriented development

   b. **Assignments**  
      i. Create Plan Framework section, as a team  
      ii. Prepare for in-class presentation

8. **Presentation in class and workshop**  
(Monday October 21 and Wednesday, October 23)  
   a. **Class Agenda**  
      i. In class presentation to invited guests  
      ii. Workshop with invited guests  
      iii. Preparation for Arlington presentation

   b. **Assignments**  
      i. Prepare for Arlington presentation  
      ii. Revise Plan Vision and Goals, Plan Framework sections in light of feedback

9. **Presentation in Arlington**  
(Week of October 28)  
   a. **Class Agenda**  
      i. Present in Arlington to client and to public (tentative date, 10/28, Thompson School)  
      ii. Meet on 10/30 as class for debrief

   b. **Assignments**  
      i. Professional Memorandum 5:  
         What goes into making a plan? How do you develop ideas? How do you address the tension between what you think needs to get done and what seems possible?  
      ii. Revise Plan Vision and Goals, Plan Framework, and other plan sections in light of feedback

10. **Reflection and in-class work**  
(Monday, November 4 and Wednesday, November 6)  
   a. **Class Agenda**  
      i. Class discussion Arlington presentation and client and community comments  
      ii. Class discussion about agenda for remaining classes
iii. Guest lecture

b. Assignments
   i. Draft Plan Implementation section

11. In-class working session
   (Wednesday, November 13)
   a. Class Agenda
      i. Guest lecture
      ii. In class working sessions

   b. Assignments
      i. Create final version of Plan book.

12. In-class working sessions
    (Monday, November 18 and Wednesday, November 20)
    a. Class Agenda
       i. Guest lecture
       ii. In class working session

    b. Assignments
       i. Prepare for final presentation in Arlington.

13. Final Presentation (Exact time TBD, week of December 2)
    a. Class Agenda
       i. Final presentation to Arlington Redevelopment Board 12/2
       ii. In class 12/4

    b. Assignments
       i. Professional Memorandum 6:
          How do you think it went? What were lessons learned along the way?
       ii. Final presentation in Arlington after December 2.