UPPP 203: Theories of Planning
Spring 2021

Class Schedule: Wednesdays 2:00 - 4:50 pm
Location: Remote (Zoom)
Instructor: Alejandra Reyes, PhD
Email: lreyesru@uci.edu
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Planners often draw on unspoken theories to frame and address urban and metropolitan issues. The primary goal of this class is thus to analyze some of the basic theories that have shaped the thinking of decision makers within the field of urban and regional planning. Planners have been traditionally framed as public servants, bound to serve the 'public interest' and to assess long-range needs in a myriad of different matters – the economy, the environment, service and infrastructure provision, housing, community development, etc. Yet, political and market forces are almost always embedded within such planning processes, placing a tension between them and democratic outcomes. We will therefore examine the recurring tensions and debates surrounding the role of planning and the ethical obligations of the profession. We will also draw specific attention to how scholars have sought to think about community engagement, organizing, and influence in large and complex urban regions.

We will review the paradigmatic schools of thought, which have and continue to shape planning practice, while critically examining such planning practices and processes. Beyond this review, we will consider how dominant planning theories inform, and are shaped by, broader concerns and issues associated with our contemporary context, from which planning cannot be separated. Ultimately, planning theories and practices both inform and are shaped by shifting political economies, a variety of cultural and intellectual traditions, and multiple imaginaries of what the (sub/peri/ex) urban should be. Students will thus engage with key debates and intellectual traditions within planning scholarship, gain an understanding about the relationships between theory and practice, and develop skills to apply theory in their own future practice. This class will also make an effort to test the proposition that theory can be useful, interesting, and even enjoyable.

Course Objectives:
This course trains urban planning students on core planning knowledge, skills, and values to help them perform effectively as planners and participate meaningfully in the planning profession. More specifically, students will gain:

1) General Planning Knowledge, including an understanding of the principles and meaning of planning, planning theory, and some of the global dimensions of planning.

2) Values and Ethics in Planning, which include professional responsibility, and consideration to principles such as, governance, equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

Summary of Course Requirements and Assignments

1. **In-class and Canvas participation (25 points).**
   - <u>Class attendance</u> is not mandatory this quarter, but it <u>is highly encouraged.</u>
   - In-class participation will count as <u>extra credit.</u>
   - Focus on the <u>5 Canvas Discussions</u> to earn participation points. These short discussions will center on reviewing the readings and class content, and posing questions (either asking for clarifications or the broader socioeconomic and political implications of topics discussed in class). <u>These discussions will be due on Tuesdays by 2 pm.</u>

2. **2 Take-Home Essays (75 points total)**
   - Midterm Essay (35 points)
   - Final Essay (40 points)

Grading: This class is not curved, and the grading scale is based on 100 points.

A 100-93	A- 92-90	B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80	C+ 79-77
C 76-73	C- 72-70	D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60	F 59-0

*All readings/content will be posted on the Canvas course website.

**Email/contact me for any accommodations you may require to complete any assignment or course requirement. Students who require accommodations should also register with the Disability Services.

***Teaching format: This course will be taught remotely through Zoom. Though there are some shortcomings with remote instruction, this format also provides various ways to foster interaction between students and instructors.