

**School of Urban and Public Affairs  
University of Louisville**

**Syllabus  
PLAN 650 Capstone Studio  
Spring 2007**

Meetings:	Instructors:	
Fridays, 6 to 8:45 pm	Dr. Steven Bourassa	Dr. Lauren Heberle
Urban Design Studio	Urban Studies Institute, Room 100	Urban Studies Institute, Room 217
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***Goals and content:***

The Capstone Studio is a required course for students in the Master of Urban Planning program. Its purposes are to give students the opportunity to integrate the various elements of the MUP program while working on a real planning project, to develop and apply a comprehensive planning process to that planning project, to experience working as members of teams, and to prepare written reports and oral presentations of professional quality.

This semester's assignment will cover the Park Hill Corridor. This area in Louisville runs roughly north/south from Broadway to Algonquin Parkway and east/west from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. It is an area that is rife with brownfields, vacant lots, low residential population, extreme poverty, and high unemployment. There are also current working large industrial and commercial businesses like Brown Forman and Süd Chemie, many small businesses, small and large houses of worship, isolated residential areas, community groups, and a troubled housing project, Parkway Place. It touches on several neighborhoods, Old Louisville, California, Downtown, and Algonquin. It has many disconnected roads, interrupted by current and non-working industrial properties, multiple railroad tracks, and parking lots. It is, however, a great location for future transportation connections as it could easily be linked to highway and rail lines. Residents, business and property owners, locally appointed and elected officials, service providers, and religious leaders have been meeting for a year as part of the Brownfields Institute to develop ideas for revitalization and for connecting citizens to the planning process that will be implemented as part of the city's Master Plan for the area. This Capstone Studio will attempt to dovetail with those efforts and support plans for revitalizing the area.

Students will work in teams containing no more than three students each. Each team will choose and focus on a specific issue for the semester. The issues chosen by the teams will be related to at least one of the following broad topics:

1. The built environment, including existing buildings and historic structures
2. Land use planning and controls, including the possibility of live-work environments
3. Existing commercial and industrial uses and implications for economic development
4. Transportation issues
5. The Parkway Place public housing development
6. Brownfields issues

Obviously, these issues overlap. See the attached Appendix for some of the questions that might be addressed under each subject. All the groups will need to share information so that (1) we do not ask the

same city official for the same information multiple times and (2) we figure out how findings in one area might impact research or findings in another.

***Prerequisites:***

Students should have completed all (or at least most) of the core courses in the MUP program as well as some electives. The course is restricted to students enrolled in the MUP program.

***Course requirements:***

Students are required to participate in data collection and analysis, class and team meetings and discussions, preparation of oral presentations and written reports, and preparation of graphic materials. Each student must present at least part of one of the three formal oral presentations. The authors of each section or chapter of each report must be identified in the table of contents. Graphic materials used in written reports must also be attributed to the responsible class members. If appropriate, some class members might specialize in production of graphics while others focus on written materials. Generally, the division of responsibilities among team members should take advantage of the differing sets of skills that students bring to the class.

As noted above, students will be assigned to teams to focus on particular planning issues in the Park Hill Corridor. Each student is expected to pull his or her weight as part of the team and to demonstrate the ability to work effectively as a team member.

Assignments must be completed on time and grades will be based solely on the work completed by the due dates. The first assignment will be worth 15% of the final grade, the second will be worth 30%, and the final oral and written report will contribute 55% of the grade. Content, style, and professionalism will all be taken into consideration in grading the oral and written reports.

***Assignments:***

**Assignment 1: Team presentations of planning process (15% of final grade)**

**Due: January 26, 2007**

Each team will identify and describe a planning issue, problem or opportunity in the Park Hill Corridor. In addition to giving an overview of the issues, the team will then map out a planning process for addressing that issue over the course of the semester. This process should reflect an understanding of urban planning theories and processes and should attempt to apply best practice given the time and other constraints facing the team. The process should be specific in terms of how, when, and by whom various activities are to be accomplished. Potential difficulties in carrying out the planning process should be anticipated, and the process should allow for flexibility. Processes for involving key stakeholders and the community should be discussed. Details about how Assignments 2 and 3 are to be accomplished should be included.

Each team will give a 20-minute presentation that will be followed by 15 minutes or so for questions and discussion. Each team member should participate in the presentation and all students are expected to contribute to the discussion of each presentation.

**Assignment 2: Team presentations of site analysis, problems and opportunities, and preliminary goals and objectives (30%)**

**Due: March 9, 2007**

This assignment is intended to cover much of the background research needed to inform the subsequent “design” stage of the process. Each team should present a 25-minute summary of the key findings from their analysis of the site, including identification of problems and opportunities and a discussion of goals and objectives (subject to change). This presentation should include appropriate graphic materials and should revisit the process to be carried out for the remainder of the semester.

**Assignment 3: Final presentations and report (55%)**

**Due: April 27, 2007**

Each team will give an oral presentation of a maximum of 30 minutes’ duration. This will incorporate relevant material from Assignments 1 and 2, but will emphasize the planning and design stage. Other students, faculty members, task force members, stakeholders, and other interested individuals will be invited to attend and critique this presentation.

The team will also submit an illustrated report that combines the materials from all three assignments. This should be both attractive and informative and must be of professional quality. As mentioned above, the contributions of each team member should be identified where possible. Three hard copies of the report must be submitted along with an electronic version.

***Evaluation***

The three main sets of assignments will each be assigned a letter grade and a weighted average (using the weights listed above) will be used to calculate a final grade. The letter grades will be translated into numerical equivalents for the purposes of calculating the final grade: A+ = 4.3, A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, etc.

Evaluation will be based on each student’s contribution to the team effort, both in terms of amount of effort and quality of results. On average, work outside the scheduled class meetings should involve about six to seven hours per week (a total of ten hours per week, including class meetings). Credit will be given only for work completed by the deadlines.

***Class Schedule (subject to change as needed)***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>January 12</b>	6-7:15 pm	Introduction to course and study area and discussion of planning process
	7:30-8:45 pm	Team assignments and initial team procedural discussions
<b>January 19</b>	4-6:45 pm	This session will meet at USI rather than UDS. Class tour of study area, followed by discussion of impressions. Bring cameras, coats and comfortable shoes. <i>Teams to select topics.</i>

<b>January 26</b>	<b>6-8:45 pm</b>	<b><i>Assignment 1: Team presentations of planning processes</i></b>
<b>February 2</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>February 9</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>February 16</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>February 23</b>	6-7:15 pm	Brief presentations of team findings to date, with class discussion of issues
	7:30-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>March 2</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>March 9</b>	<b>6-8:45 pm</b>	<b><i>Assignment 2: Team presentations of site analyses, including problems and opportunities, and preliminary goals and objectives</i></b>
<b>March 12-18</b>	No class this week	Spring Break
<b>March 23</b>	6-7:15 pm	Class discussion of possible strategies for achieving goals and objectives
	7:30-8:45 pm	Team discussions of strategies and plans for final presentations and reports
<b>March 30</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>April 6</b>	6-7:15 pm	Brief presentations of team proposals to date, with class discussion of alternatives and implications across teams
	7:30-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>April 13</b>	6-8:45 pm	Team work period
<b>April 20</b>	6-8:45 pm	Dry runs for final presentations
<b>April 27</b>	<b>6-8:45 pm</b>	<b><i>Assignment 3: Final presentations and reports due</i></b>

## Appendix

**The following are a list of topics and potential questions associated with each topic. This is to give you a general idea of what we were thinking about just to get you started.**

1. The built environment, including existing buildings and historic structures.

What does the current built environment look like? How might we build upon and enhance what is already in the Corridor? Can we think of the Corridor in sections based on existing buildings and structures? Are there existing structures that could be reused in other ways? Which buildings highlight the residential, commercial and industrial history of the area? What should and could be restored or preserved?

2. Land use planning and controls, including the possibility of live-work environments.

Historically the Corridor had industry right next to housing for its workers. What kind of economic and/or community development could occur that would support live-work developments? Can we envision working-class live-work communities? How could current land use planning and controls be modified to encourage live-work environments that would succeed in the Park Hill Corridor? Can the existing isolated residential areas be included in this future?

3. Existing commercial/industrial uses and implications for economic development.

What kind of large businesses (commercial and industrial) exist in the Corridor today? What are their histories? Why are they here? What kind of land do they own? How do they use the land they own? What are their future plans for their operations in the Corridor? Many of the corporations are global or at least national, but do they interact with the local community? Who in the company makes decisions about local operations and community involvement? How do they contribute to the community (socially and economically)? How many of their employees live nearby? How do their employees get to work? Given current commercial/industrial activities in the area, what else could make a go of it and succeed in the area? What kind of economic activity should be recruited? How should that recruitment occur?

4. Transportation issues.

The Corridor has a couple of streets that run the north/south length of the Corridor and three east/west. For 2,100 acres this is a very small number of connected streets and causes problems traveling in any direction. There are many rail lines that cut streets off and have crossings with no arm barriers or even warning lights. This situation causes trouble for pedestrians and makes crossing even by car extremely difficult and dangerous. Public transportation to the area is very sparse. What are the most pressing transportation issues and what are the opportunities for improvement? How can the community develop a strategy for working with the multiple railroad companies who are responsible for the tracks and the crossings? What kind of public transportation improvements should be considered? Is there potential for a transit-oriented development in the area?

5. The Parkway Place public housing development.

This development is not scheduled for improvements or demolition any time in the near future, although there is a great deal of informal talk that the site will simply be bulldozed. What is the Housing Authority's plan for the development, if they have one? It is located between a metal

recycling plant, an LG&E site, and an immense city-owned brownfield, Rhodia. However the south side of the property links to a vibrant but poor residential area on Algonquin Parkway. The residents face treacherous transportation, high crime, pollution, and extreme poverty. Recently, Somali and Bantu immigrants and have been located there. What should the future of this development be? What should be done for the residents? What do the residents think of the area and its future? What physical changes could happen in the meantime and how might that be funded? Can the future planning process for the area adequately include residents?

6. Brownfields issues.

The area is rife with Brownfields. These are underutilized or abandoned properties that have known or perceived contamination that has hindered the redevelopment of the property. The Rhodia property is a well known publicly owned property. There is an LG&E site, and many other sites that need attention. Develop an overview of real or potential brownfields both publicly and privately owned. Examine the potential for redevelopment and if possible the level of development based on the kind of contamination at the site. What are some of the planning issues involved when dealing with brownfields? How do you plan the redevelopment of a brownfield in a market where the costs of clean-up have the potential to negate any profit from redevelopment? What are some of the specific problems faced at specific sites in the Corridor, for example how do you entice redevelopment of a former industrial property like Rhodia that is situated right next to a residential area?