

Course Outline

Course Code : RE3705
Course Title : Urban Planning
Semester : Semester 1, Academic Year 2025/26
Faculty : Prof Lee Kwan Ok
Department : Real Estate
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Overview

This course begins with an exploration of traditional and contemporary urban planning concepts that have shaped cities worldwide, including Singapore. It then delves into the strategic planning and regulatory mechanisms that guide urban development, emphasizing long-term planning, master plans, and development controls that are integral to real estate decision-making. The final section broadens the discussion by examining urban planning through multiple lenses, including land management, infrastructure, housing, and urban design.

Through case studies and comparative examples from both local and international contexts, this course highlights the complex interplay between urban planning and real estate development. By fostering an interdisciplinary perspective, it encourages students to think holistically and innovatively about urban development, beyond conventional financial metrics.

Learning Outcomes

Students who have successfully completed RE3705 will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of traditional urban planning principles and emerging trends relevant to real estate professionals.
2. Assess the evolution of urban structures and critically evaluate how different planning approaches address contemporary urban challenges.
3. Identify how urban planning frameworks, regulations, and strategies influence real estate development and investment decisions.
4. Gain familiarity with key planning components such as land management, infrastructure, housing, and urban design, and understand how they are integrated into long-term plans, master plans, and development control.
5. Develop a simplified master plan for Singapore's future urban development, demonstrating a practical understanding of planning processes, real-world applications, and the daily practices of urban planners.
6. Recognize the complexity of urban planning as a process requiring negotiation and collaboration among planners, real estate professionals, government agencies, and communities, drawing insights from local and international case studies.

Course Prerequisite(s)

RE1707* **or** RE1701

*: Suitable substitute courses may be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to approval. Examples include CDE2501 *Liveable Cities*, GE2102 *Politics, Economies, and Space*, and GESS1019 *Urban Planning in Singapore*.

Course Prerequisite(s)

RE2701 and RE3901

General Guide & Reading

1. The City Reader. 6th edition. (2016). LeGates, Richard and Stout, Frederic (editors). Routledge Urban Reader Series. (E-book available via NUS library website)
2. Cities of Tomorrow. 4th edition. (2014). Peter Hall (editor). Wiley Blackwell. (Available at CL RBR: TH166 Hal 2014)
3. Introduction to Urban Planning. (1979). Anthony J Catanese and James Snyder. McGraw-Hill. (Available at CL RBR: HT166 Urb)

All other reading non-online materials will be posted on Canvas.

Tentative Schedule & Outline

Schedule

This is a one semester course, and the class will usually meet once per week with three hours per session.

Format

RE3705 follows a seminar format that includes a lecture (100-120 minutes with a break) and in-class activities.

Lectures present the primary themes and concepts from the assigned readings, with an opportunity for questions and comments from students. I will usually introduce several discussion questions at the end of each lecture. Due to limited time during the lectures, I will mainly utilize the CANVAS Discussions for this. Please note that active participants in Discussions will gain participation marks. The Discussions platform will be also used to share questions and answers for the group project.

In-class student activities consist of: (1) structured discussion of topics related to the lectures and readings and (2) role play debates on several topics related to lectures. Active participation of all students is expected especially for tutorials.

Synopsis

This course is structured into three main parts, covering foundational concepts, regulatory frameworks, and interdisciplinary approaches to urban planning.

Part I: Traditional and Contemporary Concepts of Urban Planning

- From Garden Cities to New Town Planning
- Spatial Restructuring
- Urban Redevelopment
- Globalizing Cities

Part II: Planning and Regulating the Urban Environment

- The Singapore Approach: Long-term Plans, Master Plans, and Town Planning
- Overview of Plan-making Processes
- Regulating Real Estate Development
- Working with Markets and People

Part III: Multiple Perspectives in Urban Planning

- Land Management
- Infrastructure and Transportation Planning

- Housing Affordability
- Urban Design, Conservation, and Place making

Assessment

The assessment for this class is based on 100% CA.

Assessment Components	Weightage (%)
Group Project: Singapore’s Next Generation of Urban Planning	40 (Group)
Role Play Debate + Policy Briefs (Individual)	25
Weekly online quizzes (Individual)	15
Participation in Discussions the CANVAS Discussions and Class attendance (Individual)	20
Total	100

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’ own” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubt, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

About me

I am Professor of Real Estate at the Business School at the National University of Singapore (NUS). I am also the Deputy Head in the NUS Department of Real Estate. I received numerous awards, including the Annual Teaching Excellence Award for 2016/2017, the Business School Teaching Excellence Awards for 2020/2021 and 2022/2023, and the School Teaching Excellence Awards for 2015/2016, 2016/2017, and 2018/2019.

I truly enjoy teaching real estate and urban planning that have practical and interdisciplinary natures between economic, socio-political and physical components. I am proud that my education exposing students to international cases and application to local contexts has inspired some students to shatter stereotypes to become critical thinkers and aspire changes in the built environment. Teaching these subjects also means that I and students could achieve mutual growth because there is no single answer for any question raised. As we learn from each other and collaborate for research, I am strongly motivated for my education as both a teacher and a learner. By teaching this course and interacting with students, I hope to produce more real estate

professionals and urban planners who will significantly contribute to the built environment in Singapore and beyond.

Schedule and Outline

Lesson/Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Main In-Class Activities
1	Aug 14	Part 1 Traditional and Contemporary Concepts of Urban Planning I (From Garden Cities to New Town Planning): Garden city and city beautiful movement; Contemporary/radiant city ideas; New town planning Course objectives; Topics to be covered; Tasks and responsibilities	
Note that there is no class on Aug 21			
2	Aug 28	Part 1 Traditional and Contemporary Concepts of Urban Planning II (Spatial Restructuring): Suburbanization and urban sprawl; Spatial inequality and spatial mismatch; Smart growth and new urbanism; Polycentric model Part 1 Traditional and Contemporary Concepts of Urban Planning III (Urban Redevelopment): Failures of urban renewal; Issues surrounding gentrification; Loss of sense of community and social capital	
3	Sept 4	Part 1 Traditional and Contemporary Concepts of Urban Planning IV (Globalizing Cities): Globalization and world city hypothesis; Issues arising in global cities; Importance of creative class; Search for sustainability	Group Project Kick-off
4-5	Sep 11	Part 2 Planning and Regulating the Urban Environment I (The Singapore Approach: Long-term Plans, Master Plans, and Town Planning): Introduction of Singapore’s planning history, Planning institutions in Singapore, and Transitions of actual plans (12-3 pm) Field visit to URA and JTC (PDD) (3-6 pm)	
6	Sep 18	Part 2 Planning and Regulating the Urban Environment II (Overview of Plan-making Processes): Population and economic projections, SWOT, Visioning and programming, Development guide plans	Mini presentation on Population and Economic Projection
Mid-semester break			
7	Oct 2	Part 2 Planning and Regulating the Urban Environment III (Regulating Real Estate Development): Development control, GLS, Development charge	Role Play Planning Debate I: Master Planning, Regulation, and Policies
8	Oct 9	Part 2 Planning and Regulating Land Use V (Working with Markets and People): Top down vs. bottom up; Governance; Incentives given to real estate; Public benefits provided by developers; Public Private Partnership; Participatory planning	Group Project Consultation
9	Oct 16	Part 3 Multiple Perspectives in Urban Planning I (Transportation Planning): Public transportation; Smart mobility Guest Speaker: Prof. Raymond Ong (NUS CDE)	Role Play Planning Debate II:

			Public Private Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement
10	Oct 23	Part 3 Multiple Perspectives in Urban Planning II (Housing Affordability): Global housing crisis, Affordable housing policies	Mid-review of Group Project
11	Oct 30	Part 3 Multiple Perspectives in Urban Planning III (Urban Design, Conservation, and Place making): Public space needs; Interactions between urban planning and design; Heritage conservation Guest Speaker: Kelvin Ang (URA Conservation Group)	Role Play Planning Debate III: Efficiency and Effectiveness of Different Affordable Housing Policies
12	Nov 6	Part 3 Multiple Perspectives in Urban Planning IV (Land Management): Land acquisition vs. land readjustment; White site; Mixed use; 15 minute city	Role Play Planning Debate IV: Dilemma between Conservation and Development
13	Nov 13	Class Wrap-up and Review	Final Presentation with Jury Members