

GEOGRAPHY 445-ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
SPRING SEMESTER
Dr. Brian J. Sommers

Classroom: DiLoreto Room 311
Class Hours: T 5:15-7:50
Office Hours: MW 9:00-11:00, T 4:00-5:00

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INTENTIONS OF THE COURSE

This course is intended to introduce students to the study of environmental planning. Moreover, it is the intention of this course to introduce students to the activities of environmental planning and to provide practical experiences in planning activities. The goal is to provide the students with knowledge of the theories, people, techniques, and legalities of environmental planning.

COURSE MATERIALS

There are two required textbooks for the course. They are Landscape Planning: Environmental Applications (3rd Edition) by William Marsh and The Living Landscape: An Ecological Approach to Landscape Planning (2nd Edition) by Frederick Steiner. There will also be assigned readings and materials that will come from sources other than the textbook. Some of the readings will come web sites. Other readings will come from sources provided for the students. These will be placed on reserve in Diloreto Hall, Room 312.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following course requirements are those items on which all of the students in the course (undergraduate and graduate) will be graded.

1) PARTICIPATION and IN-CLASS EXERCISES: Participation is a combination of attendance and actual participation in class discussions. Beyond simply a grade, attendance will be important as the lecture material and class discussions may come from sources other than the assigned readings. If you are absent when an assignment is given it is your responsibility to find out about it and complete any related work **on time**. Participation is important because it demonstrates a) your knowledge of the readings, b) your understanding and/or lack of understanding of the items under discussion, and c) your commitment to learning and to the course. The exercises will involve problem-solving activities in environmental planning. They will consist of activities basic to the job of environmental planning. The exercise materials will be discussed in-class and students will be expected to know how to do the exercise work for the exams.

2) TESTS: There will be three tests. Tests 1 and 2 will be **ONE-HOUR** practical exams that will call upon students to perform operations and problem solving functions related to the in-class exercise material. Test 3 (essentially the second part of test two) will be a cumulative exam over broad concepts in environmental planning. Students will be allowed to use calculators, rulers, etc. and a single one-sided note sheet on 8.5x11" paper for Tests 1 and 2. Test 3 will be a closed book exam. Failure to take a test will result in a grade of zero for that test. Failure to take two of the tests will result in a failing grade for the course.

3) THE FINAL PROJECT: For the final project the students in the class will work in groups to produce an environmentally sensitive development project in response to a fictitious request for proposal (RFP). Through the project you will apply what you are learning in the classroom to design a project that, while meeting the demands of the RFP, limits its environmental impacts. It should also be crafted in such a way as to meet the demands of Connecticut environmental planning law (this will emphasize the graduate student contribution to the project). In doing so, you will present not only your designs, but also an environmental impact statement which covers the impacts and mitigation measures utilized. This material will be presented in the form of a professional quality paper that will address all the elements of your proposal. Deadline dates and specific information on content, the presentation of the project, and grading will be distributed in the sixth week of class.

GROUP WORK-The project will involve group work. For this you will receive grades both for the group effort and for your contribution. The grade for your participation will be based on the quality of your work and the extent to which it contributes to the group effort. This means that groups which do "A-level" work may have members who do not get "A-level" grades.

4) READINGS: Reading assignments are important to student learning and to classroom discussions. The readings will come from the text, sources on reserve, and from the Internet. While there is no specific readings grade, completion of the readings will be integral to class discussions and information from them will appear on the tests. **It is expected that students will come to class having completed the reading assignments.** Doing so will aid everyone in the learning process. If it appears as though the readings are not being completed prior to class, the instructor will get very cranky. In such cases, the instructor reserves the right to give quizzes on the readings. Any quizzes will be added to the point total for the final grade. In completing the readings, students should come to class prepared to answer the following questions.

What are the key planning concerns related to the environmental phenomena under study? What is it about that component the phenomena that makes it a planning concern? How successful is such planning likely to be for our use of the environment? How successful is such planning likely to be for ecosystem preservation?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Graduate)

Much of the work in the course will be the same for graduates as it will be for the undergraduates. The value placed on those assignments will differ according to the grading scheme below. There is, however, one significant difference in the material requirements of the course. In addition to the items above, graduate students will complete the following.

REGULATORY NOTEBOOK: As a graduate student there is a better than even chance that you will end up working in the subject area in which you study. As such, you will be butting your heads regularly against the Connecticut State statutes. In order to better understand the regulations, you are to read through them and write short synopses on each. These should communicate **IN YOUR OWN WORDS** the major issues and crucial details of the various applicable regulations. A good approach to this project will be to simply follow through the state regulations as we come to them in the class materials. You will be graded based on the completeness of coverage and the extent to which they communicate the key items of concern.

GRADING POLICIES AND DISTRIBUTION

The expectations for grading are simple. It is expected that the students will produce work of a quality appropriate for a senior/graduate-level course. Grades will be given accordingly and there will be **NO CURVE AND NO EXTRA CREDIT.** Grades for the course will be based on the following grading scale. The grades for graduates and undergraduates will be calculated separately. Expectations of work quality will be higher for the graduate students.

A	93-100%	B	83-86.9%	C	73-76.9%	D	63-66.9%
A-	90-92.9%	B-	80-82.9%	C-	70-72.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%	F	Less than 60%

Grades for undergraduates will be determined as follows. Grades for the graduates will be determined as follows.

Participation	(10%)	Test 1	(20%)	Participation	(15%)	Test 1	(15%)
Test 2	(20%)	Test 3	(20%)	Test 2	(15%)	Test 3	(15%)
Project	(30%)			Notebook	(20%)	Project	(20%)
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Total	(100%)			Total	(100%)		

If quizzes are given each one will account for an additional 5% of the course grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The class schedule below is tentative. The topics covered on any given day may vary depending on the progress of the class or other unforeseen circumstances. All graded items will come with due dates attached. These due dates, along with those listed in the class schedule will not change. The exception to this is when class is cancelled. If there is a class cancellation when an assignment is due or a test to be given, the next class period will be used as the test/due date. The readings listed below correspond to 'S' Steiner and 'M' Marsh chapters in the texts. Connecticut State Statute (CSS) chapters are for the graduate students. They are available on-line at (<http://www.cga.state.ct.us/2001/pub/titles.htm>). While not required, undergraduates who are serious about learning the intricacies of environmental planning would be well served to follow along.

Date	Topic	Required Reading	CSS Chapter
1/21	Course Introduction-NEPA	Reading Handout	22a-439
1/28	Planning Background	S 1-2/M 1	
2/4	Planning, the Environment, and the Law	Other readings	8-124, 125a
2/11	Inventory	S 3-4/M 2	8-126, 127
2/18	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Soils	S 5/M 5-6	22a-446h, 25-478
2/25	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Topography	M 3-4	TBA
3/4	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Water Resources	M 7-11	22a-440, 444, 446i
3/11	TEST 1 , Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Runoff	M 8-10	25-476a, 22a-446j
3/18	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Erosion	M 12-14	25-473, 477&a,c,d
3/25	SPRING BREAK		
4/1	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Climate	M 15-17	TBA
4/8	Suitability Analysis/Hazards/Resources-Ecology/Habitats	M 18-20	23-447, 448,
4/15	Plan Development and Design	S 7&9/Other reading	23-453, 454
4/22	Plan Administration	S 11-12	
4/29	TEST 2, TEST 3		
5/6	Project Work Day		
5/13	Project Presentations- All Project Materials Due		

A GUIDE TO THE GRADING OF ASSIGNMENTS "A LA SOMMERS"

By now you probably know that different faculty grade things differently. Just to avoid problems, this is what I look for in grading an assignment. A good quality assignment, one that may deserve an "A," is one that;

- 1) Is complete, follows the directions, and is on time.
- 2) Shows thought and care in keeping with the level of the course.
 - Your work is well written, organized, and looks like you cared about what you were doing.
(Assignments that appear to have been through the wash or which are full of errors which could have been fixed with a single proofreading are my personal pet peeves.)
 - You didn't just paraphrase a source, you thought about it and responded to it.
- 3) Identifies where information comes from. This is a must in any profession that deals with lawyers.
 - If you have any questions in this regard, please see *The Guidelines for Paper Writing*.
- 4) Creativity is appreciated & sometimes even rewarded, but does not make up for other problems.