

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBP 241: PLANNING SUSTAINABLE CITIES (2 UNITS)
SPRING 2025

Instructor: Dr. Charles R. Rivasplata
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Telephone: 415-656-6844
Classroom: Clark Hall 205
Class Time: Selected Tuesdays: 4:00-5:45 pm (see 11 meeting dates below*)
Office Hours: Tuesdays when class meets, 3:00-4:00 p.m., by appointment
Zoom Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/89723543641?pwd=8BjwFiOQDsLkzOq7fZsQmf8ta5UVA.1>
Prerequisites: None

* 11 meeting dates: Jan. 28, Feb. 4, 11, 25; Mar. 4, 11, 25; Apr. 8, 15, 22; May 6

Course Catalog Description

URBP 241: An overview of urban sustainability covering topics such as the origins of urban sustainability, tools for sustainability planning, global dimensions of sustainability (including different approaches to planning across world regions), and visions for creating sustainable futures.

Here is a link to the URBP 241 webpage: <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1599326>

Course Description and Course Learning Objectives (CLO):

This course is intended to provide students with a strong grounding in the theoretical paradigm of sustainability, understanding the relationships between human civilization, economic growth, “nature” and the environment. Next, the course will focus on evaluating sustainability principles in action, analyzing how cities and regions across the world have taken actions to embed sustainability principles, policies, and actions into land use planning. A key objective will be to establish the philosophical and ethical tenants of sustainability within each student’s understanding and approach to urban planning with an ability to translate abstract principles driving sustainability into everyday land use planning actions.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will ideally:

- 1) Describe and explain the philosophical foundations underlying modern western society with respect to how we view “the environment” and its relationship with our society and economy.
- 2) Describe and explain how environmental limits and social inequities frame our approach to sustainability.

- 3) Describe and explain the core tenants of sustainability in a concise manner, interweaving the three “E”s that guide sustainability –environment, economy, and equity.
- 4) Describe and explain the modern origins of land use planning and how the regulatory approach of addressing the externalities of land development can serve to implement sustainability objectives.
- 5) Apply and critique sustainability planning tools such as sustainability indicators, ecological footprint analysis, and green building certification.
- 6) Identify subject areas related to urban sustainability such as land use, urban design, transportation, environmental planning, resource use, environmental justice, local economic development, and architecture and building construction practices, and explain how these individual topics fit together.
- 7) Describe and explain natural resource and pollution control factors in planning, as well as how to create sustainable futures.
- 8) Describe and explain urban sustainable development practices used in cities and regions across the world, including those in Europe, Asia, and South America.
- 9) Describe and explain interactions, flows of persons and goods, cultures, and differing approaches to urban sustainability planning across world regions.
- 10) Describe and explain how to effectively communicate sustainability principles to the public and elected officials to inspire action.

Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) Knowledge Components

This course covers the following five PAB Knowledge Components:

- 1d) Human Settlements and History of Planning: understanding of the growth and development of places over time and across space.
- 1e) The Future: understanding of the relationships between past, present, and future in planning domains, as well as the potential for methods of design, analysis, and intervention to influence the future.
- 1f) Global Dimensions of Planning: appreciation of interactions, flows of people and materials, cultures, and differing approaches to planning across world regions.
- 3c) Sustainability and Environmental Quality: appreciation of natural resource and pollution control factors in planning and understanding of how to create sustainable futures.

A complete list of the Planning Accreditation Board Knowledge Components can be found at:

<https://sjsu.edu/urbanplanning/graduate-programs/masters-in-urban-planning/pab-knowledge.php>

Required Course Readings

Course readings are primarily available online (see links in the Course Schedule section of this syllabus for week-by-week assignments). In a few instances, readings are available on Canvas: “Files” section, “Readings” folder. The Course Schedule also has links to the TED Talk videos.

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Your grade for the course will be based on the following assignments and other class activities:

Assignments and Graded Activities	Due Date(s)	Percent of Course Grade	Course Learning Objectives Covered
Reading Memos (4)	Ongoing	12	All
Class Participation	Ongoing	13	All
Assignment 1	Feb. 25	15	1d, 1f, 3c
Assignment 2	Mar. 25	20	1e, 1f, 3c
Assignment 3	Apr. 22	20	All
Final Term Paper (12-15 pp.)/Discussion on an aspect of the paper	May 6	20	All

This class only meets eleven times during the semester. As such, each student should make every effort to be in class on a regular basis. If you are sick or have an unavoidable conflict, please notify me in advance by email. All students in the class will be expected to have read the required readings before the start of each class and be ready to discuss the key questions and issues raised. Class discussion is an important component of URBP 241 and thus, reading and participation in class constitute a significant component of the course grade.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that for each unit of credit, students will spend a minimum of 45 hours per semester (normally, three hours per unit per week with one of the hours used for lecture) in class or preparing/studying course-related activities.

Sustainability in Action – Three Part Evaluation

One of your principal class assignments will be a three-part evaluation of sustainability principals in action through the lens of a selected community to study. In these three assignments, described below and on the next page, you will evaluate the principals of sustainability planning by examining:

- (a) the characteristics of the community with respect to resource needs (energy, water, food), their ecological footprint, socio-economic characteristics;
- (b) current planning documents adopted by the municipality (or other governing agencies) address long term sustainability in the community with respect to resource needs, environmental constraints, and socio-economic characteristics; and
- (c) measures that you would prescribe so that the community is sustainable and resilient.

The course workload will primarily be based on the following activities:

- **Reading Memos (4)**
Students will post on Canvas a one-page summary/reaction memo for one of the assigned readings (not a TED Talk) by 12 noon on the following class dates: February 4, February 25, March 11, and April 8. Maximum of 12 points (up to 3 points per memo)
- **Class Participation**
Students will be expected to actively contribute to class discussions throughout the semester. Each student will assist in leading a class seminar discussion in one of the scheduled classes held during the semester (beginning February 11). Maximum of 13 points.
- **Assignment 1: Community Summary (Student Assignment – 4 pp. max.)**
This assignment, due on Canvas on February 25 at 4:00 p.m., will identify a community for evaluation – one encapsulated by one government jurisdiction (County, City) that has specific geographic boundaries and community characteristics. It will summarize (a) the characteristics of the community (size, demographics, economic activity) (b) its resource needs and where they come from (power, water, food, materials), and (c) an initial evaluation of the community’s environmental “footprint” and socioeconomic characteristics. Maximum of 15 points.
- **Assignment 2: Planning and Gap Analysis (Student Assignment – 4 pp. max.)**
This assignment, due on Canvas on March 25 at 4:00 p.m., will provide a summary of the community’s planning documents (General Plan, Zoning, Sustainability Plans, and Climate Action Plans) and evaluate how the community addresses long-term sustainability needs. Specifically, as part of a gap analysis, it will evaluate if these planning documents address the resource needs and any socioeconomic issues identified in the first assignment. Maximum of 20 points.
- **Assignment 3: Sustainability Policy / Proposal (Group Paper & Presentation)**
In groups, based on the research and background information acquired from the first two assignments (e.g., narrative, figures, tables) for one community, you will draft a proposal for a program, policy or tool that you will advocate be adopted by the community to address sustainability needs (due on Canvas on April 22 at 4:00 p.m.). Each group member will be expected to cover a specific area. This assignment will include both a report containing research and recommendations, and a 12-minute group presentation on April 22. Maximum of 20 points per student.
- **Term Paper Project** will cover a sustainability theme. The student will e-mail and post on Canvas a medium-length (12-15-page, double-spaced) term paper on May 6 at 4:00 p.m. and give an informal, in-class, 3-minute presentation on an aspect of the paper (no Powerpoints please). A grading rubric for the Final Paper will be provided in February and a one to two-page outline of the term paper should be e-mailed to the instructor by March 4. Comparative studies of up to two cases are welcomed, as are papers focused on a single issue. Focus the paper on a topic and make sure that there is adequate material on it. Ideally, your paper will feature an introduction (purpose/objectives); a brief (half-page to one-page) literature search; description of current policy frameworks; a synthesis of the findings in light of urban policies and/or best practices; and a conclusion and/or set of recommendations. Maximum of 20 points.

Here are possible subject areas from which to narrow down term paper projects:

1. Sustainable Urban Infrastructure
2. Transport, Land Use and Climate Change (e.g., SB 375)
3. Recent Legislation Supporting Sustainable Cities
4. Developing and Implementing Sustainable Targets
5. Designing Sustainable Housing
6. Sustainability and Urban Form
7. Sustainable Public Transport Systems
8. Sustainability and the General Plan
9. Other Subject Areas by Mutual Agreement.

Calculation of Final Course Letter Grade

As indicated in the table above, the final course grade incorporates graded activities. The following scheme will be used to translate each student's total numeric score into a final grade for the course:

A+ (98 to 100); A (93 to 98); A- (90 to 93); B+ (87 to 90); B (83 to 87); B- (80 to 83); C+ (77 to 80); C (74 to 77); C- (70 to 74); D+ (68 to 70); D (66 to 68); D- (63 to 66); F (below 63).

Other Grading and Assignment Issues

All classwork received late will be marked down accordingly.

Reading Memos (4): If received within the first 24 hours after the scheduled 12:00 noon deadline, they will be marked down 0.2 point (from a total of one point per memo). Thereafter, it will be marked down according to the following schedule:

1-4 days late: 0.5 point

4-7 days late: 1.0 point

Over 7 days: no credit given

Assignments 1, 2 and 3: If received within 24 hours of the 4:30 P.M. deadline, it will be marked down 2 points. Thereafter, it will be marked down according to the following schedule:

1-4 days late: 4 points

4-7 days late: 6 points

Over 7 days: no credit given

Final Paper: If received within 24 hours of the 3:00 p.m. deadline on December 5, it will be marked down 2 points. Thereafter, it will be marked down according to the following schedule:

1-4 days late: 4 points

Over 4 days: no credit given

Classroom Protocol

Students are expected to arrive on time to class, be courteous to other students and the instructors and refrain from using a cell phone, texting and the internet in class, except as permitted by the instructors. If you need to be absent, please notify both instructors at your earliest convenience. I recognize that illness, personal emergencies and other legitimate conflicts may occur, however please remember that each class meeting represents a substantial fraction of the total course. Be sure to check with the instructors regarding any materials or information given out at the session you were absent from, and if possible, obtain class notes from a classmate.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

Academic Integrity Statement, Plagiarism, and Citing Sources Properly

SJSU's Policy on Academic Integrity states: "Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University." The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without providing proper attribution. It is a very serious offense both in the university and in your professional work. Plagiarism is both theft and lying--you have stolen someone else's ideas, and then have lied by implying that they are your own.

Plagiarism will lead to grade penalties and a record filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. In severe cases, students may also fail the course or even be expelled from the university.

If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to make sure you clarify the issues before you hand in draft or final work.

Learning when to cite a source (and when not to) is an art, not a science. However, here are some common examples of plagiarism that you should be careful to avoid:

- Using a sentence (or even a part of a sentence) that someone else wrote without identifying the language as a quote by putting the text in quote marks and referencing the source.
- Paraphrasing somebody else's theory or idea without referencing the source.
- Using a picture or table from a webpage or book without reference the source.
- Using data some other person or organization has collected without referencing the source.

The University of Indiana has developed a very helpful website with concrete examples about proper paraphrasing and quotation:

- [How to Recognize Plagiarism: Tutorial and Tests, School of Education, Indiana University Bloomington \(iu.edu\)](https://plagiarism.iu.edu/) at <https://plagiarism.iu.edu/>

If you still have questions, feel free to talk to the instructor personally. There is nothing wrong with asking for help, whereas even unintentional plagiarism is a serious offense.

Citation style

It is important to properly cite any references you use in your assignments. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning uses Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Eighth Edition (University of Chicago Press, 2013, ISBN: 978-0226816388). Copies are available in the SJSU King Library. Additionally, the book is relatively inexpensive, and you may wish to purchase a copy. Please note that Turabian's book describes two systems for referencing materials: (1) "notes" (footnotes or endnotes), plus a corresponding bibliography, and (2) in-text parenthetical references, plus a corresponding reference list. In this class, students should use the second system, i.e., in-text parenthetical references.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building is evacuated, please make an appointment with the instructors as soon as possible, or see us during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations register with the Accessible Education Center or AEC (formerly known as the Disability Resource Center or DRC) to establish a record of their disability.

You can find information about the services SJSU offers to accommodate students with disabilities at the AEC website at <https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See University Policy S14-7 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

Library Liaison

The SJSU Library Liaison for the Urban and Regional Planning Department is Ms. Lauren DeCelle. If you have questions, you can contact her at: lauren.decelle@sjsu.edu or 408-808-2621.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. To make an appointment or refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services office is located on the corner of Seventh Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling and Psychological Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Please refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/university-policies/policies-by-category/policy-grades-registration-fees-schedule.php>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current SJSU Academic Year Calendar webpage. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

**URBP 241 – PLANNING SUSTAINABLE CITIES
SPRING 2025**

COURSE SCHEDULE

Special thanks to URBP Lecturer Rob Eastwood for identifying many of the class readings.

Date	Topic	Reading	Memo/Paper Due
Jan. 28, 2025	Introduction	Syllabus; other handouts provided	None
Feb. 4, 2025	Sustainability Theory	<p>1) Wheeler, Stephen B. <i>Planning for Sustainability...</i> 2013. Ch. 1-3. Found at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=1221513</p> <p>2) Wright, Diana & Meadows, Donella H. <i>Thinking in Systems: A Primer</i>, pp.105-141. 2008. Found at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/reader.action?ppg=151&docID=430143&tm=1503030341815</p> <p>2) Fleming, Rob et al. <i>Sustainable Design for Built Environment</i>. Ch. 10. 2025. Available on Canvas.</p>	Reading Memo #1 (for Feb. 4 reading)
Feb. 11, 2025	Our Economy, Economic and Population Growth, and Environmental Limits	<p>1) Heinberg, Richard. <i>The End of Growth, Adapting to Our New Economic Reality</i>. 2011, Ch 1. Found at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=714579</p> <p>2) Meadows, Donella & Dennis, Randers, Jorgen. <i>The Limits to Growth: the 30-Year Update</i>. 2004. (Summary/Synopsis). Found at: http://donellameadows.org/archive/s/a-synopsis-limits-to-growth-the-30-year-update</p> <p>3) TED Talk: Steffen, Alex. “The Route to Sustainable Future.” 2005. https://www.ted.com/talks/alex_steffen_sees_a_sustainable_future?language=en</p>	
Feb. 25, 2025	Current Environmental	1) Heinberg, Chapter 3. Found at:	Reading Memo

	Challenges	<p>http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=714579</p> <p>2) Matthews, Susan. The End of the Story (Review of <i>The Inhabitable Earth</i>, by D. Wallace-Wells). <i>Slate</i>, Feb. 2019. Available on Canvas.</p> <p>3) Wheeler, Steven & Rosan, Christina. 2021. <i>Reimagining Sustainable Cities</i>, Ch 1. Found at: https://www-degruyter-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/document/doi/10.1525/9780520381209/html</p>	#2 (for Feb. 11 & 25 readings) Assignment 1 (due Feb. 25 at 4:00 p.m.)
Mar, 4, 2025	Socioeconomic Challenges and a Paradigm Shift to Sustainability	<p>1) Heinberg, Ch. 6. Found at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=714579</p> <p>2) Oxfam. <i>An Economy for the 1%</i>. 2017. Download at: https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/inequality/an-economy-for-the-one-percent</p> <p>3) TED Talk: Rockström, Johan. “Let the Environment Guide Our Development. 2010 https://www.ted.com/talks/johan-rockstrom_let_the_environment_guide_our_development?language=en#t-154974</p>	Term Paper Outline: 1-2 pages (due Mar. 4)
Mar. 11, 2025	Land Use Planning and Sustainability: Methodology and Tools Assignment 3 Group Meetings	<p>1) Wheeler, Chs. 6, 12. Found at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=1221513</p> <p>2) Sustainable San Mateo. <i>Indicators for a Sustainable San Mateo County</i>. 2022. Found at: https://sustainablesanmateo.org/home/indicators-report-search/</p> <p>3) Wheeler & Rosan, Ch. 9. Found at: https://www-degruyter-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/document/doi/10.1525/9780520381209/html</p>	Reading Memo #3 (for Mar. 4 & 11 readings)
Mar. 25, 2025	Sustainability Planning in Practice: Principles	1) Newman, Peter; Beatley, Thomas; and Boyer, Heather.	Assignment 2 (due Mar. 25 at

		<p><i>Resilient Cities – Overcoming Fossil Fuel Dependence</i>. 2017 Ch 2, 3. Found at: https://link-springer-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/content/pdf/10.5822%2F978-1-61091-686-8.pdf</p> <p>2) Heinberg, Richard and Fridley, David, <i>Our Renewable Future</i>, 2016, Chapters 9 & 10. Found at: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=4923718&pq-origsite=primo</p> <p>3) Howard, Ebenezer, “The Town Country Magnet” in <i>Garden Cities of Tomorrow</i>. 1898. Found at: https://archive.org/details/gardencitiestom00howagoog</p> <p>4) TED Talk: Green, Michael. “How Can We Make the World a Better Place in 2030.” 2015 https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_green_how_we_can_make_the_world_a_better_place_by_2030?language=en#t-867623</p>	4:00 p.m.)
Apr. 8, 2025	Sustainability Planning: International Examples	<p>1) Beatley, Timothy. <i>Green Urbanism</i>. 2000. Chapters 8 & 9. Found at: http://www.academia.edu/10399646/Green_Urbanism_Learning_From_European_Cities</p> <p>2) State of Green. <i>Copenhagen – Solutions for Sustainable Cities</i>. (Available on Canvas)</p> <p>3) World Bank. <i>Three Big Ideas to Achieve Sustainable Cities and Communities</i>. Found at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2018/01/31/3-big-ideas-to-achieve-sustainable-cities-and-communities</p> <p>4) Video: C-40 Cities. “We Live Here Together.” 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxG1eLGQ4Ik</p>	Reading Memo #4 (for Mar. 25 & Apr. 8 readings)
Apr. 15, 2025	Sustainability Planning: North America, California, Bay Area	1) California Cap & Trade Program (Review links including Program Overview, Current Regulation,	

		Guidance Documents). Found at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/capandtrade.htm	
		2) California Renewables Portfolio Standard. (Skim Program Overview) Found at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/renewables-portfolio-standard	
		3) Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). <i>Plan Bay Area 2050</i> . Found at: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/long-range-planning/plan-bay-area-2050	
		4) City of San Jose. Pathway to Carbon Neutrality by 2030 (Exec. Summary, skim the rest). 2022. Found at: https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/93082/638065452005070000	
Apr. 22, 2025	Sustainability in Everyday Planning	1) Rees, William “What’s Blocking Sustainability?” in <i>Sustainability: Science, Practice & Policy</i> . Volume 6/2. 2010. Found at: http://www.gci.org.uk/Documents/BlockingSustainability(Final0910).pdf 2) Wheeler & Rosan, Ch. 12. Found at: https://www-degruyter-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/document/doi/10.1525/9780520381209/html	Assignment 3 group summary and in-class presentation (due Apr. 22 at 4:00 p.m.)
May 6, 2025	Student Presentations (informal)	Groups give a 12-min. presentation (using PowerPoint or other aids). Students give a 3-minute informal presentation on their term paper.	Term Paper (due May 6)

Note: Any modification to this syllabus will be announced via Canvas, e-mail or in class.

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