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EVST 594.04: Graduate Seminar - Local Land Use Policy

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Local land use decisions have profound impacts on air and water quality, natural areas, wildlife, agricultural lands, and the built environment (including urban areas, the urban fringe and rural areas). Indeed, rapid growth and sprawl in the West is putting tremendous pressure on our land-based natural resources. Confronting this trend is essential to the achievement of more sustainable land use and enhancement of quality of life in the West for decades to come.

This course examines the forces contributing to unsustainable growth and explores strategies to achieve sustainable communities. The focus is on innovative policy approaches that can balance the often competing goals of land use, conservation, and preservation in the West. Thus, we examine local land use decision making processes. In addition, we will consider means of building political support and involving citizens in the development of sustainable land use policies. This will include a socially critical analysis of “smart growth.”

By focusing on Montana generally and the Missoula urban area in particular, we will develop an understanding of the ways that local decision making bodies and land use policies influence the shape and pace of development. We will use these understandings to conduct an applied research project in collaboration with a citizens group(s), local government, and/or quasi-governmental organization(s). We will work to facilitate local land use policy in Missoula that can support both the economic health of Missoula as well as the protection/development of services such as open space, recreational opportunities, sustainable transportation, renewable energy, water and air quality, green buildings, etc.

Specific learning objectives are:

- To understand and appreciate recent and projected land use trends in the West and the factors contributing to unsustainable land use.

- To understand the fundamentals of local land use planning, local decision making and associated governmental institutions in the Montana context in particular.

- To understand the factors that shape local and regional land use decisions in the West, and in particular, the role of state and local land use policies.

- To understand how specific policy approaches can promote sustainable land use.

- To gain experience in land use planning, policy making, or policy evaluation by carrying out a collaborative policy or citizen participation research project.
• To enhance students' research, professional presentation and report-writing skills.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings, students are required to:

• Submit on time a total of six response papers to the assigned readings throughout the term.
• Lead class discussion once during the term.
• Carry out a policy research project that involves consultation with a civic body or citizens group and culminates in a written report and a public presentation.

CLASS

Class meets on Tuesdays 3:40 – 6:30 p.m. in Jeannette Rankin Hall, Rm. 203. Class will be mostly seminar format, consisting of a combination of discussion, lecture, project work and occasional guest speakers. Ample class time will be provided for project development. However, students doing group projects must be available to meet with their group and their “clients” outside of class. The last two weeks of the course will be devoted to presentations of student research projects. This may include a public presentation or meeting to share/discuss findings with citizen group, local government representative, etc.

ASSIGNMENTS

Response Papers – At the beginning of each class students will turn in a short response paper that critiques, provides commentary, or raises useful questions for you and class about the assigned readings. Although there are many possible approaches, students are encouraged to briefly summarize the main points or arguments (you can assume the reader is familiar with the readings) and identify what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of each reading. Try to connect them to each other and explain how they help us understand the topic for the day and connect to the course objectives. When referring to specific points in a reading, please provide page numbers or direct quotes. You can also offer other comments, for example, about what you found useful, liked, disliked, didn’t understand, etc. You are also encouraged to raise questions for class discussion. Grading will be based on your level of analysis, conciseness, organization, and clarity of your presentation. Response papers should single-spaced and about 2 pages. Please use 1.25 inch margins and no less than 11-point font.

Leading Class Discussion – Once during the term, each student (individually or in a pair) will lead class discussion on a policy topic listed in the syllabus. Students are encouraged to lead discussion on a topic about which they also plan to carry out the research assignment (see below). Thus, it would be appropriate to “workshop” your research ideas with the class. Students are expected to introduce the assigned readings for the day and to present additional information from the recommended reading or elsewhere. Students must submit a plan for leading discussion a week in advance and obtain feedback from the instructor. Students will be evaluated on their level of preparation, their delivery, and engagement of the class. Finally, students must submit a one-page self evaluation of their facilitation of class discussion within a week of leading discussion.
**Research Paper/Project** – This major assignment provides an opportunity to research and analyze a policy approach to sustainability at the local level. For this assignment, students may work individually or in groups. Projects may take many forms. For example, you could investigate a policy approach to sustainability that has already been utilized in one or more communities or has been proposed and then investigate and analyze how and why the policy was developed and enacted and/or evaluate its implementation. You (and your group) might provide a strategy for the adoption of a specific policy, program, or practice in Missoula or another community. It is expected that the goals and objectives of this analysis will be developed in consultation with a governmental entity or citizens group. The research project should be carried out in a collaborative manner and a written report and presentation provided to the collaborative partner. The project should also involve original research that includes interviews of policy actors, stakeholders, and/or experts. Work will be completed in three phases and assembled into a complete research paper by the end of the term. Additional guidance will be provided in class as needed.

**PHASE 1: Research Project Proposal** – Proposals should include a description of the project’s goals and objectives and provide a justification (anticipated benefits of the project). Also identify and describe the current policy or policy approach you will investigate, and if appropriate, the context in which it is being proposed or implemented. Include an annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources. Finally, indicate how you plan to carry out the research and describe the final product. Indicate what information, people, data and sources you plan to consult and the methods or approach for doing so. Be as specific as possible. **Due Oct. 23.**

**PHASE 2: In-class Progress Report** – Students will provide in-class oral reports and updates on their progress on a regular basis in order to receive feedback from their peers and the instructor.

**PHASE 3: Final Report and Paper** – Incorporate feedback from Phase 2, additional research, analysis, and any refinements needed. Final reports typically should be about 20-50 pages. **Due Mon., Dec. 10.**

Research project proposals and final reports should be double-spaced. Please number the pages, use reasonably fresh toner, and no less than 11-point font and 1-inch margins. Cite sources using an accepted style. Deductions will be made for late assignments unless arrangements are made in advance with the instructor.

**GRADING AND EVALUATION**

Course grades will be based on class participation (10%), response papers (30%), leading discussion (10%), research project presentation (10%), and project report (40%). Class participation grade will be based on your preparation for and active involvement in class and group project work, and your overall contribution to the learning environment. Grading criteria for each assignment will be handed out or discussed in class.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

There are two required texts, which can be obtained from the UM Bookstore:


We will also read extensively from a recently-released book by William Travis, *New Geographies of the American West: Land Use and Changing Patterns of Place*. Some individual chapters will be posted on E-Res (see below). The book also will be “On Reserve” at the Mansfield Library Circulation Desk. It can also be purchased on-line or at a local bookstore. We will also read several chapters from *The Citizens Guide to Planning 3rd Edition* by Herbert Smith (published by the American Planning Association), and we will examine a new report by the Sonoran Institute: *Building from the Best of the Northern Rockies*.

Additional readings will be on Electronic Reserve (E-Res), which can be accessed through the Mansfield Library website (http://www.lib.umt.edu/). The course password is “plan.” Assigned readings are listed in the course schedule below.

Also included in the course schedule below are optional readings, which are included so that if you find a topic of particular interest, you have a jumping off point for further research. Although there is no expectation that you will read the optional readings, students are encouraged to at least skim some of them.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

A number of recommended books and reports will also be put on reserve at the Mansfield Library. Additional on-line resources and report will be provided in class:


**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The class schedule, list of topics and assigned readings are shown below. Some adjustments in the schedule may occur to meet the needs of the class.

Aug. 28 – Course Introduction
Sept. 4 – Land Use Trends in the West

New Geographies of the American West Ch. 1-7 (E-Res and Course Reserve)
Condo Picchu: Is a New Kind of Tsunami Battering the Coast
http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/318

Sept. 11 – Introduction to “Smart Growth” and Strategies for Sustainable Land Use

Paving Paradise: Sprawl and the Environment
http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smartGrowth/rpave.asp
Sprawl: A Compact History Ch 10 and 13
New Geographies Ch. 8 and 9

Sept. 18 – Introduction to City Planning, Zoning, and Local Politics (Guest: Local government official TBA)

The Citizen’s Guide to Planning Ch. 3, 5, & 6 (E-Res)
Local Politics Ch. 4 & 5 (Required Text)
Missoula County Growth Policy – 2005 Update Executive Summary and Ch. 1 (E-Res)
Optional: Local Politics Ch. 6 & 7
Optional: Missoula County Growth Policy – 2005 Ch. 3 (E-Res)

Sept. 25 – Sustainable Land Use Politics – Citizens’ Strategies (Guest: Ron Erickson, EVST Professor Emeritus, Montana State Representative, and former Planning Board member)

Local Politics Ch. 10 & 11 (Required Text)
The Citizen’s Guide to Planning Ch. 4, 7 & 12 (E-Res)
Chickens are Roosting on Private Property in Oregon (E-Res)
Overcoming Obstacles to Smart Growth through Code Reform (E-Res)
New Laws Help Growing Cities and Counties Preserve Quality of Life and Open Spaces (E-Res)
Urban Density Reframed
http://www.newwest.net/index.php/city/article/urban_density_revisited_and_renamed/C8/L8/
Optional: Local Politics Ch. 8 & 9
Optional: Anti-Sprawl Laws, Property Rights Collide in Oregon (E-Res)

Oct. 2 – Policies and Tools for Sustainable Transportation (Guest: Bob Giordano, Director, Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation, MIST)

MetroGreen Ch. 5 (Required Text)
Taming the Auto: The Promise of Car-Free Cities (ERES)
Optional:
   Bicycles: Low-Tech Ecological Mobility (ERES)
   Land Use and Transportation Planning Opportunities (ERES)

Oct. 9 – Policies for Open Space and Agricultural Land Preservation (Guest presenter: Jackie Corday, Missoula Open Space Program Manager)

MetroGreen Ch. 1, 2 & 3 (Required Text)
Oct. 16 – Valuing Green Space – Green Infrastructure (Guest: Donna Erickson, Land-Use and Landscape Planning Consultant, and Professor Emerita of Landscape Architecture, University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources and Environment)

MetroGreen Ch. 6, 7 & 8 (Required Text)
Building Support for Green Infrastructure (E-Res)
Making It Happen (E-Res)

Oct. 23 – Policies for Sustainable Housing (Field Trip to HomeWORD’s Orchard Gardens)

Sustainable Independent Living Communities (E-Res)
Creative Housing and Living Environments (E-Res)
Optional: Building Ecologically: Designing Buildings and Neighborhoods with Nature in Mind

Oct. 30 – Policies for Sustainable Energy

Repowering Montana: A Blueprint for Homegrown Energy Self-Reliance
Executive Summary and Ch. 1 [http://www.aeromt.org/BLUEPRINT.php](http://www.aeromt.org/BLUEPRINT.php)
Energy Efficiency, Community Economic Development and Social Justice (E-Res)
Create an Energy Action Plan (E-Res)
Optional: Energy Conservation Under the Sun: A Resource Book for Local Governments

Nov. 6 – Local Sustainability Indicators

Local Sustainability Indicators (E-Res)
Do Indicators Help Create Sustainable Communities? (E-Res)
Optional (skim): Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook

Nov. 13 – Progress Reports

Nov. 20 – Progress Reports

Nov. 27 – Presentations

Dec. 4 – Presentations

Dec. 13 – Finals Week