School of Planning  
Faculty of Environment - University of Waterloo

Plan 720 Introductory Planning Project Studio  
Course Syllabus – Winter 2021

Professor:  
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Class Meetings: On-line via Zoom

Office Hours:  
Fridays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM EST  
On-line via Zoom

Learning Objectives

Calendar Description
This studio course introduces students to the process of collaborative problem solving central in Planning Practice. Students work in teams, led by faculty facilitators, in applying theory and knowledge from Planning and related disciplines to problems drawn from the local community planning context. The emphasis is on the development of student skills including design, plan making, teamwork, creativity, negotiation, management, and policy application and creation. Problem based learning, reflection on process and communications are central in this course.

Introduction & Learning Objectives
Plan 720 is a core course in the first year of the graduate program of the School of Planning. It is designed to provide learning opportunities in four main areas:

- Development of collaborative work and project management skills,
- Exploration of connections between planning theory and practice,
- Examination of emergent social changes and their relationships with new modes of planning practice,
- Plan development, communication and implementation.

As a studio course, there is a strong emphasis on ‘hands-on’ or experiential learning and modelling professional practice through project-based work. In other words, students are expected to undertake independent research and actively contribute to scheduled meetings with the course professor to discuss progress and received critical feedback on course deliverables. In general, the course is meant to...
emulate the interaction, project workflows and deliverable expectations that students will encounter in private and public Planning practice.

**Plan of Study**
Plan 720 is an asynchronous on-line course. This means that there will be no regularly scheduled (live or on-line) class sessions that all course participants are required to attend. Written course content – e.g. presentations, reading materials, project workplans – will be delivered through the course Learn site. However, as Plan 720 models professional practice, student teams will be required to meet regularly (i.e. weekly/bi-weekly) with the course professor and project clients to present and discuss project progress and draft deliverables. Student teams are expected to establish mutually agreeable meeting times with the course professor at the beginning of the course and incorporate those times within their respective project workplans.

**Studios**
One conception of a studio is that it is an artist's, designer's or craftsperson's workspace. While this is true in some instances, and there are several courses offered by the School of Planning that are urban design studios, this conception does not capture fully/accurately what a studio entails. A studio is more than a physical space, it is also a method of instruction and communication between instructors and students. In essence, a studio is a **project-based learning experience** that provides opportunities for students to discuss and receive critical feedback about their work as they are developing it prior to an assignment deadline as well as discuss feedback after assignments have been submitted and evaluated by the instructor. In general, all studio courses share common attributes, which include:

- Project-based learning through action – i.e. with a focus on producing project solutions/deliverables,
- Student led engagement in the learning process,
- Collaborative effort between students to develop project solutions/deliverables,
- Instructors provide direction and consistent feedback/critique as project solutions/deliverables unfold.

Plan 720 is predicated on this broader concept of studio-based instruction. To this end, the course de-emphasizes conventional lecture-based delivery of course content and places stronger emphasis on independent and collaborative learning by student teams guided by consistent communication with and constructive feedback from the course professor. Given the focus on communication and feedback, it is essential that student teams establish mutually agreeable and maintain regular meeting times with the course instructor throughout the term.
Office Hours
In addition to scheduled team meetings with the course professor, regularly scheduled online office hours are available to students to meet with the professor individually to discuss project expectations, review draft project work, provide feedback on graded work, address issues that are affecting individual or team performance in the course or other matters that are pertinent to the course or the Planning program generally. Office hours are available on Fridays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM EST. If students are not available to meet during regularly scheduled office hours, they are encouraged to email the professor to request an alternate meeting time.

Course Milestones
Each project team will receive and be expected to follow a project workplan through the course Learn site that outlines their project’s problem statement, objectives, milestone schedule, deliverables and supplementary resources. Project teams are expected to review and adapt any portion of their workplans in consultation with the course professor within the first two weeks of the term. While each team will have milestones and deliverables that are specific to their respective projects, in general, all project teams are expected to work according to the following course schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Phase</th>
<th>Topics and Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Overview</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dates: Jan 11th – Jan 15th</td>
<td>Course Syllabus&lt;br&gt;Project Workplans&lt;br&gt;<strong>Deliverable: Student Team Selection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1: Project Scoping</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dates: Jan 11th – Feb 5th&lt;br&gt;Deliverable Due Date: Feb 5th @ 11:59 PM EST</td>
<td>Client meetings&lt;br&gt;Data collection methodology&lt;br&gt;<strong>Deliverable: Draft report outline</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading Week</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dates: Feb 15th - Feb 19th</td>
<td>No classes/meetings</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dates: Feb 8th – Mar 12th&lt;br&gt;Deliverable Due Date: Mar 12th @ 11:59 PM EST</td>
<td>Data collection&lt;br&gt;Quantitative/qualitative analysis&lt;br&gt;<strong>Deliverable: Report of preliminary findings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> &quot;Additional Scheduled Pauses&quot; or no ‘classes’ March 15th and 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3: Final Report</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dates: Mar 17th – Apr 14th&lt;br&gt;Assignment Due Date: Apr 14th @ 11:59 PM EST</td>
<td>Professional and technical report writing&lt;br&gt;Report critiques&lt;br&gt;Client meetings/presentations&lt;br&gt;<strong>Deliverable: client presentation and final report</strong></td>
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Required Reading
Any required readings to support project activities in Plan 720 will be provided through the project workplans. Students are expected to review thoroughly the project workplan for their respective projects, which will include a list of recommended academic and grey (i.e. policy) literature sources to support their
work. In addition to the recommended sources provided by the course professor, project teams are required to conduct independent research and supplement the workplan literature with additional sources from academic and government sources.

Evaluation
There are three main deliverables for Plan 720. Rubrics for the evaluation of course deliverables will be distributed no later than one week prior to the deliverable due date. The requirements for course deliverables will be articulated though the project workplans and will only be modified through prior discussion with and unanimous approval of the course participants.

- Active and prepared participation in course meetings (15%)
- Phase 1: Draft Report Outline (15%)
- Phase 2: Report of Preliminary Findings (20%)
- Phase 3: Final Report (50%)

Note: Plan 720 students are expected to engage with the course professor through regular online course meetings to discuss the workplan objectives, review draft work and receive feedback on graded course deliverables. Project teams are required to establish a consistent and mutually agreeable meeting schedule with the course professor early in the term. Each student’s grade for course participation will be based on the course professor’s consideration of three factors:

- Active contribution to online meetings. In other words, attendance during course meetings does not equal participation. All students must come to each meeting prepared to discuss their respective contributions to their team’s work, as well as ask meaningful questions to clarify deliverable requirements.

- Demonstration of a constructive and professional attitude. Problem solving is at the core of professional Planning practice and all students are expected to be able to discuss issues openly and offer solutions.

- At the conclusion of the term, each member of a student team will have the opportunity to provide a peer evaluation - i.e. a review of the relative contributions of other team members to project work.

Instruction

Communication
The course professor will be available to meet on-line (via Zoom) during posted office hours for consultation and discussion of any procedural or substantive issues pertaining to the course. In addition,
meetings with project teams are an opportunity to discuss deliverable requirements, obtain feedback/commentary on draft student work, clarify the content contained any readings, and other aspects of the assignments with the professor. If students are not able to attend regularly scheduled office hours or project team meetings, they may email the professor to request an alternate meeting date and time.

**Please note:** E-mail is the preferred means of communication for the purpose of making appointments. Detailed or substantive questions about assignments (particularly grades) must be addressed directly (i.e. person-to-person) between the student(s) and professor through an on-line Zoom meeting.

**Conduct**
Students can expect that the course professor will deliver the material/concepts according to the course syllabus, be available for office hours and project team meetings and provide timely, respectful and constructive feedback on course deliverables. If the professor is not available for all or a portion of a project team meeting due either to illness or is required to attend a meeting by School, Faculty or University administration, students will be notified in advance by e-mail. Students are expected to submit completed work in a timely manner, conduct themselves professionally and respectfully during on-line meetings and contribute equitably to the preparation and completion of project work. All participants in Plan 720 (professor and students alike) are expected to conduct themselves ethically, respectfully and contribute to an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination.

**Submitting Work**
Deliverables are expected to be completed and submitted on time. All course deliverables are to be submitted directly to the professor through the course Learn site. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Time extensions are a normal part of professional proposal and deliverable submission processes and are permitted in Plan 720. However, extensions will be granted only through direct discussion with the course professor. In other words, a project team that is requesting an extension must send an email to the course professor and request to meet online to discuss the status of their work, provide a compelling rationale for requesting a deadline extension and a reasonable estimate of the time required to complete the deliverable.

**Academic Honesty**
Originality is the cornerstone of academic as well as professional planning and design practice. To protect and uphold academic integrity in the class, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate the originality of his or her work if called upon to do so. For all course deliverables, the sources of all data and ideas that are not the student's own must be referenced using a standard academic referencing
format (APA is the preferred format for Plan 720). The failure to reference an assignment properly constitutes plagiarism and will result in an academic penalty.

**Grading Policy**

The course professor is willing to discuss feedback and grades for any assignment during an on-line meeting after project teams have taken the time to read and reflect on the comments provided. Through on-line feedback discussions, if the professor determines that the assigned grade warrants reconsideration, the initial comments may be adjusted, additional comments may be offered, and the grade may be changed (either higher or lower) depending on the professor's re-evaluation of the submission.

**Please Note:** Mistakes do occur. Check the addition on each returned assignment. Cases involving a simple mathematical error should be brought to the professor's attention immediately.

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**University Policies**

**Please note:** Some of the policies stated below may no longer be relevant due to the on-line delivery of Plan 720 (e.g. Recording Lectures, Co-op Interviews and Class Attendance).

❖ **Intellectual Property**

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student’s educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner’s permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others on-line (e.g., to an on-line repository).
Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or on-line. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

❖ **Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. The University’s guiding principles on academic integrity can be found here: [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity). ENV students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university’s Academic Integrity office specifically for students: [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html)

Students are also expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. Students may also complete the following tutorial: [https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial](https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial)

When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline: [https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71). Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance: [https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70)

❖ **Note for students with disabilities**

[AccessAbility Services](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability/services), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic
integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

❖ Mental Health
The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments/Schools consider students’ well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. **Please note that help is available.** Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services [http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services) is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

❖ Religious Observances
Students need to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

❖ Grievance
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

❖ Appeals
A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

❖ Unclaimed assignments
Unclaimed assignments will be retained for one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW’s confidential shredding procedures.
❖ **Communications with Instructor and Teaching Assistants**

All communication with students must be through either the student’s University of Waterloo email account or via Learn. If a student emails the instructor or TA from a personal account they will be requested to resend the email using their personal University of Waterloo email account.

❖ **Turnitin**

Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students’ submissions are stored on a U.S. server, and are subject to the USA PATRIOT ACT, 2001; therefore, students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography) if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

❖ **Research Ethics**

The University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office’s Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, the please contact the course instructor for guidance and see [https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics](https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics)

❖ **Recording lectures**

Use of recording devices during lectures is only allowed with explicit permission of the instructor of the course.

- If allowed, video recordings may only include images of the instructor and not fellow classmates.
- Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as: facebook, twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.
Co-op interviews and class attendance

Co-op students are encouraged to try and choose interview time slots that result in the least amount of disruption to class schedules. When this is challenging, or not possible, a student may miss a portion of a class meeting for an interview. Instructors are asked for leniency in these situations; but, a co-op interview does not relieve the student of any requirements associated with that class meeting.

When a co-op interview conflicts with an in-class evaluation mechanism (e.g., test, quiz, presentation, critique), class attendance takes precedence and the onus is on the student to reschedule the interview. CECA provides an interview conflict procedure to manage these situations. Students will be required to provide copies of their interview schedules (they may be printed from WaterlooWorks) should there be a need to verify class absence due to co-op interviews.