

Planning and Public Policy Program, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy,  
Rutgers University

History of Planning Thought, 10:762:478, Spring 2008, 3 credits

Tuesday, 2:15-5:15, Hickman Hall, Room 118, Douglass Campus

Taught by Frank J. Popper, Civic Square Building, Room 535, College Avenue Campus,  
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Office hours: Thursday, before or after class, or by appointment

Texts: Robert Fishman (ed.), The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy (2000)  
and Peter Hall, Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Design and Planning  
in the Twentieth Century (third edition, 2002). Both are in the Rutgers University  
Bookstore. There may be additional, shorter reading assignments as needed.

This course explores the history of city and regional planning thought over the last century and a half. The course focuses primarily on the United States, but not exclusively. The course often draws implications for related fields such as history, geography, environmental studies or American studies. Of the two texts, Hall generally offers the overall bigger picture, while Fishman provides close-up local analyses of particular places or issues, but this generalization has frequent exceptions. The primary goal of the course is to provide an advanced-undergraduate-level understanding of how thinking about planning has evolved and made an on-the-ground difference (or not) since roughly the time of the Civil War and to give students tools for explaining these matters.

Thirty percent of the grade comes from each of two take-home examinations. Thirty percent comes from the research paper. The paper, which is expected to use sources beyond the texts, may be on any topic the instructor approves. There will be no shortage of material from which to choose topics or approaches, and the instructor wants students to use their imaginations to develop adventuresome analytic (not solely descriptive) subjects and treatments. The paper should be in the range of 15 pages, not counting notes, references and graphics. All the work for the course should be typed double-spaced. Ten percent of the grade comes from class participation and general conscientiousness, including getting work in on time.

The instructor expects all written work to be original products written for this course only. He—and the Planning and Public Policy Program and Rutgers generally—take plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty VERY seriously. For proof, see the pages on the subject in both the Bloustein School and the Rutgers University catalogues. The penalties for misconduct range from a failing grade on an exam or paper to expulsion from Rutgers. If a student has questions on such issues, he or she should consult the instructor. But as a rule, if you think you may be doing something academically dishonest,

you probably are. On a related subject, Wikipedia and other encyclopedias, on-line or off-, are good places to begin research and terrible places to end it. Use them as starting points. Don't cite them.

The instructor wants the written work for the course to meet advanced collegiate standards of writing and will lower the grade of any that does not. In addition, the instructor expects students to attend all classes, do the reading for them carefully and be prepared to discuss it. The class will be relatively small, so the amount of student preparation will quickly become clear and affect the student's grade.

### Schedule

- January 22 Introduction
- January 29 Late-nineteenth-century planning: Hall, Chapters 1-2
- February 5 No class
- February 12 Early-twentieth-century planning: Hall, Chapters 3-6
- February 19 Interwar planning: Hall, Chapters 7-9
- February 26 Postwar planning: Hall, Chapters 10-11
- March 4 Contemporary planning: Hall, Chapters 12-13; first take-home exam distributed
- March 11 Exam due
- March 18 Spring vacation
- March 25 Analyzing the history of planning: Fishman, Foreword and Chapters 1-3
- April 1 National planning: Fishman, Chapters, 4-7
- April 8 Local cases: Fishman, Chapters 8-11; second take-home exam distributed
- April 15 Exam due
- April 22 Two-page descriptions of term paper due
- April 29 Individual meetings on term paper descriptions in instructor's office
- May 6 To be announced

May 8      Term papers due in instructor's office

### A note on sources

There are numerous sources on the history of planning thought and of planning generally. Alternative texts for this course might have been (or actually have been) Donald Krueckeberg (ed.), The American Planner: Biographies and Recollections (1994); Krueckeberg (ed.), Introduction to Planning History in the United States (1983); Jon Peterson's The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917 (2002); Mel Scott's American Planning History since 1890 (second edition, 1971); or Jon Teaford's The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise and Reality (second edition, 1993). Google Books lists almost two hundred "full view" books under "City Planning," many with historical emphases.

Then there are interesting planning histories of Chicago (by William Cronon and Bessie Louise Pierce CHECK, Las Vegas (Hal Rothman), Los Angeles (Mike Davis and Greg Hise), Pittsburgh (Joel Tarr) and Portland, Oregon (Carl Abbott), among many other cities and authors. Local blogs, on cities, neighborhoods, states and other places and issues, are sometimes vividly invaluable and other times a complete waste of time. If you have questions about them, consult the instructor.

There are what amount to planning histories of the suburb—for instance, Dolores Hayden's Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 (2003); Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue (eds.), The New Suburban History; and Adam Rome's The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism (2001).

All states, most large cities, many regions and rural areas, and some counties and neighborhoods have been the subjects of serious historical investigation, though not always from a planning perspective. Visit their websites or the Rutgers libraries for more information. A fascinating site on the overall history of urban planning is [library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/homepage.htm](http://library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/homepage.htm). Do not overlook the publications, libraries and websites of state, city, county and neighborhood historical societies. The Hall text has an 85-page list of references.

There are large literatures on specific issues of planning history such as environmental problems, economic development, globalization, zoning, regional questions, ethical/religious perspectives, public health or energy concerns, immigration, housing, transportation, gender experiences, African, Asian, Latino, and Native American and other ethnic issues, waste disposal, food systems, social movements, natural disasters, historic preservation, tourism, corruption, and urban, suburban, rural and frontier development.

Several planning and environmental figures have been the subjects of recent book-length studies: for starters, Rachel Carson, Bernard DeVoto, Lois Gibbs, Alice Hamilton, Jane Jacobs, Robert Moses, Lewis Mumford, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, John Wesley

Powell, Wallace Stegner, Frederick Jackson Turner, and the instructor and his wife. See also the 1994 Krueckeberg collection mentioned above.

Any number of specialized periodicals can be useful. Look, for example, at the Journal of the American Planning Association, American Historical Review, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Geographical Review, Geography, Journal of Geography (disclosure: the instructor is on its editorial board), Journal of American History, Journal of Planning History, Journal of Planning History, Journal of Planning Literature, Journal of Urban Affairs, Journal of Urban History, Journal of Urbanism, Planning, Planning Perspectives, Progress in Planning, Urban Affairs Review and Urban Geography, plus regional periodicals (such as High Country News, Journal of the West, Pacific Historical Quarterly or Western Historical Quarterly for the West) or disciplinary ones (such as those on air pollution, hazardous waste, housing or environmental economics). Many of these periodicals are partly or wholly on the Web, as are many newspapers. Neal Peirce, probably the country's leading journalist who focuses on planning and urban issues, has his syndicated columns and other writings at [citistates.com](http://citistates.com).