

**Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

**RP 650: Introduction to Land Use
(was RP 645: Growth Management)**

Fall 2011

Tuesdays and Thursday 9:30 – 10:45
Hills North, Room 373

Dr. Elisabeth M. Hamin
emhamin@larp.umass.edu
Room 415 Hills North
577-4490

Office Hours:
Monday 1:00 – 2:30
Tuesday 12:00 – 1:30
or by appointment

Course Objectives: This course introduces comprehensive planning, principles of good urban and regional form, and methods for analyzing elements of urban form. The course is a blend of theory and practice, exploring the values and goals of good planning and how they can be realized. The learning objectives for the course include:

- Knowledge of the basic principles of ‘reading’ the city, theories of urban form, and experience of a variety of environments
- Knowledge of the comprehensive planning process
- Familiarity with introductory concepts/issues of land use and smart growth
- Knowledge of current trends in and design principles for the neighborhood, city, and region
- Demonstrated skill at connecting theory to practice
- Mastery of the short report format

Course Organization: The course investigates both regulatory and design approaches to land use planning. The goal is to introduce students to both current best practices and emerging issues and answers. As such, some of the topics we explore are just beginning to be researched, while others have strong existing literatures. This course follows a combined lecture-seminar format. I will usually do brief presentations of key definitions and principles of the topic at hand. As a group we will then engage in discussion of the application, benefits, and weaknesses of these. Students are encouraged to bring questions from the assigned readings into class. Students will make presentations on particular topics and case studies.

SPARK: Please submit your papers on SPARK as WORD documents, not pdfs. The syllabus and readings that are not in the texts will be posted on SPARK. Pdfs of these are available through spark, but in case you need them, the websites for the electronic readings are listed at the end of the syllabus.

Course Assignments: The most fundamental requirement of the course is, of course, to do the readings and come to class ready to discuss. There will be quizzes to

encourage you to keep up with the readings. Beyond this, the requirements are as follows:

Briefs connecting theory to practice. We will attempt to test out what we read by comparing it to what we can experience in a nearby city or place. Students on their own time and in pairs or small groups will visit particular assigned locations and prepare brief reports that link their findings to the theories they are reading about the particular topic. In all of these, the goals are:

- 1) demonstrate mastery of the course readings, by applying the concepts to practice
- 2) perfect your ability to write short, informative, to the point papers that demonstrate a high level of professionalism.
- 3) Bring the perspectives you gain into the class via participation in class discussions.

All papers should have a maximum 3 pages of text, and should make reference to both the readings and to your own original thought in applying the readings.

Caution: short papers are harder to write than long ones. Have a clear point and make it, and remove words or sentences that do not directly go to that point. Edit, edit, edit. If you are not much of a writer, then you may want to put in more graphics to demonstrate your analyses. Graphics can go on an extra page if you like, bringing total maximum to 4. Submit on SPARK **as a word document, not a pdf**, or if it is easier for your graphics, you can give me a hard copy.

You can skip one paper. Or you can turn them all in and I will drop your lowest grade.

Paper 1: We will have read about the trends in the United State's population and its effects on metropolitan form. Think specifically about an area you know well – how is it likely to change given demographic trends? Be sure to cite from the readings.

Paper 2/Trip 1: Public Transit Boston. Assignment: Travel by at least three of different public transit modes (bus, street car (Green Line), subway, commuter rail, inner harbor ferry) to three or four different neighborhoods (Cambridge/Harvard Square, Beacon Hill, Downtown Crossing, North End/Rose Kennedy Greenway). Planning your travel is part of the project. Write up your comparisons of the transit mode experiences, and the urban neighborhood experiences, as we will discuss in class. Paper should be between 2 and 3 pages.

Suggestions:

- Purchase a one-day transit pass called the 'LinkPass' for \$9, which gets you on all buses, subways, inner harbor ferry, and commuter rail.
- To take Red line subway in: park at Alewife commuter parking structure off Route 2
- To take commuter rail in: park at Fitchburg for \$3, but watch the schedule – it's limited on weekends.
- If you drive all the way in to Downtown, budget \$25 – 45 to park in a lot, or pray very earnestly to parking Goddess prior to trip for legal street parking.

Paper 3/Trip 2: City and regional form. Visit Natick, Mass. Choose one of these topics to write on:

- 1) Think about the urban morphologies that were presented on pages 399-407. Identify edges, boundaries, nodes as per Lynch. How does it all fit together?
- 2) Document the street hierarchy in Natick. How does it compare to the suggestions in Condon and Standards for best practices?
- 3) Read ahead to the Standards section on Development types. Document different types of buildings and the ways the street network make those feasible.

Paper 4/Trip 3: Residential design. Visit three different housing areas: Echo Hill, the neighborhood around Lincoln Avenue, and Pulpit Hill Cohousing (we will have a tour for Pulpit Hill), all in Amherst. You can look at aerial photos/GIS in advance at the town website, [amherstma.gov](http://www.amherstma.gov). Key question for you to answer: which is the 'best' neighborhood and why? Connect your observations to the readings on housing and street design.

Paper 5: Infrastructure & density paper. What is the relationship between density and infrastructure? The university is a very dense residential area; what infrastructures make that possible? How does the density make the infrastructure possible? Does using green infrastructure affect possible density? Please connect campus design to the readings in the utilities chapter of Standards and the Condon chapter on green infrastructure.

Paper 6: Regional paper: Think about a region you know well. Use some sketch maps and narrative to explain whether it follows the ideas laid out in either of the Duany and Talen or Neuman readings.

Electronically available readings:

Amherst Master Plan: <http://www.amherstma.gov/index.aspx?NID=526>

Amherst Citizens Guide: <http://www.amherstma.gov/index.aspx?NID=651>

Amherst Wetlands Bylaw: <http://www.amherstma.gov/index.aspx?nid=1269>

Sydney plan by Gehl Architects: <http://www.gehlarchitects.com/#/159110/>

Brookings report on Census 2010:

<http://www.brookings.edu/metro/StateOfMetroAmerica.aspx>

Optional: PBR First results from 2010 Census:

<http://www.prb.org/Publications/ReportsOnAmerica/2011/census-2010.aspx>

Grading. Grading will be based on the percentages below.

Assignment	Grade Weight
Paper 1	10%
Paper 2	15
Paper 3	15
Paper 4	15
Paper 5	15
Quizzes	10
Class participation	20%

Required Texts. There are two texts for the course, plus readings that are available either on-line or that will be distributed electronically. The first text is *Urban Planning and Design Standards*; this will also be used in the Tools and Techniques class taught in the spring semester. The second text is *Seven Principles of Sustainable Cities* by Patrick Condon. Books are available at Amherst Books, near the Town Hall. Buy local if you can!

ACCOMMODATION POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

It is expected that all graduate students will abide by the Graduate Student Honor Code and the Academic Honesty Policy (available at the Graduate Dean's Office, the Academic Honesty Office (Ombud's Office) or at

http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/handbook/univ_policies_regulations_a.htm).

Sanctions for acts of dishonesty range from receiving a grade of F on the paper/exam/assignment or in the course, loss of funding, being placed on probation or suspension for a period of time, or being dismissed from the University. All students have the right of appeal through the academic honesty board.