

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Title

Land Use Planning and Policy GEOG 458R/658R

Course Description (from Catalog)

Urban and suburban growth management from the perspective of the historical reasons for managed growth and the techniques employed in and impacts of management strategies.

Expanded: This course is an exploration into planning tools and techniques both of a regulatory and policy nature. The political and fiscal context in which these tools are deployed will also be examined. Finally, as our region and state is in a period of declining growth and economic contraction the course will focus on the implications of these trends.

Course Design

This course is designed as a lecture-seminar course. The instructor will introduce topics in a lecture. Working in teams, students will study in depth different land use topics and utilizing a case study approach, prepare and present different assignments related to their research.

Class Time

Mondays, 4 PM to 6:45 PM

Classroom

Mackay Science Hall, Room 227

Instructor

Jenny Brekhus, MPA/MCRP
jennybrekhus@gmail.com

Office Hours

Office hours are available upon appointment only and can be flexibly arranged upon request.

TEXT AND READINGS

Students in this course must have the following classic text readily available throughout the semester:

Babcock, Richard F. *The Zoning Game: Municipal Practices and Policies*.
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

The bulk of readings made available in a timely manner throughout the semester. Readings will be posted on WebCampus or provided in class. It is the student's responsibility at all times to obtain the readings in whatever format the readings are made available.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Class Date	Topic
August 29	Introduction and Identification of Class Project Topics
September 12	Land Use Controls I – History, Legal Basis and Evolution
September 19	Land Use Controls II – Zoning Practicum – Assignment #1 Due
September 26	Zoning and Adaptive Reuse Walking Field Trip to Downtown Reno
October 3	The Subdivision of Land I
October 10	The Subdivision of Land II – Focus on Surplus Lots
October 17	Infrastructure and Provision of Public Utilities – Guest Speaker
October 24	Policy Planning I – Theory – Assignment #2 Due
October 31	Policy Planning II – Plan Hierarchy and Conformity
November 7	Mid Term Exam – History of Growth Management
November 14	Growth Management Approaches – Focus on Fiscal Soundness
November 21	Future Land Use Scenarios – Focus on Planning for Depopulation and Contraction – Assignment #3 Due
November 28	Intergovernmental Relations – Conflict and Cooperation
December 5	The Planning Profession – Assignment #4 Due
December 12	Comparative Planning Models – Final Exam Review
December 19	Final Exam (2:45 PM to 4:45 PM)

BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT

The overall grade received for this class will be based upon the following weighting for the various events, such as exams, quizzes and assignments given during the semester:

Attendance	5%
Participation	15%
Class Project	40%
Mid Term Exam	20%
<u>Final Exercise/Exam</u>	<u>20%</u>
Final Grade	100%

Participation

Complete all readings prior to the class session for which they are assigned. It is expected that students will be sufficiently familiar with the readings in order to answer questions and participate fully in class discussions and exercises.

Class Project

Collaboration and teamwork are essential features of successful planning initiatives. To strengthen these skills, students will participate in a semester long in depth examination into a particular land use control or policy issue with regional or local implications. Teams will be formed and topics decided upon at the first class meeting. Class time will be provided to work on the project but it will also be necessary for teams to meet outside of class to discuss the project, research associated issues and to work on assignments.

Grading Scale: The grading scale for the class will be structured as follows:

A	96 - 100%
B+	89 - 96%
B	80 - 89%
C+	75 - 80%
C	70 - 75%
D+	67 - 70%
D	60 - 67%
F	60% or lower

The actual grade point total will be used to determine the class grade within the grade ranges shown in the Grading Scale. The actual score, expressed to two decimal places, not a rounded value will be used for calculating the final letter grade. (Example 88.57 is a B and 95.79 is a B+)

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Students with disabilities requiring assistance should contact the instructor or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

GEO 458/658 Land Use Policy Planning

Class Project Topic Areas

Annexation – One of the most compelling challenges cities face is managing their municipal boundaries. Cities and counties often compete for development as new growth was in the past perceived as a contributing to fiscal soundness. This project will examine theories regarding what land use patterns are suitable for incorporation and corporation, local practices and the political conflict associated with annexation.

Transportation Financing – This project will examine the complex web of intergovernmental roles and responsibilities involved in financing transportation improvements. The team will research federal, state and local roles with focus upon overlapping and distinct areas of responsibility. A local transportation project or program and the funding sources associated with that project will be examined.

Environmental Justice – This project will involve a literature search to arrive at a useable definition of environmental justice and present case studies where environmental justice was achieved for impacted communities. A case study of a historical or potential regional environmental justice issue will be prepared.

Zoning (2) – This project will explore the sticky concept of nonconforming uses also known as “grandfathered” uses. The theory behind phasing out nonconforming uses and best practices to do so will be examined. Case studies of how local communities have addressed specific problematic uses will be presented.

Transect zoning is a new approach to classifying uses that attempts to integrate design considerations with community character strengthening. Is this new technique an improvement over Euclidian zoning? Will it catch on or is it overly complex? This project will involve an examination into Transect zoning and an evaluation of its successes and early adoption by different communities.

Public Utilities/Services – During these recessionary times, local governments have had to stretch to provide basic services at previous levels or to reduce service levels. This project will involve an examination into one particular service (e.g., public safety, parks and recreation) and recent national trends of local governments attempting to maintain service levels as revenues decline. A case study will be prepared regarding how one regional local government has endeavored to provide this service during these recessionary times. The implications of the localities land use patterns as related to this public utility/service will be explored.

Planning for Disasters – As climate change progress and severe weather events become more frequent, many communities are incorporating disaster mitigation and response elements into their master plans. This project will involve an examination into best practices in planning for disasters and what steps Northern Nevada communities should take to plan for climate change and severe weather events.

Housing Foreclosure Crisis – This project will involve a literature research into the emerging field of study regarding what caused the housing foreclosure crisis and what steps are necessary to restore health to the housing sector. The project will involve an examination into the role of state and local policy as contributing to the crisis and the distribution of the crisis among geographic regions. The team will prepare predictions about how communities will be altered based upon changing consumer preferences in the post crisis future.

Class Project Research Assignments, Timeline and Methodology

Assignment #1: The Case Study Problem Identification

Due: September 19

Teams will be formed and class project topics identified at the first class session. To facilitate learning about the topic in an applied sense, students will identify a case study of local or regional interest to explore the topic area more fully.

Assignment #1 will involve introduction of the topic and the case study to the class by the team. A research problem will be identified and a research approach to be taken to understand the problem. A hypothesis may be posed if appropriate. Graduate students will prepare an essay between 250 and 400 words that presents the presentation in a staff like report/memo.

Assignment #2: Research Methodology and Preliminary Findings

Due: October 24

This assignment will involve a presentation by class members of their research methodology and preliminary findings. The team should be prepared to discuss unexpected findings or complexities that were not previously anticipated, if any. Emphasis will be placed upon the use and role of both primary and secondary source of information and the different type of research tools utilized by the team.

Assignment #3: Presenting Information Graphically

Due: November 21

This assignment will involve the use of graphic displays to present the project topic and case study. Evaluation will be based upon the clarity of information presented and the relevance of graphics to the overall message presented.

Assignment #4: Professional Memorandum

Due: December 5

Students will report upon any selected aspect of the project topic in a clear, concise memorandum in a persuasive tone that recommends a policy action to a defined audience. This is a communication exercise to evaluate students' writing abilities. Limit 1500 words.

NOTE: The critique is a borrowed learning approach from the architectural field that will be used in this class. All students must be prepared to critique other student's presentations and exhibits in order to develop constructive, diplomatic and useful teamwork skills. Likewise, the ability to accept criticism and incorporate input into one's own work is also a necessary skill.