

Wayne State University
Department of Urban Studies & Planning

UP 6340: Community Development

Instructor Patrick Cooper-McCann (cooper@wayne.edu)

Course info Fall 2025, CRN: 12146, 3 credits

Class sessions 5:30 to 8 pm in State Hall 2207

Format Lecture/Seminar

Office hours

I'm available to discuss the course, the urban planning program, Metro Detroit, or your career plans. For quick questions, please approach me right after class. For a longer conversation, please email me to arrange a meeting. Late afternoons (around 3 pm) are best for me, but I'm flexible. I can meet you at my office, via Zoom, or over the phone.

Course description

This course prepares students to lead community-based initiatives to empower urban residents and create more equitable neighborhoods. In the first half, students learn about community organizing and capacity building, with a focus on environmental justice, secure housing, and community benefits agreements. The second half of the course focuses on the workings of the community development industry. Students learn how government agencies, community development financial institutions, and community-based nonprofits partner to help low-income families increase their financial resources, access affordable housing, and obtain high-quality education and jobs. The course also provides a basic overview of grant writing, theories of change, and program evaluation.

Learning objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Compare different approaches to community organizing and development
- Explain the evolution and functioning of the community development industry, including the roles played by nonprofit and governmental organizations
- Advise community-based organizations on how they can organize and build capacity to secure community benefits, mitigate displacement, increase financial wellbeing, build affordable housing, and promote economic development
- Write and present a grant proposal that recommends an appropriate program or policy that will contribute to the development of a particular community
- Contribute to community development efforts in Metro Detroit

Planning Accreditation Board educational outcomes

This course assesses comprehension of the following values, knowledge, and skills in accordance with the Planning Accreditation Board's Amended 2022 Standards:

A1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice: Diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice factors that reduce inequities and promote opportunity for all; planning for the needs of all, including historically underserved and under-resourced communities and populations; and reducing inequities through examination of past and current systems and practices.

A2. Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice: Environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable communities; reduce impacts of climate change; and create equitable, resilient, and climate-adapted futures.

B1a. Planning History and Theory: The evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how the history of planning has advanced and hindered opportunities for particular peoples, places and communities; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works; past and present conceptions of the future, including the relationship between planning and the future; the role of planning in responding to the global climate crisis.

B1b. Planning Law and Institutions: Behaviors and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision-making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and/or internationally.

B1c. Urban and Regional Development: Political, economic, social, and environmental explanations of and insights on historical, present, and future development; relationships between the built and natural environments and individual and community health and well-being; planning responses to mitigate climate change, reduce risks, and recover from climate-exacerbated impacts; how the movement of people, products, and ideas has affected cities and regions.

B2a. Planning Process and Engagement: Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement; plan creation and implementation; methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future.

B2c. Professional, Communication, and Leadership Skills: Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields; professional leadership in the planning context; written, oral, and graphic communication.

Required readings

All readings will be posted on Canvas and are listed in order of priority.

Attendance policy

This is an in-person course, and in-person attendance is required. However, all lectures will be recorded. The recordings will be posted to Canvas as a resource for studying. The recordings may not be downloaded or shared with anyone outside of the class. Students should also be prepared to meet on Zoom if necessary due to inclement weather or if the professor is ill. To participate on Zoom, students will need a computer with reliable internet access and a camera, microphone, and speakers. For assistance with technology issues, contact the C&IT Helpdesk at 313-577-4357 or helpdesk@wayne.edu.

Assessment

1. Discussion posts = 18% (1.5% each x 12 posts)

Students will respond to a prompt on Canvas by 4 pm before most classes. The prompts will typically require some independent research related to the Grant Proposal. Please read the prompts prior to starting each week's readings so you know what is required and can budget enough time to respond. Discussion posts will be graded for completeness, accuracy, and timeliness. Students may turn in one post late without penalty.

2. Participation = 6%

Full participation requires completing all readings, discussion posts, and assignments on time; attending each class session in full; taking notes on readings, lectures, and class discussions; and actively engaging in class by posing thoughtful questions and comments and participating in group activities. Students may have one absence without explanation.

3. Meeting report = 6%

Every student will be required to attend one community meeting of their choice during the semester and report back to the class through written notes and a 5-minute in-class presentation. The notes are worth 3% and the presentation is worth 3%. Students can sign up to present at the start of any class from September 3 to November 19.

4. Midterm exam = 20%

The midterm will be a written, take-home exam. The questions will be shared after class on October 8. The exam must be returned by midnight on October 14.

5. Grant proposal first draft = 10%

Students will be required to write and present a grant proposal. Students may work individually or in pairs. The assignment offers students an opportunity to research a program/policy of personal interest and then develop a proposal to implement that idea in the community of their choice. Students will begin brainstorming their proposals through discussion posts. The first complete draft of the proposal will be due November 2.

6. Grant proposal second draft = 10%

After receiving feedback, students will be asked to revise and resubmit their grant proposals. The final draft of the proposal will be due November 26.

7. Proposal presentation = 10%

Students will present their proposals to the class on December 3. All students must attend the entire session. The presentations will be brief, but depending on the size of the class, this session may be longer than the normal class period. Please plan accordingly.

8. Final exam = 20%

The final will be a written, take-home exam. The questions will be shared after class on December 3. The exam must be returned by midnight on December 10. The exam is not cumulative; it will test all readings and lectures covered *after* the midterm.

The grading scale is as follows: A: 94-100, A-: 90-94, B+: 87-90, B: 83-87, B-: 80-83, C+: 77-80, C: 73-77, C-: 70-73, D: 60-70, F: 0-60.

The grade of any assignment submitted late, including interim products, will be reduced by one marking grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B), unless the student requests and receives an extension from the professor in advance. All assignments must be completed to receive a course grade. A course grade of “Incomplete” will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be arranged, in writing, before the last class session.

Assistance with writing

The Wayne State Writing Center offers free virtual tutoring sessions Monday-Thursday, 10 to 5. Sign up here: <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/>. You can schedule a session to receive help with any written assignment. The tutor will help you edit your own writing.

Student Disability Services statement

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. Please visit <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu> to register your condition. Once you have accommodations in place, please inform your instructor. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the University in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at WSU. SDS supports students with a variety of conditions, such as mental health disorders, learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, etc.

Statement on academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or undermine the education process. Examples include:

- **Plagiarism:** To take and use another's words or ideas as your own without appropriate referencing or citation.
- **Cheating:** Intentionally using or attempting to use, or intentionally providing or attempting to provide, unauthorized materials, information or assistance in any academic coursework. This includes using artificial intelligence (AI) tools/systems in academic coursework, except where such use has been authorized in advance by the instructor and disclosed through appropriate referencing or citation. Forms of cheating include the following:

- **Collusion:** Working with other student(s), when told not to do so or other than as authorized by your instructor, to complete any course work, in whole or in part. This includes using messaging services to exchange information or answers to any coursework.
- **Contract Cheating:** Paying or soliciting an individual, private company, or other source, for the completion of any coursework (e.g., exams, papers, etc.), or parts of coursework. These include essay mills, auction platforms, commercial services for hire, and private parties (family, classmates, former students, tutors, etc.), even if not for money.
- **Other:** Selling, giving, offering, or stealing all or part of a test or term paper or any other academic assignment or course materials, unauthorized use of resources, enlisting in the assistance of a substitute when taking exams, destroying another's work, threatening students or instructors, or any other misconduct identified in the course syllabus or elsewhere.
- **Fabrication:** Intentional or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation, such as knowingly attributing citations to the wrong source or listing a fake reference in the paper or bibliography.

Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from Wayne State University.

Course drop/withdrawal information

In weeks one and two of the full term, students can drop this class and receive 100% tuition and course fee cancellation. Beginning with the third week of the term students who wish to drop the class must initiate a withdrawal request. You will receive a transcript notation of WP (passing), WF (failing), or WN (no graded work) at the time of withdrawal. No withdrawals can be initiated after the end of the 10th week; students enrolled in the 10th week and beyond will receive a grade. More information on this can be found at: <https://reg.wayne.edu/students/information#dropping>.

Course Schedule

Part I. Organizing for Community Development

1. August 27 – Course Overview

1. Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, “Introduction,” in Ferguson and Dickens, eds., *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999), 1-13.

2. Familiarize yourself with the Canvas site, including the links to “Resources on Community Development in Detroit” and “Upcoming Community Development Meetings,” and sign up for the CDAD newsletter: <https://cdad-online.org/>

3. Complete discussion post

2. September 3 – What Is Community Development?

1. Robert Sampson, “What ‘Community’ Supplies,” in Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, eds., *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 241-265 and 269-279.
2. Alan Mallach, *Managing Neighborhood Change: A Framework for Sustainable and Equitable Revitalization* (Montclair, NJ: National Housing Institute, 2008), pages 1-6.
3. Read the Grant Proposal Instructions and complete discussion post

3. September 10 – Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping

1. Rob Chaskin, Prudence Brown, Avis Vidal and Sudhir Venkatesh, “Community Capacity and Capacity Building: A Definitional Framework,” in *Building Community Capacity* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2001), 7-26.
2. Watch the first 38 minutes of “From Needs to Assets: A New Approach to Community Building” on You Tube. You may want to increase the playback speed to 1.25 or 1.5.
3. “Asset Mapping,” in “Appendix A: Data Collection Methods,” *Performing a Community-Based Assessment: Curriculum Appendices* (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research), A2-A11.
4. Complete discussion post

4. September 17 – Community Organizing: Theory and Tactics

1. Mary L. Ohmer and Fred Brooks III, “The Practice of Community Organizing: Comparing and Contrasting Conflict and Consensus Approaches,” in Marie Weil, ed., *The Handbook of Community Practice*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2013), 233-248.
2. Anne Mackinnon, “Funding Community Organizing: Social Change Through Civic Participation” (Grantcraft: Practical Wisdom for Grantmakers, 2008), pages 4-10.
3. “Community Organizing 101,” *Toolkit for Organizing*, Resident Action Project, 2017.
4. “Community Meetings,” *Toolkit for Organizing*, Resident Action Project, 2017.
5. “One-on-Ones,” *Toolkit for Organizing*, Resident Action Project, 2017.

6. Motor City Freedom Riders, “Running Strategic Campaigns,” January 27, 2018.
7. Complete discussion post

5. September 24 – Organizing for Environmental Justice and Health

1. “Prioritizing Vulnerable Residents and Adapting to Change” (the final section of *Addressing Climate Change in Detroit* from 2023), <http://detroitclimatestrategy.com>. I would encourage you to skim through the rest of the plan up to that section as well.
2. Natalie Sampson et al., “Household Flooding in Detroit: A Snapshot of Citywide Experiences, Implications for Public Health, and Potential Solutions” (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Poverty Solutions, June 2021).
3. “Executive Summary,” *Public Health Action Plan: Improving Air Quality & Health in Detroit* (Detroit: Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments, 2017).
4. Take a look at the Southeast Michigan GREEN Dashboard and the MiEJScreen Environmental Justice Screening Tool. These maps works best if you turn on one layer at a time, e.g. tree canopy or lead blood levels, to see how each layer is distributed.
5. Complete discussion post

6. October 1 – Organizing for Secure Housing

1. Sophie Ordway and Eric Williams, “Home Improvement: Laying Detroit’s Firm Foundation for Truly Affordable Housing,” Detroit Justice Center, November 15, 2023.
2. Look through “Data Sources on Housing in Metro Detroit.”
3. Complete discussion post

7. October 8 – Organizing for Community Benefits

1. Julian Gross, Greg LeRoy, and Madeline Janis-Aparicio, *Community Benefits Agreements: Making Development Projects Accountable* (Washington, D.C.: Good Jobs First, 2005), 9-26 (chapters 1 and 2; the rest of the report is helpful but optional).
2. Detroit Community Benefits Ordinance webpage
3. Berglund, Lisa and Sam Butler. 2021. Detroit’s Community Benefits Ordinance: Setbacks and Opportunities to Giving Residents a Voice in Development. *Journal of Community Practice* 29 (1): 23-45.

4. Celia Fan and Mara Cecilia Ostfeld, “Detroiters’ Top Household Challenges Ahead of the 2025 Mayoral Election,” Detroit Metro Area Communities Study, September 2025.

5. Complete discussion post

Part II. Program Development and Evaluation

8. October 15 – Grant Writing

No required readings. The take-home midterm is due by midnight on October 14.

9. October 22 – Evaluating Change

1. Anne Mackinnon and Natasha Amott, “Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation” (Grantcraft: Practical Wisdom for Grantmakers, 2006).

2. Anne Mackinnon, “Funding Community Organizing: Social Change Through Civic Participation” (Grantcraft: Practical Wisdom for Grantmakers, 2008), pages 25-27.

3. Watch the first 40 minutes of “Evaluating Your ABCD Efforts” on You Tube. You may want to increase the playback speed to 1.25 or 1.5. This webinar provides tips for measuring increases in social capital as a result of community-building efforts.

4. Anne C. Kubisch, “Lessons to Improve the Design and Implementation of Community Change Efforts,” in Anne C. Kubisch, Patricia Auspos, Prudence Brown, and Tom Dewar. *Voices from the Field III* (Aspen Institute, Roundtable on Community Change, 2010), 120-137.

5. Complete discussion post

Part III. The Community Development Industry

10. October 29 – The Market-Based Approach to Community Development

1. Jordan S. Yin, “The Community Development Industry System: A Case Study of Politics and Institutions in Cleveland, 1967-1997,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 20, no. 2 (1998): 137-157.

2. Mark McDermott, “The Evolution of the Community Development Industry: A Practitioner’s Perspective,” in Norman Krumholz and Kathryn Wertheim Hexter, eds., *Advancing Equity Planning Now: Seeking a More Just City*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 44-59.

3. Steve Pomeroy, *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada* (Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2006).

4. Complete discussion post

11. November 5 – Increasing Access to Financial Resources

1. Afton Branche-Wilson and Patrick Cooney, “The Financial Well-Being of Detroit Residents: What Do We Know?,” UM Poverty Solutions, August 2020. Read at least pages 1-7 (Executive Summary).

2. Peter Dreier, “The Future of Community Reinvestment: Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing Environment,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 69, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 341-353.

3. Lehn Benjamin, Julia Sass Rubin, and Sean Zielenbach, “Community Development Financial Institutions: Current Issues and Future Prospects,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2004): 177-195.

4. Complete discussion post

12. November 12 – Providing Affordable Housing

1. Avis C. Vidal, “Housing and Community Development,” in Lester M. Salamon, ed., *The State of the Nonprofit Sector*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 266-293.

2. Alex F. Schwartz, “The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit,” *Housing Policy in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 135-162.

3. Complete discussion post

13. November 19 – Community Development Systems

1. Ronald F. Ferguson and Sara E. Stoutland, “Reconceiving the Community Development Field,” in Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, eds., *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 33-42 only; the rest of the chapter is optional.

2. Avis Vidal and Langley Keyes, *Beyond Housing: Growing Community Development Systems* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005). Read 7-10 only.

3. *Roadmap to Equity: Sustainability Strategies for Detroit's Community Development Ecosystem* (Detroit, MI: Community Development Advocates of Detroit, 2022). Read pages 15-20, 26-27, and 59-67.

4. Complete discussion post

14. December 3 – Student Proposal Presentations

No readings or discussion post

The final exam will be shared December 3 and due December 10