PURPOSE

This course is a requirement for doctoral students in urban and regional planning. The intent of the class is to navigate the terrain of contemporary planning theory, focusing on definitional as well as conceptual aspects of planning ideas, arguments, hypotheses, methods, models, examples, cases, exercises, and evaluations. While the course is designed to prepare participants for careers in planning education and/or professional practice, it also seeks to stimulate discourse on contemporary public policy issues as well as alternative perspectives on planning and intervention. The course, therefore, is dedicated not just to the connections between “knowledge” and “action” but also to framing, understanding, evaluating, and learning from plans and planning.

APPROACH

Students taking this course should have taken PLAN 600 (Planning Theory) or an equivalent masters level planning course with a grade of B or better. It is expected that students will have had exposure to key terms and concepts in planning theory. Several background textbooks may be helpful including: John Friedmann’s Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action (Princeton University Press: 1987), John Forester’s Planning in the Face of Power (University of California Press: 1988), and Michael Brooks’ Planning Theory for Practitioners (APA Press: 2002). Students are to be familiar with the literature in journals such as the Journal of Planning Education and Research. The intent of this course is to build on that knowledge base and delve into the theoretical constructs informing the field of urban and regional planning and explore challenges faced by planners and those who train them. Hence, we will move between the nature of planning problems and the response of planners, shifting between the
background and the foreground, alternating between the plan as a product and as the outcome of a process that involves not just intention, but also values, ideologies, constraints, politics, institutions, and other factors. We will begin by examining various frameworks and approaches for organizing planning theory, moving next to historical considerations, touching upon some key individuals, places, and projects which have informed the development of planning as both a discipline and as a profession. We will cover both rational approaches to planning and design and acknowledge influences of the postmodern condition, while reviewing fundamental concepts and ideas related to social justice. We also consider some of the dominant social, cultural, and economic forces (urbanization and sprawl) as well as some contemporary approaches (ecological footprints) for measuring change and progress. One way of reviewing the growing literature on sustainable development involves seeing it as a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary approach to planning. We will finish off the semester with discussion and analysis of two very different kinds of planning problems – disaster management and the new economy associated with the information age.

**EXPECTATIONS**

This is a seminar class, the success of which depends upon the participation of students as readers, discussants, analysts, reactors, and synthesizers of information. For each of the topics, participants are expected to:

- Summarize and describe the main points;
- Identify the dominant theoretical and disciplinary traditions;
- Point to similar works, if any;
- Critique the article or paper in terms of problem formulation;
- Assess the data and methods;
- Relate the findings to contemporary issues and problems in urban planning;
- Translate the information into a usable format;
- Share your ideas with others in the seminar.

Part of this class involves the construction of a framework for placing and positioning research related to urban and regional planning. Using the very same readings and ideas covered in class, students may choose to frame the topics and research in ways different from each other. The notion here is that while planners share a common knowledge base, there are different ways of arranging information and concepts. Part of the reason could be disciplinary – while some may be more attracted to economics, others may be interested in political science, geography, architecture, or engineering traditions. There also could be cultural or gender or other factors affecting not just what we know, but also the “how” and “why” of what we know. The goal of this class, therefore, is to enable students to better articulate their personal view of the world in terms of planning theory. While a reading list and copies of readings will be provided as a starting point for discussion, participants are invited to supplement the course materials with additional literature. In addition, each participant will also be asked to help structure and lead seminar discussions.
ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1. Develop a framework for organizing and understanding planning theory. This framework should relate not just to the broad categories identified in this course, but also provide a way of integrating the major theories, ideas, and intellectual developments associated with urban and regional planning. Present the information in the form of a chart or diagram and 4-5 page write-up. Include a paragraph or two on what you think your dissertation research topic is and where it fits within this framework. Due February 18, 2008. 30 points.

Assignment 2. Review of a book or article related to planning theory. Choose a recent new book or publication frameworks and critique it utilizing the ideas, frameworks, and concepts covered in class. Topic due on March 3, 2008, review due March 17, 2008. 15 points.

Assignment 3. Develop a new course in planning theory. Create a syllabus and complete the UHM-1 form for creating a new course. Due April 7, 2008. 25 points.

Assignment 4. Development of Research Proposal. Choose a particular planning problem - it could be related to your dissertation topic or an expansion of one of the topics in the class or a topic that you are personally interested in and write a 10 page paper which describes the contributions of planning theory. The paper should both place the topic within the broader context of planning theory, it should cite the relevant literature, and frame a research agenda which should be justified. You can think of this as either a “mini” proposal for a research grant or the introduction to a journal or publication devoted to a particular research topic or planning problem. The topics will be presented and discussed in class on April 28, 2008, while the final papers will be due May 5, 2008. 30 points.

OUTCOMES

The course strives to achieve the following:

(1) increased knowledge of planning theory;
(2) construction of an intellectual framework for positioning planning ideas and concepts;
(3) application of planning theories to contemporary urban problems;
(4) exposure to pedagogic considerations related to planning theory;
(5) appreciation of planning as multi-disciplinary field of inquiry with particular needs and approaches to theory-building.

Three questions will be asked throughout the semester. First, how is the way in which you arrange information and ideas related to planning theory? Second, how does one go about constructing, critiquing, writing and talking about “theory” relevant to urban and regional planning? Third, how does knowledge of planning theory inform research,
practice, and education?
Course Outline, Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments

**January 14, 2008** - Preliminaries, review of course structure, syllabus, requirements and expectations, course format, and other initial considerations related to the course.

**A. January 21, 2008 - What is the Discipline of Urban Planning?**


**B. January 28, 2008 - History**


**C. February 4, 2008 - Rationality**


**D. February 11, 2008 - Postmodernity**


**E. February 18, 2008 – Design**

**Assignment #1 Due**


**F. February 25, 2008 - Justice**


**G. March 3, 2008 – Urbanization**

*Assignment #2 book or article title due…*


**H. March 10, 2008 - Sprawl**


I. March 17, 2008 - Ecological Footprints
Assignment #2 Due


March 24th – 28th – Spring Break – No Classes.

J. March 31, 2008 - Sustainable Development


K. April 7, 2008 - Disaster Management
Assignment #3 Due.


L. April 14, 2008 - City of Bits
(Note: This class will be run as a “chat” session using the UH portal).


K. April 21, 2008 A New Economy in Hawaii?
Koshiba, J. and A. Aoki (2004) A New Economy in Hawaii. Hawaii Institute for Public Affairs. Honolulu. (additional readings to be suggested…) – A panel discussion will also be arranged, involving outside speakers interested in the topic of economic development in Hawaii.

April 28, 2008 – Student Presentations

May 5, 2008 - Last Class: Review, Clean-up, Recap, and Assessing the State of Advanced Planning Theory