

URP 532: SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL CHANGE

Winter 2024

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, 2210 Art & Arch Bldg.

Instructor: Prof. Scott Campbell (sdcamp@umich.edu)

This course emphasizes the local and regional scale of sustainability; the role of planning, land policy, local economic development, and regional planning; and the relationship between human settlement patterns and environmental consequences. We examine the conflicts between local economic development, environmental protection and social justice -- and planning strategies to resolve these conflicts. We will engage "sustainability" both as a useful organizing principle for planning and as a problematic concept to be challenged and updated.

Why another course on sustainability? Graduate students come with rich and varied knowledge and experiences with sustainability, and programs across campus now widely engage the issue. The purpose of a stand-alone graduate planning course on sustainability is to develop a specifically urban & regional framework for sustainability; to examine specific local case studies; and to critically evaluate the connections and conflicts in sustainability concepts and practices.

Five central course themes:

Urban Form/Land Use: the impact of urban form and density on sustainability (including the compact city debate); river basin planning; (green and gray) infrastructure such as transit and water; moving beyond car dependence; greenbelts; ecoregions.

Community Economic Development: the shift from growth-oriented economic development to steady state economics? regenerative sustainability; green economy; the benefits of localism; the challenges of eco-gentrification; resource-dependency (water, timber, mining).

Ideas: the emergence of sustainability in planning thought; the current state of sustainability thinking in the profession; environmental preservation versus social justice; resilience; political ecology; alternative environmental economics; wicked problems and complex adaptive systems.

Institutions: local sustainability plans; local sustainability offices and jobs; efforts by cities to measure local sustainability; market vs. regulatory approaches to sustainability; strategies to lower automobile dependence (including complete streets and pedestrian/bicycle plans).

Climate Change and the Future: If sustainability was once the fear that we were extracting resources from nature's "warehouse" at too fast a rate, we are now worried that the warehouse itself is on fire; theories of sustainability transition; sustainable development and climate action as both overlapping and at times conflicting social goals. Urban ecological utopias and dystopias.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

Course syllabus: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~sdcamp/up532/>

Course requirements: Course assignments include several short analysis/evaluation assignments; several short essays; and a group project on an economic/environmental conflict case study.