

## URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING

### UP 894/494 Planning Practicum

Michigan State University

Spring 2025

MW 9:10 pm-12:00pm

Human Ecology Rm 209

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### Course Description

Collection, analysis and synthesis of planning information for an established urban or regional area. Problem identification and alternative plan formulation. Formulation of comprehensive physical development policies and plans, implementation of programs.

### Course Materials

A number of previous practicum reports are also available at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/urban-collaborators/Practical-Engagement/>

The project clients will also distribute *packages for each group*, providing background material for each project and examples of similar projects from other locations. It is the responsibility of the group to share these packages amongst members of the team as appropriate.

### Course Requirements

- Ability to travel to communities across Michigan.
- Contact periods are six hours a week for fifteen weeks. Each student is expected to put approximately 250 hours over the semester into Practicum work.
- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable).
- Access to *Desire2Learn (D2L and Zoom platform)*.

**Attendance is MANDATORY.** Students who fail to attend the first week of class will be dropped from the course. This class has no lectures or recorded materials. Attendance and participation in all meetings and field work is mandatory. More than one absence will result in a grade reduction. If you get sick for more than one week during the semester and are unable to attend class, attend scheduled field trips, or attend scheduled team meetings, you will be advised to drop the course and take it the next year. Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class.

### Course Structure

We find Practicum to be a tremendous teaching vehicle, helping students to increase their knowledge and confidence through the provision of a needed service to deserving communities. Our experience has been that the practicums provide a vehicle for substantive learning and the integration of techniques with theory. We feel the result is graduates who are better planners. The Practicum will involve projects sponsored by various communities. Students vote on each project on the first day of class and are usually allocated their first or second preference (although some receive their third preference). The projects will involve a number of basic skills including: meeting with clients, developing a scope of services, managing teamwork, and developing skills in creative problem solving, public speaking, designing and using graphics, and report writing. The class will meet regularly as a whole as well as in project groups. The large class meetings will be used to provide input (“how-to” information). It will also be a forum for discussing larger questions about the connections between planning

theory and planning practice, for example: What are planner's responsibilities to their clients and the larger public? How much information is enough? What kinds of planning do the projects involve (comprehensive, incremental, advocacy etc.)?

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

The faculty in Urban and Regional Planning are unanimous in their support of the Practicum as an important method for integrating classroom work and pragmatic planning in "real world" situations. This experience is essential in the progression from student to trained practitioner.

#### **Course Objectives:**

1. To master basic techniques concerning data collection, interviews, fieldwork, map making, and report writing.
2. To apply analytical techniques needed to create an understanding of the state of community and its issues.
3. To have the student gain a thorough knowledge of planning processes and experience in the establishment of participatory procedures, which are applied for the duration of the project.
4. To apply knowledge gained in preceding coursework to current problems and future planning decisions.
5. To apply basic inventory and analytical techniques within the context of the project in question.
6. To gain experience in the development of recommendations for implementation in the following areas: regulation, (e.g., zoning), process (e.g., special permits), and funding (e.g., capital improvements, grants).
7. To learn from comparable case studies both national and international places and use when appropriate in recommendations for the future.
8. To prepare professional quality reports and graphics.
9. To learn how to work in groups, assume leadership roles, and behave in a professional and ethical manner.
10. To present and communicate planning assessments and recommendations to multiple audiences.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Students should be able to demonstrate the following *Guiding Values*: Values inform ethical and normative principles used to guide planning in a democratic society.

- **Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion:** key issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners' role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons.
- **Sustainability, resilience, and climate justice:** environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable communities.
- **Professional Ethics and Responsibility:** key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation.

Students should be able to demonstrate the following *Planning Skills*:

- **Planning Process and Engagement:** Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future.
- **Analytical Skills and Tools:** Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research; quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting; methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization.
- **Professional and Communication Skills:** Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication.

#### **Selection of Practicum Projects**

The topics for the Practicum are selected jointly by the Practicum faculty. The criteria are:

1. The projects must be at a scale that is achievable within the fourteen-week time period, by teams of 5-7 students.
2. A choice of options should be provided over the year including: urban, urbanizing, metropolitan, and/or rural areas.

3. Each project must include data collection, analysis, and the development of plans, and implementation strategies as part of the project.
4. Critical elements covered over the course of the Practicum include demographics, land use, environmental concerns, economic development, and their relation to planning process.
5. Each Practicum should be based on an actual situation and, as much as possible, have an interested client.
6. Each project must allow the students to prepare maps/graphics, write reports, and make presentations.

### **Grading:**

Grading will be first based on the following criteria:

1. Overall quality of the work including data collection, analysis, and communication of findings.  
We will judge the quality of the work by examining the following criteria:
  - a. Are all milestones met in a timely manner?
  - b. Are interim drafts and reports of adequate depth and quality?
  - c. Does the final product reflect a good knowledge of contemporary planning processes?
  - d. Are all recommendations and findings clearly linked to evidence?
  - e. Is the report organized in a clear, sensible, and professional manner?
  - f. Can an educated lay reader understand the entire report?
2. Creativity and how new ideas were employed.
3. Leadership, management and team building skills.

The philosophy behind the Practicum is that high quality work is expected. Practicum instructors will work with each team to produce a near to professional-quality report.

The Faculty will determine a grade to each practicum report. Many students on a practicum team will receive the report grade. This is not guaranteed, however. An individual student's grade may vary from the report grade based on input from clients, peers and faculty. Furthermore, in fairness to all team members, each team will create a Code of Conduct Contract. This contract lays out team expectations of all members including criteria by which a team member can be fired for non-performance. If this happens, the fired member fails practicum and has to retake it the following Spring semester.

### **Presentations:**

There will be multiple presentations during the semester and a final presentation. Each student is expected to speak two times, at a minimum. The final will be 30 minutes long and include a summary of where the project fits in the context of planning as an academic and professional discipline. There will be a Client/Community presentation if required by the clients after the final presentation on campus. Students are also expected to present their work to the community at a community-based location the week after the campus presentation.

### **Product:**

Each team will produce a professional caliber planning report on their project, prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the project report, and create either a 30" x 36" poster board summarizing the research, findings and recommendations or a short video about your project findings. Upon approval by course faculty of the final versions of the following deliverables will be required:

- 3 flash drives with ALL material including clean copy of final report in WORD and PDF; PowerPoint presentation; Posters or Videos; and all supporting material.
- 2 bound copies of the complete report
- 2 hard copy of the poster

*New accessibility regulations require the Executive Summary and Posters to be in an accessible format.*

### **A Note on Drafts:**

There are several due dates for draft reports marked on the schedule: first draft, client review draft, final draft, and camera-ready copy (the final draft with typos, grammatical errors, formatting problems, and so on, corrected).

To assist with monitoring project progress through multiple drafts teams are requested to attach marked up copies of the previous draft to the current draft. That means for every draft with the possible exception of the first draft, you will be attaching our marked-up copies. If you do not attach our marked up old version, your project may not receive timely review. This may sound onerous but it both helps the faculty see revisions made, and tends to reduce the reintroduction of materials deemed adequate in previous drafts. The instructors are committed to seeing students create quality professional products, therefore we are often available to review more drafts than the ones indicated on the syllabus.

### **Notes on Posters**

Posters are widely used in the academic community, and most conferences include poster presentations in their program. Research posters summarize information or research concisely and attractively to help publicize it and generate discussion.

The poster is usually a mixture of a brief text mixed with tables, graphs, pictures, and other presentation formats. A helpful video for guiding students on how to make posters can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnhoIbfc0M>

- Important information should be readable from about 10 feet away
- Title is short and draws interest
- Posters should be approx. 30" x 36"
- Word count of about 200 to 300 words
- Text is clear and to the point
- Use of bullets, numbering, and headlines make it easy to read
- Effective use of graphics, color and fonts
- Consistent and clean layout

### **Class Schedule and Meeting Rooms:**

This is a *team-based* course. Class meetings will involve all teams and individual team meetings. Dates of meetings of the whole class are marked. Dates that are blank, or where merely a due date is marked, will probably not involve classes although instructors will be available for consultations. Remember the class schedule is a basic guide. Projects change and the faculty and teams may need to meet more or less frequently to accomplish the project tasks. When in doubt check with the instructors.

## TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

MONDAY	TUES	WEDNESDAY	THURS	FRIDAY
<b>January 13</b> <i>Introduction to Course and Project Assignments</i>	14	15 <i>Project Teams meet with Clients to scope project</i>	16	17
20 <i>Holiday. Start data collection</i>	21	22 <i>Scopes to be sent to instructors</i>	23	24
27 <i>All Groups Present Scopes</i>	28	29	30	31
<b>Feb 03</b> <i>Progress Reports: All Groups</i>	4	5	6	7
10 <i>Progress Reports: All Groups</i>	11	12	13	14 <i>First Draft reports Due Instructors Only</i>
17 <i>Drafts Returned Each Team Individually</i>	18	19	20	21
24 <i>Progress Reports: All Groups</i>	25	26 <i>Second Draft reports Due by noon Instructors and Clients</i>	27	28 <i>Drafts Returned</i>
<b>March 3</b> SPRING BREAK	4	5	6	7
10 <i>Each Team Individually Review Client Comments</i>	11	12	13	14
17 <i>Progress Reports: All Groups</i>	18	19	20	21 <i>Full Drafts Due Instructors Only</i>
24 <i>Drafts Returned Each Team Individually</i>	25	26	27	28
31 <i>Progress Reports: All Groups</i>	<b>April 1</b>	2 <i>Full Drafts Due Instructors and Clients</i>	3	4
7 <i>Drafts Returned Each Team Individually</i>	8	9 <i>Review Client Comments</i>	10	11
14 <i>Poster Review</i>	15	16	17	18
21 <i>Final Presentation Rehearsal All groups</i>	22	23 <i>Peer Grading and Exit Assessment All Groups</i>	24	25 <i>Final Presentations* Final Products Due</i>
28 <b>SCHEDULE COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS if required by client (before 5/2)</b>	29	30	<b>May 1</b>	2

\* *Final Presentations will be at the MSU Union Room 50*

**MANDATORY ATTENDENCE WEEKS:** You will not complete the course without being present.

## ***ADDITIONAL NOTES***

### ***Participation and Engagement***

During all classes, the instructor expects students to be fully engaged and prepared to discuss reading assignments. Students are encouraged to ask questions of the instructor, guest speakers, and their peers.

Active participation includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

1. Asking and answering questions of the instructors, peers, or guest speakers
2. Bringing forth new ideas, information, or perspectives to academic conversations
3. Discussing your readings and reflections with instructors and peers
4. Meeting with the instructors to discuss your interests, assignments, or project
5. Questioning information presented and discussed
6. Participating in small group discussions and activities
7. Assuming responsibility for personal behavior and learning

While working on group projects, students should be mindful of other students in their group; therefore, it is important for all participants to exercise:

- Respect for themselves, each other
- Openness and a positive attitude toward new ideas and other's ideas
- Flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity
- Good communications amongst themselves.

### ***Academic Honesty***

[Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Academic Freedom Report states: "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the School of Planning, Design and Construction adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations. Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Using or copying phrases or sentences directly from the readings or any other sources without references is not allowed. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in this course. I am required to report any violation of MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades. Please speak to me if you have any doubt on what is acceptable. Please check details on academic honesty at the following Website: [msu.edu/unit/ombud](http://msu.edu/unit/ombud).

Collection of Student Work: For the purposes of accreditation of the Urban and Regional Planning Program, some student work will be retained for future use without any personal identification or information on the material.

### ***Electronic Devices and Use of Social Media:***

Use of cell phones is prohibited during the class time. You will be asked to leave the classroom for the day if you are found using your cell phone during class time.

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. Students may not record lectures or any other classroom activities.
2. Students may not post course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor.
3. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

### ***Professional Etiquette:***

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own" or to "use (another's production) without crediting the source" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

It is easy to copy words from a website or from someone else's work and pass it off as your own. MSU takes this issue seriously. All information in your assignments and or submitted work should be in your own original words. If you have got the idea from another source, please cite the source appropriately. If plagiarism is suspected and confirmed, you will receive a 0 in that assignment. You can read more about MSU's policy on academic integrity at [MSU's Integrity Policy - http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/RegsOrdsPolicies.html](http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/RegsOrdsPolicies.html)

### ***Limits to Confidentiality***

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others.

As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from "a campus official" who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

### ***Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed***

From the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

### ***Understand When You May Drop This Course***

#### ***Drops and Adds***

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (insert date). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (insert date). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

### ***Commercialized Lecture Notes***

Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.\*

\*Note: The Code of Teaching Responsibility requires instructors who permit students to commercialize their class lecture notes to include a statement in their course syllabi that gives such permission. Absent such permission, students may not do so.

### ***Disruptive Behavior***

Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Academic Freedom Report \(AFR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [AFR](#) states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.

### ***Campus Safety***

Your sense of safety and security on campus is important to me as your educator, and it is fundamental to your capacity to learn. Below are some of the ways the university strives to make campus as safe as possible.

- MSU classrooms are equipped with one of two [door locking mechanisms](#), in case of emergency.
- MSU Green Light emergency phones are located throughout campus.
- MSU's mass notification system is comprehensive and includes audible alerts from Green Light phones, use of outdoor weather sirens, computer notifications, desktop phone announcements, and cell phone alerts.

There also are additional steps you can take to increase your safety on campus.

- Ensure you are [signed up to receive MSU alerts](#) on your cell phone.
  - Download the [SafeMSU App](#) and turn on push notifications.
  - Update your cell phone contact and list it as *preferred* by logging into [MSU's Student Information System](#), clicking "my profile" and then clicking "contact details."
- If you live near an MSU campus, sign up for Nixle Community Alerts for your local municipality by following the links on the [MSU Alert](#) webpage.
- Complete MSU's Active Violence Incident (AVI) training, available on [MSU's Ability Training Platform](#).

For questions related to campus safety and security, please visit the [MSU DPPS Safety Tips webpage](#).

## **GENERAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

All other general college and university policies applicable to this course are available at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/academics/courses/policies> . Please review these policies.

Topics covered in these general policies include:

- Students with disabilities, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) and accommodations
- Student rights under the family educational rights and privacy act (FERPA)
  - Student release authorization form
- Religious holiday policies
- Grief absence policies
- Students in distress policies
- MSU student athlete policies
- Course add-drop policies
- Honors options
- Course Management system policies
- Final exam policy and attendance
- Grade dispute policies
- Academic honesty and integrity, plagiarism, and disciplinary procedures
- Disruptive behavior
- Harassment and discrimination policies
- RVSM University reporting protocols



- Limits to confidentiality
- Social media policy
- Web accessibility policies
- MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility
- SIRS
- Commercialization of lecture notes
- University Learning Goals