

Course Title: Making Theory Usable and Useful in Planning & Environmental Design

Course Manager: Tom Harper
harper@ucalgary.ca

Office: PF3174

Office Hours: please email for an appointment

Time: Tuesday, Thursdays 12:30 – 13:50

Location: PF2140

Course Description

This course is designed to enable the research student (MEDes or PhD) and planners (MPlan) to think critically (& in greater depth) about the theories they are applying or devising, so that they can be used effectively in particular contexts. It aims to aid in avoiding many of the common pitfalls in thinking about, designing and applying research.

Introduction

The first section will present useful concepts & distinctions which are necessary for critical thinking. The second examines theories within the old (modernist) paradigm, which are still influential in many disciplines. The third section examines theories within newer (post-positivist) approaches. These sections employ case studies from public policy, planning and management at different scales – community, urban and regional – to develop an awareness of the complexity in applying theory to actual situations. The fourth section looks critically at some concepts which are currently influential, and the difficulties which arise in different applications.

Outline

1. Thinking

Theory & theorizing – some useful distinctions
Different descriptive accounts - causal & intentional
Science & scientism/positivism
Social science & social institutions
Different worldviews – modern, post-modern, pragmatic/post-positivist
Communication as interpretation
Normative & ethical thinking

2. Old Paradigm (Modernist) Theories

of Public Design, Planning, Policy, Management
Old paradigms & new approaches
egs Social reform, Rational planning.

3. *Newer Approaches (Post-Positivist) Theories of Public Design, Planning, Policy, Management*
egs Liberalism & neo-liberalism (Rawls), Social learning & communicative/dialogical approaches (Friedmann, Innes), Progressive/equity approaches (Forester, Krumholz), Critical approaches (Habermas, Foucault), Dialogical approaches (Healey, Stein & Harper).

4. *Popular Concepts & Theories*

Chosen from complexity & chaos, sustainability, resilience, healthy & complete communities, new urbanism, smart growth.

Format

Lectures & discussion, student-led presentations discussion of cases and applications of current concepts.

Textbooks

(recommended for purchase)

Harper, T.L., and S.M. Stein. 2012 (orig. 2006). *Dialogical Planning in a Fragmented Society: Critically Liberal, Pragmatic and Incremental*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Suggested Readings

Will be available online,
or through library

Evaluation:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1) Seminar on case | 20% |
| 2) Written case report | 20% |
| 3) Seminar on concept | 30% |
| 4) Written report on concept | 30% |

Note: *A satisfactory grade is required on each of the course components to receive a passing grade in the course.*

Grading Scale

All grades will be reported as letter grades, with the final grade calculated according to the 4-point range.

Grade	Grade Point Value	4-Point Range	Percent	Description
A+	4.00	4.00	92.5-100	Outstanding - evaluated by instructor
A	4.00	3.85-4.00	85-92.49	Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	3.50-3.84	80-84.99	Very good performance
B+	3.30	3.15-3.49	76-79.99	Good performance
B	3.00	2.85-3.14	73-75.99	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	2.50-2.84	70-72.99	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	2.15-2.49	66-69.99	All final grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	1.85-2.14	63-65.99	
C-	1.70	1.50-1.84	60-62.99	
D+	1.30	1.15-1.49	56-59.99	
D	1.00	0.50-1.14	50-55.99	
F	0.00	0-0.49	0-49.99	

Notes:

-A student who receives a "C+" or lower in any one course will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average (GPA) unless the program recommends otherwise. If the program permits the student to retake a failed course, the second grade will replace the initial grade in the calculation of the GPA, and both grades will appear on the transcript.

NOTES: Other Relevant Course Related Policies and Procedures

Notes:

1. Written work, term assignments and other course related work may only be submitted by e-mail if prior permission to do so has been obtained from the course instructor. Submissions must come from an official University of Calgary (ucalgary) email account.
2. Academic Accommodations. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their Instructor or the designated contact person in EVDS, Jennifer Taillefer (jtaillef@ucalgary.ca). Students who require an accommodation unrelated to their coursework or the requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the Vice-Provost (Student Experience). For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/
3. Plagiarism - Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:(a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or

presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test), (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author, (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or, (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved. While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. It is recognized that clause (d) does not prevent a graduate student incorporating work previously done by him or her in a thesis. Any suspicion of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean, and dealt with as per the regulations in the University of Calgary Graduate Calendar.

4. Information regarding the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>) and how this impacts the receipt and delivery of course material
5. Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoint>)
6. Safewalk information (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>)
7. Contact Info for: Student Union (<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/page/affordability-accessibility/contact>); Graduate Student representative (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa/>) and Student Ombudsman's Office (<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/page/quality-education/academic-services/student-rights>).