

**FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND URBAN CHANGE  
YORK UNIVERSITY**

**ENVS 5121 3.0 PERSPECTIVES IN PLANNING**

**Fall 2024**

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**Course Instructor and Contact Information**

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**Course Time and Location**

Wednesdays 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Room HNES 141

**Official Course Description**

The course explores the field of planning in its diverse forms of theory and practice. The focus is on overarching aspects of planning theory and practice and selected themes of significance to planning in the Greater Toronto Area.

**Expanded Course Description (Overview and Learning Objectives or Outcomes)**

This course focuses on developing a foundation of knowledge in planning history and theory while exposing students to various forms of contemporary practice. The themes of the course are intended to help students appreciate the interrelated nature of environmental, socio-spatial, cultural, economic, and political considerations that define planning problems and processes, and invite students to activate their “planning imagination” and sense of futurity via an interdisciplinary encounter with the field. Throughout the course, students will learn about planning’s complex relationship with politics and the public interest(s) and analyze diverse forms of participation in planning and decision making, paying attention to power dynamics, traditionally excluded groups, and silent voices in planning processes and histories. Underpinning these themes, students will find discussions on equity planning, sustainability, racial justice, and urbanisms of empathy and care that are at the core of the MES Planning Program at EUC.

Complementing theoretical perspectives, the course will interrogate various modes of practice through case studies and personal accounts from planners working in various fields—from community and environmental planning to urban development. Lastly, the course equips students with a critical lens to evaluate popular planning discourses, key concepts, and “best practices,” and pushes students to identify their own personal and professional values, ethics, and approaches to planning.

The course is a seminar-style course led by the instructor, with a guest speaker or two. The class will meet weekly. Classes are in person unless unforeseen circumstances require remote learning. Students are required to attend a class session off-site accessible by TTC. Students are required to attend a public meeting (virtual or in person). EClass is used for course management.

**Anticipated Course Readings or Texts**

**Course reader (required):** Hodge, Gerald, David L. A. Gordon, and Pamela Shaw. (2020). *Planning Canadian Communities: An Introduction to the Principles, Practice, and Participants in the 21st Century*. Seventh edition. Toronto: Nelson, 2020.

In addition to the textbook, the following is a selection of readings that may be assigned by the instructor. Links to all available through eClass and YorkU Libraries.

- Churchman, A. (1999). Disentangling the concept of density. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 13(4), 389–411.
- Davoudi, S. (2017). The Promised Land or Rolled-Out Neoliberalism? Chapter 2 in M. Gunder, A. Madanipour, & V. Watson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory* (pp. 15–27). Routledge.
- Dorries, H., Hugill, D., & Tomiak, J. (2019). Racial capitalism and the production of settler colonial cities. *Geoforum*, 263–270
- Grant, J. L. (2024). Complete Community: Planning Theory From Practice. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 90(2), 213–229.
- Hall, P. (2014). The city of the dreadful night, Chapter 2 in *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design since 1880*. 4th ed. pp. 12–48 Wiley Blackwell.
- Lorius, A. P. & L. E. Taylor (2024). “The Canadian suburban experience: sprawl is bad, so why do we keep building it?” in *The Next Australian City*.
- Marcuse, P. (2011). The three historic currents of city planning. *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, 643-655.
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (2020). *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Toronto: Queen’s Printer.
- Rudel, T. K. (2021). Land Use and Land Use Change. In B. Schaefer Caniglia, A. Jorgenson, S.A. Malin, L. Peek, D.N. Pellow & X. Huang (Eds.), *Handbook of Environmental Sociology*. (pp. 425–438). Springer.
- Rutland, T. (2018) “Planning the Town White: Comprehensive Planning, Scientific Racism and the Destruction of Africville” *Displacing Blackness: Planning, Power and Race in 20<sup>th</sup> century Halifax*. (75-116). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Scott, J. C. (2008). The high-modernist city: An experiment and a critique. Chapter 4 in *Seeing Like a State* (pp. 103-146). Yale University Press.
- Sebert, L. (1980). The land surveys on Ontario 1750–1980. *Cartographica*, 17(3), 65–106.
- Spirn, A. W. (2005). Restoring Mill Creek: Landscape Literacy, Environmental Justice and City Planning and Design. *Landscape Research*, 30(January 2015), 395–413.
- Spirn, Anne Whiston (2011) *Ecological urbanism: A framework for the design of resilient cities*, pp. 1–35.
- Vega, M. (2024). Where does the money go when you buy a new Toronto condo? Here’s the breakdown. *thestar.com* (August 20).
- Watson, V. (2009). Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe’s central urban issues. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), 2259–2275

### **Evaluation: Grading and Course Requirements**

*Participation (20%)*: Attend class prepared and ready to participate. Students are evaluated based on attendance, and active and substantive participation in class discussions.

*Essay—The Role of the Planner: Reflection on OPPI Conference, Alumni Panel, and Public Meeting (20%)*: Write an essay reflecting on the role of the planner drawing from your experience participating in the OPPI Conference (in person or virtual), the Alumni Panel in class, and your attendance at a public meeting (in person or virtual).

Draw upon Chapter 15 in the textbook, but include at least three other scholarly references (other popular media as appropriate). Focus on your own interests as emerging in your Plan of Study and how you see your own career path or trajectory.

Essay should be about 2,000 words, not including references. Photos, maps, and graphics may be included, as appropriate. Font size and style are your choice. Reference list is required (APA style with in-text citations) and not included in word count. We will discuss the assignment in class and additional guidance may be posted on eClass.

*Weekly Planning Issue Debate (20%)*: Each student will be assigned to a small group to debate for or against a current planning debate related to weekly themes. Debate topics will be confirmed in class. Draw upon class readings and your own research. Powerpoint or other media maybe used but are not required. The rest of the class will be divided into “for” or “against” the assigned proposition and a student moderator may be assigned to support the instructor.

Evaluation based on evidence of genuine engagement, evidence of preparation, research, analysis, and communication of your arguments and rebuttals.

*Due diligence report (Individual) (30%)*: Each student will prepare a due diligence planning report. The assignment is to investigate a site and prepare a planning report. A “due diligence” is a comprehensive site analysis prepared in advance of potential land use change. Your due diligence will include the site’s settlement and planning history, contemporary environmental and planning context, and your ideas about future change. In class working sessions will provide guidance for your work. Evaluation of individual due diligence reports will be based evidence of genuine engagement with the project, the quality of research, synthesis, writing, and visual presentation. To be uploaded to the eClass. Length: 12–15 pages including all photos, maps, and other graphics.

*Planning visions: Due diligence assignment reflection (Group) (10%)*: Following submission and review of individual due diligence reports by the instructor, students will be organized into small groups to facilitate an in-class discussion of their vision for a planning intervention(s) based on one or more of their individual sites. Groups will present during the final two class sessions of the term. A one-page submission with references required for each group.

Evaluation will be based on evidence of genuine engagement, excellence in research, a high degree of creativity, collegiality, and communication of your ideas. excellence in oral, written, and visual presentation.

### **Important Course information**

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the [Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum & Pedagogy webpage](#)

- Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and the Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

**Note:** A more detailed course syllabus will be available in the first week of class.