PPD 361: Sustainable Communities, Policy and Planning (4 credits), Section 51114, Spring 2017

Time: Monday/Wednesday, 4:00 – 5:50pm

Location: GFS 205

Instructor: Xize Wang, xizewang@usc.edu
(Please allow 48 hours for email responses.)

Office hours: Monday/Wednesday, 3:00 – 3:50pm, 2nd floor of GFS

Course Overview:

This course is an introduction to changes in public policy and planning underway at the local and metropolitan level in response to the depletion of natural resources, including fresh water, and climate change, with the goal of placing human society on a more sustainable path. The course is interdisciplinary in nature and relies on ideas and techniques from natural sciences, social sciences, public policy, and planning.

This course has three parts. In the first part, we will survey the definitions of sustainability, introduce indicators of sustainability with a local-based example, and discuss the theoretical foundations of sustainable development. In the second part, we will explore different facets of sustainable communities, including transportation, water resources, resiliency, land use, urban design, green buildings, energy and material use, and environmental justice. In the third part, we will discuss selected issues on climate change mitigation actions at different scales and hold workshops on individual projects with a focus on sustainability issues in China. By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

- Articulate major theories and concepts of sustainability to a specific audience
- Identify components of theories in practical settings relevant to sustainability
- Think critically about initiatives intended to enhance sustainability
- Make policy recommendations relevant to sustainability issues

Reading materials:

The following textbooks are required:


All other reading materials will be available on Blackboard.
Students are required to finish all the reading materials before the class and engage actively in course discussions.

Grades:

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

- A 93 and above
- A- 90-92.9
- B+ 87-89.9
- B 83-86.9
- B- 80-82.9
- C+ 77-79.9
- C 73-76.9
- C- 70-72.9
- D+ 67-69.9
- D 63-66.9
- D- 60-62.0
- F 59.9 and below

Below is the breakdown of the final grade:

- Questions/comments on the reading: 10%
- Course project: 40%
  - One-page proposal: 5%
  - Check-in presentation: 5%
  - Final presentation: 15%
  - Final report: 15%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%
- Preparation and participation: 10%
- Extra Credit: 5%

Questions/comments on the reading: Beginning with the second class meeting, each student is to come to class having read all of the assigned reading and to submit TWO questions or critical issues raised by the readings that can help focus the class discussion. Questions and issues are to be submitted in advance of the class, specifically, by 2pm the day of class (unless indicated on the syllabus) on Blackboard. A selection of questions will be discussed in class. To receive credit for your submissions, the questions need to be directly related to the readings assigned and demonstrate understanding of the readings.

Course Project: Each student is required to finish an individual project culminating in a public policy recommendation that directly impacts sustainability. Each student will investigate a
sustainability issue relevant to Chinese cities and describe the problem, use the theories and concepts in this course to analyze the problem, and provide policy recommendations. Appropriate topics related to sustainability in China: (1) air pollution and public health, (2) managing automobiles, (3) the future of shared mobility, (4) carbon emission mitigation or (5) environmental justice. Students who wish to use a different sustainability problem for Chinese cities must receive written approval from the instructor.

The project must address the following questions:
(a) What is the central problem in this study?
(b) What are the causes of this problem, what class readings/academic studies can support your claim?
(c) Which stakeholders (identify three) are involved in this problem, and how?
(d) What are your recommended policies to address this problem, what class readings/existing cases in and outside the US/academic studies can support your policy recommendations?
(e) How will your policy recommendations impact the stakeholders you just mentioned in (c)?

The project will produce four deliverables:
- Each student is required to submit a one-page proposal to identify the topic and scope of the project by 11:59pm 02/27/2017. The instructor will respond to the proposal by either approving it or providing recommendations for resubmission. All project topics must receive approval from the instructor. The proposal should include a brief description of the case/problem, describe the product that will be produced to address the problem, and outline the steps the student will follow to complete the product.
- Each student is required to present the progress on their project to the class, including a PowerPoint, on 03/29/2017. In the presentation, each student should report the progress of the project by showing (1) the works have completed to date and (2) a plan for their steps to complete the project. The presentation should last approximately 10 minutes with 5 minutes afterward for Q&A. The work-to-date should include a review of the background information for their case and a summary of their project proposal. At least three academic literature articles and two news articles (please use reliable news sources) must be included in the presentation.
- Each student will submit a five-to-eight page (excluding graphics and tables), double-spaced final report addressing the questions outlined above; citations should follow APA format, the report should use 12-pt font size and one-inch page margin. The paper is due by 11:59pm 04/21/2017. The instructor will return a grade for the paper and feedback on 04/28/2017. Students can choose to resubmit a revised paper by 11:59pm 05/03/2017 for a new grade.
• Students will conduct a 20-minute presentation of the final project and a 5-minute Q&A session on 04/24/2017. The presentation should address all the questions outlined above. Both the quality of work and the quality of the presentation will be evaluated both by the instructor and peer students.

Midterm and final exams: The midterm and final exams will be based on the readings and discussion materials presented in class.

Preparation and participation: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate in class discussions and in-class activities. Students will accumulate points toward their participation grade through completing in-class activities that will be announced each class.

Extra credit: We will discuss news and/or videos (five to ten minutes long) related to sustainable communities, policy, and planning in class sessions. Students can provide the news/videos and two questions for discussion via Blackboard (Blackboard -> Assignments -> News Videos for Discussion (extra points)); each piece of news/video (with questions) will earn 1% extra credit, for a total of up to 5%. To earn the extra point, the news/videos must be different from those were already posted.

Here are some specific news sources which might interest you. Please keep in mind that you could always find news from other valid sources as long as they are related to the topics covers in this course:

• The City Lab by the Atlantic: http://www.citylab.com/;
• Planetizen: http://www.planetizen.com/;
• The Daily Climate: http://www.dailyclimate.org/;
• Urban Land Institute: http://uli.org/;
• LA Observed: http://www.laobserved.com/;
• Los Angeles Times: http://www.latimes.com/;
• Street Blog LA: http://la.streetsblog.org/;

Late Assignments:

All the deliverables must to be submitted to the Blackboard system by 11:59pm (unless advised otherwise) on the due date. Without PRIOR approval of the instructor, late assignments will NOT be accepted.

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize
yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards and appropriate sanctions (https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct (http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

USC does not tolerate discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity (http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the Department of Public Safety (https://dps.usc.edu/contact/). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/) provides confidential support, and the Sexual Assault Resource Center webpage (http://sarc.usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems:

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute (http://ali.usc.edu/), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs (http://dsp.usc.edu/) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information (http://emergency.usc.edu) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Class Schedule and Readings:

PART I – WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

01/09/2017 (Monday) – Introduction & course overview
- Reading:
  - SW, Chapter 1: “Introduction”

01/11/2017 (Wednesday) – Defining sustainability
- Reading:
  - SW, Chapter 2: “Sustainable Development”
01/16/2017 (Monday) – No class, MLK Day

01/18/2017 (Wednesday) – Sustainable development

- Reading:
  - SW, Chapter 4: “Sustainable Planning and the three ‘Es’”

01/23/2017 (Monday) – Measurements and indicators of sustainability

- Reading:
  - The Economist Intelligence Unit (2012). “The Green City Index”. (Read pages 4-11 & 26-29, skim the rest) [Blackboard]

01/25/2017 (Wednesday) – Sustainable city plans: the Los Angeles pLAn

- Reading:
  - The Los Angeles sustainable city pLAn. [Blackboard]

01/30/2017 (Monday) – Sustainable city plans: beyond Los Angeles

- Reading:
  - City of San Diego Climate Action Plan. (Read pages 1-7 & 12-17). [Blackboard]
  - New York City Climate Action Plan. (Read pages 4-7 & 26-34). [Blackboard]

02/01/2017 (Wednesday) – Commons and the market failure

- Reading:

02/06/2017 (Monday) – Science foundations of climate change

- Reading:

02/08/2017 (Wednesday) – Documentary film watching & discussion

- Films:
Beijing Besieged by Waste (2011)
Plastic China (2014)

PART II – DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

02/13/2017 (Monday) – Transportation

- Reading:
  - SW Chapter 12: “Transportation”

- Workshop:
  - Search & discuss potential project topics

02/15/2017 (Wednesday) – Guest lecture I: LA Metro’s bike share plan

- Guest speaker:
  - Avital Shavit, Transportation Planning Manager at LA Metro

02/20/2017 (Monday) – No class, President’s Day

02/22/2017 (Wednesday) – Water

- Reading:
  - PPIC Water Policy Center (2015), What if California’s Drought Continues? [Blackboard]

02/27/2017 (Monday) – Land use and urban design

DUE: ONE PAGE PROPOSAL FOR COURSE PROJECT

- Reading:
  - WB pp. 130-137: Ewing et al. (2011). “Compactness vs. Sprawl” from *Companion to Urban Design*
  - SW Chapter 10: “Land Use and Urban Growth” (Read pages 146-154)
  - SW Chapter 11: “Urban Design” (Read pages 155-158)

03/01/2017 (Wednesday) – Green architecture and building & midterm review

- Reading:
SW, Chapter 14: “Green Architecture and Building” (Read pages 185-194 & Box 14.1)

- Discussion:
  - Midterm review

03/06/2017 (Monday) – Energy and material use
- Reading:
  - SW Chapter 8: “Energy and Material Use” (Read pages 118-124)

03/08/2017 (Wednesday) – **MIDTERM EXAM**

03/13/2017 (Monday) ~ 03/15/2017 (Wednesday) – No class, spring break

03/20/2017 (Monday) – Guest Lecture II – LA’s resiliency plan
- Speaker:
  - Marrisa Aho, Chief Resiliency Officer, LA Mayor’s Office

03/22/2017 (Wednesday) – Resiliency: landslide, earthquake and wildfire
- Reading:
- Workshop:
  - Searching journal articles

03/27/2017 (Monday) – Environmental justice
- Reading:
  - SW Chapter 15: “Social Equity and Environmental Justice” (Read pages 203-204)

**PART THREE: COURSE PROJECT & SELECTED TOPICS**

03/29/2017 (Wednesday) – Check-in presentations/ project workshop
- REFER TO THE “COURSE PROJECT” SECTION FOR INSTRUCTIONS

04/03/2017 (Monday) ~ 04/05/2017 (Wednesday)
(Individual 20-minute meetings with instructor. Schedule will be announced on March 29)
04/10/2017 (Monday) – Climate change: sea level rises
• Reading:
  o Stephane Hallegatte, et. al. (2013). “Future flood losses in major coastal cities”,
    Letters – Nature Climate Change [Blackboard]
  o USC Sea Grant Program. (2013). “Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Study for the City of
    Los Angeles” (Read pages iii-vii & 59-76) [Blackboard]

04/12/2017 (Wednesday) – Climate change: scales of planning
• Reading:
  o AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, Summary Overview
    [Blackboard]
  o SCAG Regional Transportation and Sustainable Communities Plan, 2012-2035
    [Blackboard]
  o Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), “2016-2020 L.A.
    County Strategic Plan for Economic Development” [Blackboard]

04/17/2017 (Monday) – Campus climate actions
• Reading:
    Changing climates in North American politics: Institutions, policymaking,
    and multilevel governance. MIT Press. Chapter 13, pp.263-282 [Blackboard]
  o USC Sustainability 2020 plan. (Skim) [Blackboard]

04/19/2017 (Wednesday) – Sustainable issues in China
• Reading:
  o TBA

04/21/2017 (Friday) – DUE: FINAL PAPER OF COURSE PROJECT

04/24/2017 (Monday) – Student presentations
• REFER TO THE “COURSE PROJECT” SECTION FOR INSTRUCTIONS

04/26/2017 (Wednesday) – Wrap up and review
• Reading:
  o SW Chapter 26: “How do we get there from here?”

05/03/2017 (Wednesday) – FINAL EXAM (4:30pm – 6:30pm)
• DUE: REVISED FINAL PAPER OF COURSE PROJECT