

Graduate Seminar: The Planning Game for Practicing Architects; a Primer.
A comparative study of Miami and New York Planning Process for Architectural Projects

Term: **Fall 2025**
Course Number: **ARC 6357**
Course Type: **Graduate Seminar / History Theory Elective**
Section Number: **TBD**
Credits: **Three**
Meeting times: **TBD**
Classroom: **TBD**
Professor: **tbd**
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Faculty office: Please email for an online appointment

Seminar Description

The framework for the buildings that we do as practicing architects is always given by urban planning regulations. Contrary to the general belief, regulations are fluid, and in any important project, no matter its size, practicing architects do have a specific role, frequently misunderstood, in shaping them.

This seminar proposes to study the role of architects in the urban planning process, by first understanding it, and then to help constructing a solid operational framework for architectural projects of certain size; one that does not rely only on esthetics but considers also the societal, economic, environmental, health, political and urban outcomes directly generated by the architectural product.

The purpose of our structured readings and collective discussion will be to understand in detail the political, business, and community voices that actually shape the architectural process of creating the environments for the 21st century. As an outcome, the seminar will both analyze and objectively evaluate the role, and undoubtedly the limitations --since we architects are only one player of the many needed in the planning game-- of the contemporary architectural firm in shaping the contemporary city.

For doing that we will study the urban process in Miami and New York City. The reason to choose these two is that they represent the two models of planning processes in the US, that is --respectively-- the Weak-Mayor and the Strong-Mayor City Processes. In each of these two systems, the political power of veto relies in different individuals, with fundamental implications for the planning game.

Methodologically, after understanding the differences between two processes, we will study their differences through case studies. The scale of the Case studies will be planned compounds. In Miami, we will study what are known as "Special Area Plans" In New York city are known as "Special Districts". Within the introductory part of the class, one that will cover the concepts of 1. Zoning, and 2. The Zoning Review Process, the professor will start by presenting two case studies for each city, Magic City, and the Design District for Miami, and Essex Crossing and Hudson Yards, for New York City. After that, each participant in the seminar will be responsible for a presentation of a similarly scaled project, in either Miami or NYC. In Miami, possible choices are Brickell City Center, Miami Innovation District, Miami River District, River Landing, Mana Wynwood, Legions West, Miami Jewish Health Systems, Eastside Ridge, etc. In New York City, possible choices are: Domino Sugar Williamsburg, Riverside Center, Cornell Tech, Sunnyside Yards, Hunters Point South, Greenpoint Landing, Manhattan West, River Park, Downtown Brooklyn City Point, Pacific park (formerly Atlantic Yards), Industry City etc.

In all of these examples, the goal will be to understand the architectural work needed "at the urban planning stage" and the ideological and political strategies needed for the architectural work to be carried successfully through the planning process.

Seminar Goals

The goals of the seminar are two:

1. Give a nuanced understanding of all the forces at play in the making of architecture, be that, 1 developers, 2 city and state administrations, 3 other design professionals, 4 corporations, 5 investors, 6 community governance institutions and 7 the public.
2. To understand the role of architectural firms in complex urban planning processes. With the direction of city and state officials, real estate developers, and others, the large architectural firms that increasingly dominate the USA architectural market have undoubtedly shaped Urban Planning final form. The seminar will also discuss their inner organization and motivations facing the design of these major projects.

Seminar Links and Multidisciplinary Engagement

While we conceive this seminar within SoA theory sequence, it proposes to create bridges between the fields of Architectural Theory, Urban Planning and Professional Practice.

1. The seminar could potentially stimulate interchange with and contributions from the DCP Urban Planning Department. Graduate students of Urban Planning could also conceivably take it.
2. The seminar, also at the intersection of real estate development and architecture, could also conceivably stimulate interchange with and contributions from UF Nathan S. Collier Master of Science in Real Estate at Warrington College of Business. In that regard, the seminar will include a presentation by Rachel Wein, Principal of Wein Plus a registered architect, Graduate of both UF SoA and UF Business School that specializes in the business aspects of Commercial Real Estate.
3. In analyzing the role and organization of large American Architectural firms, it complements information that the students receive in the required Professional Practice class.

Seminar Methodology

With the goal of the goal of understanding the ideological and political strategies needed for the architectural work to be carried successfully through the planning process, the class will consider a proposed “12-question outcome-evaluation framework” for major architectural projects that will include the following:

1. Does this development reflects the history of its location?
2. Does this development reflects its geographical locale?
3. To whom does this development belong?
4. Is this development the right size?
5. What logic orders this development?
6. Does this development balance community and privacy?
7. What makes this development useful?
8. Does this development support health?
9. What makes this development sustainable?
10. Who likes this development?
11. Does this development foster social equity?
12. What evidence is that this development will actually work?

The set of questions is adapted from “*Making Places for People*, By Christie Johnson Coffin and Jenny Young, Routledge, 2017”

For all of the projects above, the amount of public attention to these project, has favored –in different degrees, 1 city administration informational websites and publications, 2 developers’ propaganda, 3 architectural firms’ self-promotion, 4 grassroots urban organizations criticism publications, 5 traditional and new press commentary and judgement, 6 academia detached analysis, and finally, 7 citizens own judgement. All this information, for many of the projects, is available in the web.

Bibliography and Readings”

1. As a conceptual framework for the class, we will read fragments from three books, one from the world of architecture, the second from planning, and the third from the world of real estate consulting.
 - 1.1. *Making Places for People*, By Christie Johnson Coffin and Jenny Young, Routledge, 2017
 - 1.2. *The Planning Game*, By Alexander Garvin, Norton , 2013
 - 1.3. *Big Shifts Ahead*, Demographic Clarity for Businesses, By John Burns, Advantage, 2016
2. As Basic information about planning processes we will read from the following:
 - 2.1. *What is Zoning*, Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), 2013
 - 2.2. *What is ULURP* (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure), Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), 2017
 - 2.3. *What is affordable Housing*, (Issue in planning process), Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), 2009
 - 2.4. *The Architecture Student's handbook of Professional Practice*, Wiley, 2016
3. As the background of the planning In New York City, we will read from:
 - 3.1. *Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City*, by Julian Brash University of Georgia Press, 2011
 - 3.2. *New York's New Edge: Contemporary Art, the High Line, and Urban Megaprojects on the Far West Side*, By David Hale University of Chicago Press, 2016
 - 3.3. *New York City Politics: Governing Gotham*, By Bruce F. Berg Rutgers University Press, 2018
 - 3.4. *Building Like Moses with Jacobs in Mind: Contemporary Planning in New York City*, By Scott Larson, Temple University Press, 2013

4. As the background of the planning in Miami, we will read from
 - 4.1 Miami Transformed: Rebuilding America One Neighborhood, One City at a Time (in The City in the Twenty-First Century), By Manny Diaz, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012
 - 4.2. Center of Dreams: Building a World-Class Performing Arts Complex in Miami, By Les Standiford, University Press of Florida, 2018
 - 4.3. News, Neoliberalism, and Miami's Fragmented Urban Space. By Moshes Shumow, Lexington Books, 2016
5. Finally, as fundamental background information, we will read from the Urban Theorist Richard Florida, who shaped most of the ideas behind most of the developments that we will be considering
 - 5.1 The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited, By Richard Florida, Basic Books, 2011
 - 5.2. The New Urban Crisis, By Richard Florida, 2018

Requirements

The requirements of the seminar will be –for each student– to prepare one-one hour slide presentation about one of the developments: above, chosen in collective agreement with the class. These presentations will apply “12-question outcome-evaluation framework” and will be the springboard for a final paper in which the students will start working before mid-term. The papers will follow standard graduate research paper requirements.

The papers that the class favors will be evaluation papers choosing one of several of the “12-question evaluation framework”, applied to the development of choice for each student. The idea is that we, as a class, produce a complete set of evaluation papers that other people can use in the future to look at the project.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every seminar meeting listed on the calendar. Students will be notified in advance if there is any change in schedule. All absences must be justified by necessary documents such as medical notes. One unjustified absence from, or late arrival to, seminar will affect the student grade. Since the seminar depends on class discussion and interaction, two unjustified absences will preclude the student from completing the seminar. Justified absences must be notified via e-mail to the professor, preferably in advance.

Performance and Grades

The final paper, in combination with class presentation and class participation, will be the basis for grading.

EVALUATION OUT 1000

Weekly class participation: 200 points (20%)

Student presentation: 200 points (20%)

Final Research paper: 600 points (60%)

NUMERICAL TO LETTER GRADE CONVERSION

900 and above = A

870 to 899 = A-

830 to 869 = B+

800 to 829 = B

770 to 799 = B-

730 to 769 = C+

700 to 729 = C

670 to 699 = C-

630 to 669 = D+

600 to 629 = D

Below = E

UF Academic Policies and Resources

For additional UF “Academic Policies & Resources,” go to: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>. These resources include information about:

- Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, and assignments not noted above
- Processes for students with disabilities who may require accommodations
- Current UF grading policies

- Expectations for course evaluations and constructive feedback
- The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.
- In-class recording of class lectures for personal use
- Academic resources, including contact information
- Campus health and wellness resources, including contact information