

PLANNING STUDIO (PLN 681)
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN ALBANY'S WEST HILL & WEST END
Wednesdays @ 2:45-5:35PM

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Office Hours: Wednesdays @ 9-11am, Thursdays @ 6-7pm, and by appointment

OVERVIEW

Neighborhood planning is a series of “planning efforts that focus on altering the physical environment...in pursuit of larger social objectives” (Rohe 2009, p.209). It has evolved significantly over the last one hundred years in the United States. What began as a rather paternalistic settlement house movement focused on assimilating immigrants into their new communities and improving their living environment is now an institutionalized technique for empowering and developing communities, often through participatory municipal planning.

The West Hill & West End neighborhoods in Albany do not have a neighborhood plan but are two of the most socially- and economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods in the city. Residents, businesses, churches, and various other stakeholders see the value in having a community-shaped vision and strategy for the future. Similar to what other neighborhoods in Albany have done, such as Arbor Hill and the South End, they desire to develop a neighborhood plan to guide future social, economic, and environmental reinvestment in their neighborhood to enhance their quality of life and opportunities.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the neighborhood Steering Committee (resident-led), the Arbor Hill Development Corporation (nonprofit Neighborhood Preservation Corporation serving West Hill/West End), and the City of Albany Department of Development and Planning. We will work with them this semester to help launch the neighborhood planning process, including neighborhood surveying, a neighborhood summit, and action team meetings.

Although our project ends in mid-December, the neighborhood planning process will not. Interested students are encouraged to continue their participation into the Spring and Summer 2014 either as volunteers, or for course credit through Studio Report and Implementation (PLN 682), an Internship (PLN 684), or an Independent Study (PLN 697).

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals of this course are three-fold: one for student learning, one for community outcomes, and one for product deliverables. They are:

- (1) To equip students for reflective professional practice by applying and acquiring skills to address a real-world planning issue in a team environment;
- (2) To build upon the assets of Albany's neighborhoods by applying ethical, deliberative planning principles to coproduce knowledge and outcomes with the community;
- (3) To deliver high-quality professional planning services and products to the project client.

Through this Studio, students will:

- Co-construct a productive working relationship with a variety of clients and community interests.
- Acquire, apply, and evaluate neighborhood planning skills relevant to planning and facilitating participatory public processes.
- Practice basic professional skills, including project management, community surveying & data analysis, group facilitation and note taking, and plan development and writing.
- Challenge one another to deeper learning and course/community engagement through constructive feedback and collaboration.

MATERIALS

There are two required books for this course:

- (1) **Jones, Bernie. 1990.** *Neighborhood Planning: A Guide for Citizens and Planners.* Chicago, IL: APA Planners Press. (Available at University Bookstore & on reserve at University Library)
- (2) **Finn, S., Kamath, L., Brunn, D., & Powell, M. 2006.** *Residents at the Center: A Handbook on Community-Based Planning for Distressed Neighborhoods.* New Brunswick, NJ: Community Development Institute, Rutgers University and Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. (Available through Electronic Reserves & on reserve at University Library)

Other assigned readings are available through **Electronic Reserves** via **Blackboard**, which is also used for submitting assignments, team collaboration, and course announcements.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

There are two levels of learning assessed within this course: the individual student level and the group level. Learning will be assessed by written plan segments and presentations both to the class and to our clients. Further details are provided in the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY LOG & REFLECTIONS (40%)

Each student will post *confidential* journal entries on Blackboard regarding their weekly activities and reflections on their learning experiences and challenges. These are due **every week** and should be posted ***no later than 9am on Wednesday mornings***, even if class is not scheduled to meet (except for University-wide course suspensions) or you have been excused from class to participate in other Studio-related activities during class time. These posts should have two components:

1. **Activity log:** a weekly work log (running Wednesday to following Tuesday) documenting dates/times/hours worked outside of class per week per activity. I expect 10-12 hours per week of work outside of class.
2. **Reflections:** these should consider anything from class readings, materials and discussions, to group experiences, to learning moments in the field. They should describe what you are learning about neighborhood planning, and about yourself, in relation to their experiences.

REPORTS (50% in total)

Each student will contribute to **two reports** that will serve as draft components of the West Hill/West End Neighborhood Plan & in-class presentations of those reports on assigned dates. In all cases, reports *must* be reviewed by relevant community partners for their feedback *before* presenting drafts to class, and before the plan components are finalized at the end of the course. You are not an expert planning FOR the community, but a partner planning WITH them.

A. General Plan Components (35%)

1. **Planning Process (1 student):** This plan component will detail the planning process, from initiation through the 1st Neighborhood Summit. This student will be responsible for attending Steering Committee meetings, taking notes & reporting on Studio progress. They also will interview people as necessary to learn the history of the process thus far.
2. **Neighborhood Opinion (at least 2 students):** This plan component will analyze the results of the “stoop surveys” conducted in September prior to the 1st Neighborhood Summit. These students will also help draft & implement the neighborhood survey, and prepare results for display at the Neighborhood Summit.
3. **Neighborhood Vision & Priorities (at least 2 students):** This plan component will present the results of the 1st Neighborhood Summit. These students will also assist with planning & implementing of the Neighborhood Summit

B. Action Teams Reports (Individual) (15%)

- Action teams will reflect priority areas determined by community.
- At least one student will be assigned to each Community Action Team to attend meetings, take notes, and draft a report.

FINAL PRESENTATION (10%)

- All students will be responsible for presenting their portions of the final document to the clients and interested community stakeholders at the end of the semester.

Assignments carry the following weights within your total course grade as follows:

ASSIGNMENT	DUE	PERCENTAGE OF GRADE
Individual Activity Log/Reflections	Weekly	40%
Reports		50%
DRAFT Reports/Presentations	See below	0% but required
Plan Process	10/9	
Neighborhood Opinion	10/16	
Neighborhood Vision/Priorities	11/6	
Action Teams	11/20	
Final Plan Components	12/12	35%
Final Action Team Report	12/12	15%
Presentation	12/12	10%
TOTAL		100%

Grading Scale: The following grading scale is used to assign final letter grades:

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Letter Grade	Percent Range
A	93-100%	C	73-77%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	88-89%	D+	68-69%
B	83-87%	D	63-67%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	78-79%	E	Less than 60%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The consequences for violating UAlbany’s policies on academic integrity range from rewriting the assignment in question to expulsion from the university. Please familiarize yourself with the details of this policy, which will be enforced in this class: <http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm>. If you ever have a question about properly referencing the work of others within your papers, please ask me *before* you submit them.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

Every effort will be made to accommodate those with special learning needs. Please notify me of any documented needs you may have within the first two weeks of class so we can work together to assure satisfactory arrangements. Assistance is available through Disabled Student Services: <http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/DSS/index.html> (website), (518) 442-5490 (phone), (518) 442-3366 (TTY).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Shaded Dates = Class cancelled

Bolded Dates/Events = Events outside of class that ALL students are required to attend

Date	Topic	Preparation	Activities
8/28	History of Neighborhood Planning; West Hill/West End <i>Guest: Arlene Way, Arbor Hill Development Corporation (3-4)</i>	Review Syllabus & MOU Read Rohe 2009	Course logistics Team building
9/4	Class Suspended (University-wide)		
9/11	Neighborhood Planning as Process <i>Guest: West Hill/West End Steering Committee (TBD)</i>	Read Jones 2000; Finn et al. 2006 Attend meetings Bring Survey example Post reflection	Case study Project plan Survey drafts
SATURDAY 9/14 BUS TOUR OF WEST HILL/WEST END			
9/18	Neighborhood Plan as Outcome <i>Guest: Katie Bronson, Albany Dept. of Development & Planning(4-4:45)</i>	Read Arbor Hill Plan, South End Plan + one additional plan from (Austin, TX ; Seattle, WA ; Madison, WI) Attend meetings Post reflection	Plan analysis Survey revisions Meetings debrief
9/25	Neighborhood survey design & management	Confirm survey instruments & logistics w/partners Attend meetings Post reflection	Finalize surveys & print Distribution & collection plan Neighborhood Summit update Meetings debrief
MONDAY 9/30 THROUGH SUNDAY 10/6 NEIGHBORHOOD STOOP SURVEYS			
10/2	Class Cancelled for Stoop Surveying	Attend meetings Post reflection	Conduct surveys

10/9	Plan Process Draft Report/Presentation; Survey debrief & analysis	Complete draft plan process report/presentation Attend meetings Post reflection	Plan Process feedback Survey debrief & analysis Neighborhood Summit update Meetings debrief
10/16	Neighborhood Opinion Draft Report/Presentation	Complete draft neighborhood opinion report/presentation Attend meetings Post reflection	Neighborhood Opinion feedback Neighborhood Summit preparation Facilitating participation Meetings debrief
10/23	Neighborhood Summit Preparation	Complete presentation/posters/handouts as requested for Neighborhood Summit Attend meetings Post reflection	Neighborhood Summit preparation Meetings debrief
SATURDAY 10/26 NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMIT			
10/30	Neighborhood Summit Debrief	Attend meetings Post reflection	Neighborhood Summit debrief Meetings debrief
11/6	Neighborhood Vision & Priorities Draft Report/Presentation	Attend meetings Post reflection	Vision & priorities feedback Meetings debrief
11/13	Class Cancelled – Instructor Away	Attend meetings Post reflection	
11/20	Action Team Report Drafts/Presentations	Attend meetings Post reflection	Action Team feedback Meetings debrief
11/27	Classes Suspended (University-wide)		
12/4	Plan Component Draft Review	Submit All Draft Reports by 9am Bring 2 copies of each team/individual report Post reflection	Review of draft plan components Course debrief
THURSDAY 12/12 (8-10PM) FINAL PRESENTATIONS & PLAN COMPONENTS SUBMITTED TO CLIENTS			