

URP 6645 Sustainable Urbanism in Europe

Spring 2025

Instructor

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Course Overview/Objectives

European cities are celebrated for their livability as compared to cities in all regions in the world. Planners typically point to their unique blend of the new and the historic, the walkability of these places when contrasted with counterparts in North and South America and places in Asia, the efficiency of European urban transportation systems, the careful utilization of land in European cities to support higher population densities without sacrificing amenities, their environmental amenities, and for accommodating an increasing diverse population. At the same time, European cities confront challenges of a high-cost living, serious unemployment in certain regions, aging infrastructure, and the challenges associated with their experiment with regional integration. It is the regional integration experiment and the increasing interconnectedness of Europe's cities that makes it especially important to better understand the diverse policies that are defining city development in one of the most urbanized regions of the world. There are challenges to be understood but also models of intervention to be explored and perhaps emulated to help plan more sustainable urbanism on a global scale. That is the intention of this course.

The course will explore the diverse urban places that make up modern Europe through a three-pronged approach. The first section examines the historical development of cities in Europe, beginning with the urbanization process initiated during the Roman Empire. More attention will be given to the development processes of the 17th through the early 20th centuries. In many respects this was the period during which European urbanism was exported to all parts of the globe through colonialism. European city planners also devised models to guide urban change that had enormous global impact and are important to understand as a basis of the modern city. The impact of two world wars (destruction and rebuilding), the post-colonial, Cold War and post-Cold War period will be examined from the standpoint of their impact on select cities as a prelude to the establishment of the European Union. While this section will touch upon Europe as a whole, it will rely necessarily on select urban cases to illuminate the broader development processes.

The second section of the course will examine the challenges and accomplishment of urbanization in Europe over the past several decades. The national and local planning processes that affect the development of individual cities will be explored to better understand how Europe manages change. Select cities will be examined to demonstrate the range of strategies related to land development, provision of housing, commercial development, preservation of open space and landscape planning, financing basic services, transportation planning and its relationship to urban functions, and the broad area of economic development efforts that have kept European cities vital

places. European nations have engaged in some unique approaches to regional development (e.g. managing waterways that traverse multiple nations and cities) that offer useful lessons as well.

The final section of the course will consider the current condition and challenges of cities in Europe from the standpoint of models of sustainable development. The point here is to move beyond the case studies per se to evaluate the effectiveness of various policies, interventions and plans from the standpoint of key components of sustainability modeling, such as energy consumption, utilization of resources, ensuring greater livability to a broader segment of the population, and adaptation to the regional integration standards advanced under the banner of the European Union.

Required Texts

Beatley, Timothy, ed., *Green Cities of Europe*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2012

- Available for purchase on Amazon.com:

[amazon.com/Green-Cities-Europe-Lessons-Urbanism/dp/1597269751](https://www.amazon.com/Green-Cities-Europe-Lessons-Urbanism/dp/1597269751) [Links to an external site.](#)

Mell, Ian, *Global Green Infrastructure: Lesson for Successful Policy-Making, Investment and Management*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Europe Sustainable Development Solution Network, *Europe Sustainable Development Report, 2022*.

<https://www.sustainabledevelopment.report/reports/europe-sustainable-development-report-2022> [Links to an external site.](#)

European Union Regional Policy, *Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Europe*. 2009.

Full text

<https://ec.europa.eu/regionalpolicy/sources/docgener/presenta/urban2009/urban200...>

- PDF, available online:

ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/urban2009/urban2009_en.pdf [Links to an external site.](#)

Assignments

Case Study Project - Students will select one of the cities featured in Beatley (2012), or if desired, another notable European city, to pursue a research project. The chapters provide information about some of the leading sustainability initiatives underway in select cities at the time that Beatley's authors prepared their chapters. The purpose of your work is to explore other possible sustainability initiatives in that city, to bring up-to-date efforts that were covered in the chapter, and to critically assess the conclusions reached by the author of the chapter on overall sustainability efforts. If you choose another city beyond the selections in Beatley, be sure to include some more general background concerning its efforts to promote sustainability. The report should be prepared

in a roughly 10 page paper, typed, and including references to the sources used for the analysis. A brief PowerPoint presentation, with illustrations, should accompany the paper. The overall project is worth 40 % of the course grade, with 10% for the PowerPoint and 30% for the paper. By the 3rd week, please inform me which city you have selected for the case study project.

Discussions - Discussion questions will be posted for each module and will focus on key themes and issues relevant to each module. Active and on-going participation in the weekly discussion boards is important. You should submit twice for each module; one original post and a response to at least one other student's post. Your original posts should not be a summary of the readings. This is a chance to think critically about the reading and write up your reflection.

Final Examination - There will be a final examination conducted as a take-home examination, accessible week 8 of the term.

Course Grading

Discussion posts = 30%

Case Study Project = 40%

Final examination = 30%

Course Structure

This course comprises 8 modules:

Week 1: Introduction to Sustainability and Urbanism: European Context

Week 2: Historical Antecedents of European Sustainable Urbanization

Week 3: Land Use, Urban Form and Environment

Week 4: Transportation

Week 5: Central City Preservation and Revitalization, Residential Areas

Week 6: Ecology and Energy Needs

Week 7: Green Governance and Economic Development

Week 8: Green Cities of Europe as Global Models

Class Schedule/Readings/Topics:

Module 1 January 13-26

Introduction to Sustainability and Urbanism Concepts: European Context

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapter 1, "Introduction: Why Study European Cities?"; Douglas Farr, "Sustainable Urbanism: The Grand Unification," p. 41-59, in Farr, *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design With Nature* (Wiley, 2008); Robert Doppelt, "The Gift," p. 1-13, in Doppelt, *The Power of Sustainable Thinking* (Earthscan, 2009); European Union Regional Policy, *Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Europe, 2009* (available online)

Power point, "Emerging Trends in Sustainable Development"

Module 2 January 27-February 9

Historical Antecedents of European Sustainable Urbanization

Read: Joseph and Frances Gies, *Life in a Medieval City* (1969), p. 23-31; Mervyn Miller, "The Origins of the Garden City Residential Neighborhood," p. 99-130, in Parsons and Schuyler, eds., *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Johns Hopkins U. Press, 2002); Ian Mell, "The Antecedents of Green Infrastructure: Olmsted, Howard and Beyond," in Mell, I. *Global Green Infrastructure* (Routledge, 2016), p. 17-41.

Power point, "Historical Perspective on European Cities"

Module 3 February 10-23

Components of Contemporary European Urban Systems – Land Use, Urban Form and Environment

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapters 2 and 5.

Power points, "Spatial Planning in the Netherlands" and "Land Development in Europe"

Case Study: Select city by February 18 (send email to instructor)

Module 4 March 3 – March 16

Components of Contemporary European Urban Systems – Transportation

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapters 3 and 4, Beatley (2000), Chapter 4, "Transit Cities: Public Transport Innovations and Priorities" and Chapter 5, "Taming the Auto: The Promise of Car-Free Cities"

Power points, "Urban Transportation in Europe" and "Cars and Bikes in European Cities"

"Green Buses for European Cities," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5pwoDkuWeA>

Module 5 March 17 - 30

Components of Contemporary European Urban Systems –Central City

Preservation/Revitalization/Residential Areas

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapter 6; Venice discussion

Power point, "City Center in the Sustainable City"

Module 6 March 31 - April 6

Toward the Sustainable City – Ecology Considerations/ Energy Needs and Approaches

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapter 7; Alexander Garvin, "Greening Cities: A Public Realm Approach," p. 60-83, in Birch and Wachter, eds., *Growing Greener Cities: Urban Sustainability in the Twenty-First Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Mell, "Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and the London Olympic Park," p. 86-107 "Green Infrastructure Development in Paris (France) and Milan (Italy), p. 108-129 in Mell, *Global Green Infrastructure*.

Power point, "Ecological Components in European Cities"

Module 7 April 7 - 20

Toward the Sustainable City – Green Governance/Economic Development

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapter 8

Power point, "Economics and Governance for Sustainability in European Cities"

Module 8 April 21 - 27

Green Cities of Europe as Global Models

Read: Beatley (2012), Chapter 9

Case Study paper and power point due April 27

Final examination due May 2

Academic Policies

Course Evaluation - Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/Links to an external site.> . Please note your other classes this semester may be evaluated in the current GatorRater online evaluation system at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/Links to an external site.> . Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the

quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/Links to an external site.>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/Links to an external site.>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/Links to an external site.>.

Student Honor Code - Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Student and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Pledge - We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

(a) Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: 1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. 2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(b) Unauthorized Use of Materials or Resources ("Cheating"). A student shall not use unauthorized materials or resources in an academic activity. Unauthorized materials or resources shall include: 1. Any paper or project authored by the student and presented by the student for the satisfaction of any academic requirement if the student previously submitted substantially the same paper or project to satisfy an academic requirement and did not receive express authorization to resubmit the paper or project. 2. Any materials or resources prepared by another student and used without the other student's express consent or without proper attribution to the other student. 3. Any materials or resources which the faculty member has notified the student or the class are prohibited. 4. Use of a cheat sheet when not authorized to do so or use of any other resources or materials during an examination, quiz, or other academic activity without the express permission of the faculty member, whether access to such resource or materials is through a cell phone, PDA, other electronic device, or any other means.

(c) Prohibited Collaboration or Consultation. A student shall not collaborate or consult with another person on any academic activity unless the student has the express authorization from the faculty member. 1. Prohibited collaboration or consultation shall include but is not limited to: a. Collaborating when not authorized to do so on an examination, take-home test, writing project, assignment, or course work. b. Collaborating or consulting in any other academic or co-curricular activity after receiving notice that such conduct is prohibited. c. Looking at another student's

examination or quiz during the time an examination or quiz is given. Communication by any means during that time, including but not limited to communication through text messaging, telephone, email, other writing or verbally, is prohibited unless expressly authorized. It is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification on whether or not use of materials or collaboration or consultation with another person is authorized prior to engaging in any act of such use, collaboration or consultation. If a faculty member has authorized a student to use materials or to collaborate or consult with another person in limited circumstances, the student shall not exceed that authority. If the student wishes to use any materials or collaborate or consult with another person in circumstances to which the authority does not plainly extend, the student shall first ascertain with the faculty member whether the use of materials, collaboration or consultation is authorized.