URP 506: Planning Methods
Fall 2023

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This course introduces students to quantitative and qualitative methods commonly used in urban planning practice and urban research to understand the past, present, and future of cities and regions. To be effective professionals, urban planners must be able to find appropriate data, analyze data with suitable techniques, reach sensible conclusions from their analyses, and present their results convincingly to a wide range of audiences, including the general public, community leaders, public officials, and other professionals. Using a variety of methods, this course prepares students to summarize, analyze, and present data they have collected themselves or have obtained from secondary sources, as well as reflect on the ethical choices required by all methods. It also provides students with skills to critically review and evaluate quantitative analyses and recommendations from others such as consultants and researchers. Among traditional methods, the course also incorporates methods for analyzing neighborhood change, racial equity, and climate resilience.

Learning Goals
As a core course in the MURP curriculum, the course addresses course-level goals which fall under two main program learning goals.

Program Planning Skills Goal 1: Collect, analyze, and interpret data from a variety of sources common to the planning profession.
    Course-Level Goals
- Demonstrate the ability to create new information needed for planning through survey design, implementation, and data analysis. [Survey Design, Final Report]
- Describe the empirical conditions of a place by identifying and analyzing official data sources commonly used in planning. [Population, Housing, and Economic Profiles]
- Proficiently use quantitative analytical techniques commonly found in professional urban planning practice, academic literature, and the American Institute of Certified Planners examination including standard economic, demographic, and statistical analysis techniques. [Regression Assignment, Final Report]
- Demonstrate skills in synthesizing results of data analysis and to communicate trustworthy results clearly and effectively to nontechnical audiences through prose, figures, and tables. [Final Report]

Program Values and Ethics Goal 1: Analyze arguments related to contemporary planning issues, and recognize both the underlying systems of values they promote and the specific factual claims they rely upon.
    Course-Level Goals
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of creating mathematical models to clarify complex situations and to help decide courses of action. [Exam 2, Participation]
- Critically analyze the relationship between competing perspectives on urban problems and choices about how data and models are designed and used. [Regression Assignment, Exam 2, Participation)

Course Requirements:

The course primarily involves a series of data analysis assignments in population, housing, and economic data which culminates in a Place Report on a U.S. urban place of the student's choosing. In addition, the course includes two exams and a linear regression assignment.