School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP)
University of British Columbia
COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number | PLAN 523
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Course Credit(s) | 2.0
Course Title | The Profession of Planning
Term | 2017-2018 – Winter Term 1
Dates/Times | 8 Monday Mornings – 9am-12pm

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Office Hours | By appointment only

Short Course Description (maximum 45 words)
This course is built around a framing of “planning as leadership”. It explores what professional practice means, and develops the competencies and skills of leadership in students. The course is restricted to and required for all SCARP Masters students in their second year. No prerequisites.

Course Format
Short lectures will be interspersed with individual, small group and whole class activities. A holistic approach to learning (cognitive, practical, social, embodied) is to be expected.

Course Overview, Content and Objectives
How would we conceive of planning, if we saw it first and foremost as a leadership activity? What is the role of planners as leaders, and how do we become effective as professional planners beyond our role as technical experts? What does it mean to be a professional and what kinds of leadership does professionalism require of us? PLAN 523 is an exploration of these and related questions. We deal with the ethical and pragmatic dilemmas common in planning practice (e.g. the difficulty in establishing public interest given a divided public, responding to political pressure, absence of complete sets of information etc.) The overall objective of the course is for each student to develop mindsets necessary for leading in complexity, and specific skills and capacities they need to interact with other people and systems to catalyze action in planning contexts within the public, private and not-for-profit realms.

The course draws significantly on the literature from leadership, organizational development, business, psychology, and communication fields and evokes a complexity perspective throughout. The four segments of the course are organized along an arc that radiates out from the individual planner:
- Session 1&2: Personal Leadership – Who is the self as the instrument of this work?
- Session 3&4: Relational Leadership - How to work successfully in relation to others?
- Session 5&6: Organizational Leadership – How to work successfully in teams and organizations?
- Session 7&8: Societal Leadership – How to move elegantly within larger societal networks?

Learning Outcomes
After completing this course, students will be able to:
- Articulate the meaning of being a professional and its ethical and pragmatic implications
• Distinguish between simple, complicated and complex problems and recognize the implications of each for practice
• Distinguish between various types of leadership applicable to planning practice and identify their own orientation
• Demonstrate a greater level of self awareness including insight into their implicit biases and habitual patterns in interaction with others
• Recognize and have a way of reading systems and use a network thinking framework
• Create prototypes and internalize an adaptive approach to action
• Feel more confident in taking initiative and participating in action

Attendance
Because of the intensive nature of the course full attendance is required. A doctor’s note is required if you are going to miss any of the instructional hours.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading
Class participation (20%)
This is a highly applied course and class attendance and participation are essential to completion. Evaluation is based on the level of engagement with class materials and activities, that may also include challenging of the materials and activities.

Reflection papers (40%)
Two reflection papers are to be submitted, summarizing the student's learning after each of the 4 segments of the course. Students get to choose the 2 out of 4 segments they would like to reflect on. I suggest writing them as soon as possible after each section while the learning is fresh. A reflection paper is a thoughtful short paper (1-2 pages single spaced) that looks back on the experience of the segment of the course and describes the reaction of the student to the readings and exercises, with an emphasis on their main insights and learnings. The reflection paper connects the classroom learning with one or more of the readings, but is not meant to be a scholarly paper. Nor is a reflection paper a course evaluation: I am not only looking for your reactions to the material, but what the reactions are revealing to you about yourself and how you might work with them. Reflection papers are evaluated on their depth. (Note: I will further describe the nature of the reflective practice in the first session.)

Group assignment (40%)
To be described in further detail in class. Students will complete an assignment in groups. The assignment is meant to serve as an opportunity to intentionally collaborate with a small group, putting some of the teachings from the course into practice. We will deliberate on the collaboration together in the last segment of the course after the assignment has been completed.

Required Readings and Videos
Maged Senbel (2015) Leadership in sustainability planning: propagating visions through empathic communication, in The Journal of Environmental Planning and Management
John Forester (2011) Profile of Larry Sherman in Planning Theory and Practice
Zaid Hassan (2014) The Social Labs Revolution: A New Approach to Solving Our Most Complex Challenges. Chapter 1, 2, 6, 7, 8

Recommended Readings
Several required readings for this class are chapters in books. I recommend reading the books in their entirety for more in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.

Course Schedule
Segment 1:
- Framing and introductory lecture: the nature of professions, planning as a profession in a world of complexity, the nature of working in complex systems
- Introduction to reflective practice
- A series of dialogic and embodied exercises exploring personal and individual aspects of leadership

Segment 2:
- Exercise on implicit bias
- Embodied exercises with a focus on inter-personal relationships
- Team agreements and conflict engagement protocol
- Introduction to the group assignment

Section 3:
- Introduction to deliberative practice
- A series of embodied exercises followed by group conversation, exploring the organizational aspects of leadership
- In depth looks at team and organizational dilemmas through polarity mapping and polarity tapping

Section 4:
- Understanding the systemic nature of planning and the role of planner among many actors
- Ethical engagement and the meaning of societal leadership
- Presentation of group assignments

Academic Integrity
The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University’s policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at http://calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0.