OVERVIEW
This seminar course introduces students to the topic of social justice as it relates to planning and the city. We will focus both on higher-order social-theoretical questions related to the origins of the concept of justice and on applications of justice to and in the city, particularly as they relate to issues of uneven development, gentrification, poverty, food justice, homelessness, environmental justice, vulnerable populations, immigrants and refugees, urban politics, right to the city, public housing, segregation, racial discrimination, affordable housing, social exclusion, and public space.

The course will provide a very strong foundation and grounding in principles of justice that will guide you as you begin your career in planning or a related field. As such, we will grapple with complex questions such as “for whom are we really planning our cities?” and “what are the most powerful contemporary challenges to a just society?” and “what might a just society even look like?” and, finally, “what role does planning have to play in all of this?”

This course is unique in the MURP program, and perhaps also in the ARCH and LA programs, in that it will be run as a true seminar with weekly discussion and a substantial and deep “reading” of potentially difficult material, to include not only books and articles but also videos, images, and other popular media. I intend to let the course take on new directions as a result of student input: this is a true graduate seminar in that we will be exploring these significant questions together as peers.

We begin the semester by defining key terms such as justice, equity, and fairness. We will then work to become aware of our own social identities and cultural positioning as we begin to challenge our own views of the world. A key feature of the course is an analysis and dissection of best practices for socially just planning and policy and the development of new frameworks and criteria for action.

FORMAT
This small graduate-level seminar course relies heavily on your participation. At times, students will be asked to take the lead on a discussion topic. As such, participation should be professional at all times.
Our class sessions are equivalent to a professional meeting. This means that each student should attend every class, arrive on time, be prepared to engage the topic and other members of the class, have agency within the group, respect fellow members of the class, and use professional and inclusive language. Using laptops, tablets, or phones during class is not permitted unless it is required to facilitate an exercise, discussion, or presentation.

COMMUNICATION
Unless otherwise noted, we will use Canvas for all official course communication and it is the responsibility of each student to use Canvas settings that enable reliable communication. For example, this may mean selecting a personal e-mail address as the default in Canvas. I will use Canvas for course announcements, changes to the schedule, returning graded assignments, personal communication, or other course-related business. All assignments, unless otherwise noted, must be submitted on Canvas. Each student should be familiar with Canvas’s assignment submission procedures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
This course has five official learning outcomes per the Planning Accreditation Board guidelines. After completing this course, students will have essential knowledge about the following:
- **Purpose and meaning of planning**: appreciation of why planning is undertaken by communities, cities, regions, and nations, and the impact planning is expected to have.
- **Planning theory**: appreciation of the behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes.
- **Professional ethics and responsibility**: appreciation of key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision-making, research, and client representation (including principles of the AICP Code of Ethics).
- **Governance and participation**: appreciation of the roles of officials, stakeholders, and community members in planned change.
- **Social justice**: appreciation of equity concerns in planning

ASSIGNMENTS *

*Participation and attendance*
Student grades for participation are based on in-class participation. Grades for in-class attendance will take into account attendance and participation as evidenced by the student’s readiness to summarize the materials, critique them, and engage effectively in class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, and absence is excused only in cases of emergency or illness. Because this is a small class, your active participation is very important. This does not mean you should just “show up” and sit quietly, nor should you simply respond to every question posed (i.e., “effective participation is not measured by amount”). Active participation means actively involving yourself in the discussion by showing up on time, completing all readings before class, actively listening to who is speaking, asking pertinent/pointed questions, offering opinions respectfully, and otherwise being deeply “present” in class. Discussing honest questions and true struggles within yourself is often the best way to contribute.

Listening is also participating. If you do not actively listen and share your questions and ideas with everyone, they can’t benefit from what you have to offer. Each of you has important questions and ideas to share that we can all learn from, and I believe you have a responsibility to contribute it. If you have a question that you do not already have an answer for, you will genuinely want to hear what your classmates have to say. The worst thing for discussion is a series of unrelated monologues. What we are shooting for are true dialogues in which you engage the comments and questions of others rather than following them up with unrelated comments and questions. Be curious about what others have to say. If you share your thoughts, concerns and questions in an effort to explore the material in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, you will receive a good participation grade. Finally, to make sure you are learning outside the classroom, at times I will take volunteers or randomly call on one or two of you at the start of
class to discuss a planning or design issue that relates to justice in the city. Check out sources such as http://planetizen.com, http://citylab.com, and http://www.theguardian.com/cities.

**Discussion lead**
You will be asked to prepare and bring copies of a one-sheet maximum (can be double-sided) handout that provides an executive summary of the readings. Your summary should outline the main thesis, the crux, of each of the readings as well as summarize the key arguments and assumptions the authors make. Be sure to discuss how the reading is relevant to our broader discussions of justice and equity, why they are helpful, and what they leave out. Include 3-5 broad discussion questions to guide the discussion. During class, you will be asked to spend 5-10 minutes going through your summary with the class, then facilitating a discussion after that. Be creative, and feel free to prepare or bring additional material, such as videos or newspaper or magazine articles, to illustrate your argument or further encourage discussion on the topic. The idea is for you to inspire everyone to explore the reading in insightful ways. Good discussion questions are “open-ended,” and have a complex answer and/or a range of possible answers. They are also genuine, meaning you have not already made up your mind what the answer is. Some of the best questions ask about what actually is happening in the reading, or in the world. A descriptive example might be: “Does the author mean to say…?” A normative example asks what should be going on in the readings, or in the world, such as “Is the U.S. is right to intervene in world affairs?” The latter open up the issue of values, of what people think the world should be like. You can ask either descriptive or normative questions when facilitating discussion, or a combination of both.

**Assessing justice**
Analyze an existing government or nonprofit program, project, design, plan, process, or initiative, whether on the individual space, neighborhood, or city level, for how well it performs on any model of, or criteria for, social justice. Be clear in your criteria, and suggest what modifications might make the program/project/etc. more “just”? Be creative in your presentation, and feel free to use images or primary sources to bolster your argument.

**Response essays**
These essays should be 4-6 pages in length and are an exercise in reflection about the reading material that week. First, they should provide a very brief summary of the author’s argument. Next, they should expose the assumptions (i.e., the premises) under which the author is operating, as well as a discussion of how these assumptions may/not influence her argument. After that, be critical and discuss what the author does well and what she does not. Next, demonstrate the connection of this argument to planning: what new insights have you gained into the field? Conclude with an overall assessment of the author’s work: for example, (how) does it uncover new information, new questions, or new ways of viewing our role as planners? You are required to submit three of these between weeks 2 and 15.

**Service learning journal**
You will become involved in a social justice-related organization anywhere in the Denver metropolitan area, completing at least 20 hours of volunteer work for them. The purpose of this exercise is for you to examine a topic of interest to you in greater depth than can be accomplished in the classroom. By working with an organization engaged in this type of work, you will gain greater understanding into the challenges and opportunities that surround justice- and equity-oriented work. Potential organizations might include neighborhood civic associations, informal neighborhood groups such as church organizations, community-based, mission-driven, or population-focused organizations, or official city agencies or departments working to improve communities. Make contact with at least one organization, explain your interest in working with them in some capacity, and (if necessary), provide a letter from me explaining the goals of the project. Set up a meeting with a responsible individual at one of these organizations and arrange a schedule that works for everyone involved. The goal of this assignment is for you to reflect on your experience with the organization, writing short (300-500 words) but frequent entries exploring whether, how, and to what extent the organization is meeting its mission, goals, and priorities. Some probing questions might include: Who does the organization purport to serve? How do
you think the organization defines “justice”? What assumptions does the organization make when addressing injustice? What, if anything, is standing in its way of achieving its vision(s)? What broader social, economic, political, and/or cultural conditions and structures seem to shape its successes and failures?

**Final paper**

As we discussed in weeks 4-7, there are several critiques to Fainstein’s just city model as presented, including its separation of process and outcomes, its devaluation of democracy and democratic process, and its reluctance to work outside of existing political-economic structures. These critiques are intrinsically intertwined: process is driven by a democratic impulse, striving for certain forms of democracy requires confronting established forms of governance, etc. In an essay of 8-10 pages, I want you to dive deeper into these critiques and interrogate the connections between democracy and the city, and more specifically, between democracy and place. First, I want you to choose which form of democracy (Purcell article might help) you believe is the most appropriate for helping create a more just city. In answering this question, be sure to discuss why other models are not as appropriate. Second, given your choice of a model of democracy, does urban space – including streets, public spaces, neighborhoods, and the relationships between these various components – matter for allowing, encouraging, even fostering an active and inclusive democracy? If so, how? If not, be sure to defend your position. Put another way, what policies, politics, and spatial arrangements shape the democratic nature of cities? What do certain types of democracy – as you define it – require from the city, and in particular from its public spaces? Finally, if you do believe that place matters, does your model of democratic space actually exist? If so, be sure to present and explain at least one example.

* Thanks to Robert Lake at Rutgers, Mark Purcell at UW, and Jenny Steffel Johnson at CU Denver for help on assignment language.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Every class meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion lead</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>See sign-up sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing justice</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>March 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response essays</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>May 5 (third response)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning journal</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>May 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>May 12 (by email)</td>
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Grading for the other assignments will be based primarily on the quality and depth of the work presented, but organization, composition, and presentation (editing, spell checking) will also be taken into account. Students are expected to turn in all assignments on time by bringing a hard copy to class, except for the final paper, which should be emailed to me. Out of respect and fairness for all members of the class, late assignments will not be accepted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Due/lead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Defining justice; case studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Fundamentals of justice I</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Fundamentals of justice II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>The just city</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Equity (watch Holding Ground)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>Assessing justice</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>Application 1: Right to the city (watch Garden)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Application 2: Public space (lecture by John Parvensky)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 9 (9:00 at Fluid)</td>
<td>Application 3: Gentrification (tour with Tony Robinson)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>Application 4: Housing (tour with DHA)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 23 (9:30 at CU)</td>
<td>Application 5: Transportation (lecture by Zoë Williams)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>Application 6: Segregation (lecture by Steve Koester)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Summary; service learning experience</td>
<td>3rd response; service journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>NO CLASS – FINALS WEEK</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
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**READINGS**

**Week 1. January 20: Defining justice.**
None.

   or  

   or  

   or  

**Week 3. February 3: Fundamentals of justice II: Morals, community, and capabilities**
   or  

or


**Week 4. February 10: The “just city”**

**Week 5. February 17: Democracy**


**Week 6. February 24: Diversity**


**Week 7. March 3: Equity**


**Week 8. March 10: Assessing justice**
None.
Week 9. March 17: Application 1 – The right to the city


Week 10. March 24: Spring break – no class
None.

Week 11. March 31: Application 2 – Public space


Week 12. April 9: Application 3 – Gentrification


Week 13. April 14: Application 4 – Housing


**Week 14. April 23: Application 5 – Transportation**


**Week 15. April 28: Application 6 – Segregation**


**Week 16. May 5: Summary and discuss service learning journal**

None.

**Week 17. May 12: Finals week – no class**

None.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Education at the University of Colorado Denver and in the College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) depends on honesty and integrity, as well as appropriate conduct. CAP students are required to follow the Student Code of Conduct and the Honor Code. Please refer to this document for details. All University and College policy, as well as common sense, regarding academic honesty applies in this course. Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated and will be handled through the University’s official process. When working in a group, it is the responsibility of everyone in the group to maintain the norms of academic integrity. Students may do joint work with other courses only with the permission of all instructors and when the work is suitable for the topic and the course.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any student who needs, or who may need, accommodations due to a disability should speak with the instructors as soon as possible, and should contact the Disability Resources and Services Office on campus to arrange accommodations. See here for more details.