

URP 525: REGIONAL PLANNING

Fall 2021

Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:00 – 5:30 pm

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

This graduate course provides an introduction to regional planning, development and analysis. The regionalist tradition represents a distinctive worldview to analyze metropolitan development, envision alternative conceptions and scales of community, and structure institutional responses to environmental, economic and social challenges. We examine the history, institutional practices, idealism and limitations of regional planning. Regional efforts have alternately targeted economic, environmental and social equity goals. Themes include regional economic development, land preservation, regional sustainability efforts, city-suburb relations, water resource management, megaregions, and transportation infrastructure. Case studies may include New York, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Portland, Metro Detroit, EU regionalism and Asian megaregions.

We examine the lack of regional planning in the United States both as American exceptionalism and as myth. We explore the disparities between regional idealism and the actual practice of regional planning, as well the divergent views of the region as an economic system, a shared cultural identity, an infrastructural network, an ecological habitat, and an administrative district.

Central Questions for the Course include:

- What are regions? How do we map and visualize them? How does planning at the regional scale offer advantages over planning at the city scale?
- What are the pathways and obstacles to planning and coordination at the regional scale? Who are the largest boosters and opponents of regional management?
- How does the regional approach differ for land use planning, transportation planning, resource management, and economic development?
- How is the rise of megaregions (e.g., Bos-Wash megalopolis; the Piedmont Atlantic; the Pacific Northwest's Cascadia; the Texas Triangle; southern Cal) changing the way we envision urban areas, protect farmland and open space, and link communities by road and rail?
- How does the rise of semi-autonomous public authorities (often to build and manage infrastructure), such as port authorities, act as a model of regional planning?
- How do regional authorities collaborate – or compete -- with local and state agencies?
- Are some planning issues (e.g., transportation, water resources, park planning) better suited for regional-level coordination than others (e.g., welfare policy, housing)?
- How well can regional planning integrate economic and environmental concerns? How can the regional approach contribute to the challenge of mitigating/adapting to climate change?
- How do we understand the dynamics, history and planning consequences of the great interregional shifts in population and economic activity: the 19th century westward settlement of the US Midwest, Prairie and West; the Great Migration (ca. 1910 – 1970); late 20th century Frostbelt-Sunbelt migration; and current pandemic-induced migration? What new planning challenges arise from these big demographic shifts?

Course syllabus: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~sdcamp/urp525/>