The New School for Public Engagement
Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy
Sustainable Urban Communities
Fall 2012 - Wednesday, 6:00-7:50; MMGT 6071

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Required Texts:

1. Roberts, Joan. (2004). Alliances, Coalitions, and Partnerships. New Society Publishers. ISBN: 0865715165

Previous Course Texts:

2. Condon, Patrick. (2008). Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities. Island Press. ISBN: 9781597260534
3. Newman, Peter and Jennings, Isabelle. (2008). Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems. Island Press. ISBN: 9781597261883
4. Mayhew, Will (2008). SuN Living: Developing Neighborhoods. New Society Publishers. ISBN: 9780980936605
5. Thomashow, Mitchell. (2002). Ecological Identity. MIT Press. ISBN: 0262700638

Articles: Select articles and readings will become available through Blackboard as needed.

A Note on the Readings

The readings are intended to provide sufficient exposure to relevant ideas and methods to allow students to be sufficiently conversant to relate to our partners, both internal (Parsons) and external (community). There will no exams on the readings. Rather, with a common introductory level of exposure to relevant fieldwork language, concepts, and methods, each class member will bring to bear HER OR HIS OWN area of expertise as the primary mode of engagement. For some students that expertise will be interior or architectural design, while for others it will be group process facilitation, and for still others urban policy analysis, or finance, or fundraising, or managing nonprofits, or another area. Given these varied specializations, students in the class—as other project participants—will bring disparate perspectives, mirroring the real world context of the course. The readings should serve as sufficient guide to allow us all to "be on the same page," while discovering and even inventing the collaborative processes essential for sustainability work. That combination of diverse expertise and openness to learning new areas will be both a necessity and strength--again, just as it is in sustainability practice. So, in brief: some readings serve as a practical roadmap, others as a conceptual framework, and all to help achieve course goals while providing learning at varied levels.

Course Background

This course evolved as one of a series of special offerings dedicated to the selection of The New School as a finalist in the Solar Decathlon. Established in 2002, the Solar Decathlon is a biennial event overseen by the U.S. Department of Energy, in which university teams compete to design and build the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered house. During the summer of 2009, The New School, including Milano and Parsons, joined with Stevens Institute of Technology to assemble a team to enter the 2011 Decathlon. The team is composed of undergraduate and graduate students, with expertise ranging from engineering to architecture to urban policy and management. Selection as a finalist was announced in March 2010. In addition to The New School-Stevens team, the 20 finalists include universities from across the US, New Zealand, Belgium, and China. One feature that sets The New School team apart is a focus on affordable and sustainable housing in an urban community. Our house, the Empowerhouse, consists of two symbiotic modules that will unite to form a functioning solar two family home. Each module will be sustainable on its own, but they will achieve peak energy efficiency when they are joined together. Module one was presented in on the National Mall during the 2011 Solar Decathlon. When the competition ended, the module was moved to Ward 7 in Washington DC and connected it to Module two. The resulting two family home will accommodate two families. The house will incorporate "Passive house principles"—an international building standard that requires 90% less energy for heating and cooling compared to ordinary houses. In addition, the design team considered the full range of activities in which inhabitants engage, from the clothes they wear to the way they interact with the technology of their new home. The house in DC is being constructed by Habitat for Humanity volunteers. DC Habitat is a partner with The New School, and intends to apply lessons learned from this project to its housing model.

Course Description

Historically this practicum course constituted one of two primary links to the Deanwood community in Ward 7, Habitat for Humanity Washington DC and relevant DC government agencies. Working in line with the Parsons Architecture and building on work performed by the previous Solar Decathlon Urban Communities courses.

As the Empowerhouse project concludes students will continue the process of realizing the Environmental Policy and Sustainable Management programs goal of developing an approach to affordable and sustainable urban housing. To do so, students will study conceptual frameworks and best practices relevant to sustainable urban communities, and will draw upon this conceptual framework to analyze community assets, needs, and opportunities and to engage with stakeholders to advance these goals.

Course Objectives

To enable students to:

• gain practical work experience through participation in project work in the area of sustainable communities

• examine the concept of sustainable urban communities/neighborhoods and the techniques for developing them

• apply these concepts and techniques while serving on a focused team that will analyze conditions for a selected project and consequently develop community sustainability opportunities
• through the first three objectives, advance the goals of the New School Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management program, especially related to affordable/sustainable urban housing
• contribute to deepening understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainability

Method of Instruction
Class and small-group discussions, team dynamics, studio and on-site participation (where viable), research and analysis, writing assignments, presentations and readings.

Course Requirements, Classroom Dynamics and Expectations
Students are expected to complete all required readings as assigned, attend class and participate actively in class discussions and exercises. Students must complete all assignments to pass the course. Assignments submitted after the due date will not earn full credit. Successful class sessions require student preparation, participation, and consideration. Students are expected to attend class prepared to discuss reading assignments and to participate in exercises and other activities. **When extraordinary circumstances prevent attendance, this must be communicated to the instructor.** To receive class participation credit, students are expected to attend all classes unless excused, to arrive on time and remain for the entirety of classroom activity. A documented disability may influence such participation and will be accommodated.

In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

Student Disability Services is located at 80 Fifth Avenue, 3rd floor. The office can be reached at 212.229.5626 or via email at luchsj@newschool.edu or studentdisability@newschool.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS
1. Focused-Team scoping/analysis
Students will work on a team(s) throughout the semester. Each team will focus on a key dimension of the project.

Each team will conduct an assessment of the current state of affairs relevant to the team focus; develop an analysis of promising directions for team intervention (in the context of the larger project), and prepare document that explains the team plan to pursue promising

directions. A critical dimension of this assignment will be participation by key stakeholders.

2. Intervention
Drawing upon the work performed for the initial assignment, each team will engage with targeted stakeholders to implement the planned intervention. Two progress reports will be delivered (in written and oral presentation formats) during the semester.

3. Deliverable/ Summary Report/ Recommendations
At the conclusion of the semester, each team will present to the class as a whole a final project deliverable, summary of the work performed and a set of recommendations for further development (and/or research). Given the nature of these projects, a new group of students may assume responsibility for the urban communities work in future semesters, therefore lending special importance to provisions for continuity. In addition to the oral presentation, the team will prepare a memorandum that captures key points.

Grading Allocation

Focused-Team scoping/analysis	20%
Intervention Progress Report 1	15%
Intervention Progress Report 2	15%
Summary Report and Recommendations	30%
Class Participation	20%

OVERVIEW OF COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS

8/29: Introduction to the Solar Decathlon, Empowerhouse & Sustainable Urban Communities
Overview of Course Goals, Readings, and Assignments
Introductions of Class Members
Assignment: Competition Compare

9/5: Empowerhouse Concepts Continued (Active Systems)
Due: Competition Compare Assignment

Recommended Reading:
Condon, Patrick. (2008). Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities
Chapters 1, 2, 3

9/12: Empowerhouse Concepts Continued (Site Design and Energy monitoring)
Recommended Reading:
Condon, Patrick. (2008). Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities
Chapters 4, 5, 6

9/19: Introduction to Semester Projects
Recommended Reading:

Mayhew, Will (2008). SuN Living: Developing Neighborhoods.

9/26: No Class – University Holiday

10/3: Due: Focused-Team scoping/analysis

Recommended Reading:
Thomashow, Mitchell. (2002). Ecological Identity
Chapter 1

10/10:
Recommended Reading:
Thomashow, Mitchell. (2002). Ecological Identity
Chapter 2

10/17:
Recommended Reading:
Thomashow, Mitchell. (2002). Ecological Identity
Chapter 3

10/24: Due: Intervention progress report 1

10/31:
Recommended Reading:
Newman, Peter and Jennings, Isabelle. (2008). Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems.
Chapters 1,2

11/7:
Recommended Reading:
Newman, Peter and Jennings, Isabelle. (2008). Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems.
Chapters 3, 4, 5

11/14:
Recommended Reading:
Thomashow, Mitchell. (2002). Ecological Identity. MIT Press. ISBN: 0262700638
Chapters 4, 5

11/20: (Tuesday Class)
Due: Intervention progress report 2

11/28:
Recommended Reading:
Newman, Peter and Jennings, Isabelle. (2008). Cities as Sustainable

Ecosystems. Chapters 6, 7

12/5: Due: Summary Report and Recommendations

12/12: Final Exam