INTRODUCTION.

The class examines the concept of property and the central role of local general plans in California’s land use and development statutes. The students then look into zoning, subdividing, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), urban design, takings, and exactions. The class also explores infrastructure finance, boundary changes, growth management and smart growth. By the end of the class, the students will have reviewed a wide range of topics, opinions, and viewpoints.

PPA 250 OBJECTIVES. Students will:

Gain an understanding of the nature of the land use process in California and insights into the forces that shape the urban governmental landscape.

Develop awareness of the role of various groups in the community that are involved in the ongoing formulation of issues impacting the process of land use development.

Develop awareness of the ever-changing resource base that supports urban development.

Acquire the ability to distinguish, explain and provide examples of the interrelationships between various interest groups and society and the nature of the ethical dilemma related to land use issues.

Acquire an informational foundation upon which a variety of land use related topics can be pursued.

METHODS.* The class meets once a week, featuring lectures that build on the students’ reading. The class exercises allow the students to apply the lectures and readings to their own observations. Writing assignments including the group project provide the students with additional opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned about the regulation of land use. Occasional guest speakers share their experiences directly with the students.

*I’d like to acknowledge the kind and astute assistance of Peter Detwiler, Consultant to the Senate Local Government Committee and a graduate instructor at CSUS, in preparing for and planning this class. Peter was gracious enough to allow me to borrow some of his ideas and introduced me to Wye Island. The mistakes are all mine.
OFFICE HOURS. When students want answers to questions or need advice, they can take advantage of the instructor’s regular office hours, most Thursdays, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., by appointment. Students can call the instructor at her work number (651-8772). They can also fax material to her office after calling first (653-1819) and send her an e-mail at ktobias@parks.ca.gov. Students should send an e-mail between the first and second week of class to the above e-mail address to establish a class e-mail address list.

ASSIGNMENTS. The reading assignments are due on the dates listed in this syllabus. Students must keep up with the assigned readings to take advantage of the lectures and the guest speakers and to participate in the class discussions. You will contribute to the success of the class by drawing upon your own experiences, your collateral reading and your other courses. Please come to class prepared with questions or arguments to share. In addition, you may want to bring in articles from the daily newspapers, which deal with the issues that we are discussing.

Regardless of your role in government or the private sector, making and implementing land use policy is rarely a solitary activity. Collaboration is required for successful outcomes. Thus, this course does include a group project and class participation is strongly encouraged.

There are two written assignments: an individual short analytical paper and one group assignment that has two parts. Students must turn in their papers on the date on which they are due. The instructor will penalize a late paper a full letter grade for each day that it is late.

(1) Book Review: Wye Island. This is not your high school book report! Start by reading the book. In your essay, I will look for your explanation of what the author is trying to make the reader understand. You will need to explain how the author supports the book’s main argument. You do not need to repeat the book’s points or basic story to me – I’ve read it! The following questions may help you get started but they are not intended to be answered per se in your paper. Is the author as observer or researcher? Does the author make a logical argument or appeal to your emotions? Use specific examples. What is the context for the book? How was the author influenced by events of the day, such as historical, political, economic or social happenings? How does the author’s argument relate to major themes in this class, other books you have read and your own observations and personal experiences?

What do you think about the book? Do you agree or disagree? You’ll need to provide specific bases for your opinion. Quotes are fine but anything longer than a couple of lines will be viewed as filler. Did you find a bias on the part of the author? Any other shortcomings? Do you think this book could be written today?

Please use your hometown experience or another place that you have observed over time to compare and contrast. This should account for approximately one half of the length of your paper.

I will pass out a copy of a book review by Jonathan Franzen that you should review. I’m looking for a theme that ties this book together with what you’ve learned so far in this course and your personal experience. Papers without discussion of personal experience will be graded down.

Your book review should be five (minimum) to seven pages (maximum). You will loose one half
a grade (B+ to B=) for reports that have less than 5 pages. You will find assistance in Hacker’s A Pocket Style Manual (pp 161-164). Please use one-inch margins, 12 point type, a readable typeface (no italics unless for emphasis) double-space text with quotes indented and single-spaced, page numbers and a cover page that follows Hacker’s sample (P. 165). The cover page does not count as part of the minimum or maximum page count so please do not number it. Please turn in a disc with the report on it, in addition to the hard copy. This assignment is due at this time so that your assignments are evenly spaced throughout the semester. This assignment takes a long time to grade and will not be returned immediately.

This is due October 13, 2006. It is 20% of your grade and is a required assignment.

(2) Plan Evaluation and Neighborhood Profile. This is the group project. There are two parts to this assignment. By Week Three, you must form a working group of four students. Try to pick at least two people whom you did not know before you started this course. Diverse backgrounds and experience will help your working group. Exchange telephone numbers and e-mail addresses and agree on regular meeting times. The earlier you start, the fewer the late nights at the end of the course.

Everyone in the group receives the same grade. This does create some peer pressure: all of us have worked on a project where someone carries a bigger burden than someone else. Some conflicts are inevitable and I hope that you can work it out for yourselves. If it becomes a persistent problem, please let me know. I can meet with you individually or with the whole group. I will have you evaluate and grade the group and yourself, which will be taken into account when I grade your project.

Plan Evaluation. Pick a general plan, community plan, or redevelopment plan adopted by a city or county. (It is probably best to avoid a large plan such as the Sacramento County General Plan unless someone in your group knows a lot about it.) You should go to the public counter of the city or county planning department that you have chosen and obtain a copy. You may have to pay for the plan. Although you may use the Internet to obtain copies, you will have to turn in a complete copy with your project, with all the requisite maps. You must obtain my approval on the plan that you propose to use.

As a start, Dan Curtin, in his excellent book, California Land Use and Planning Law, has a checklist for plan reviewers:

- Is it complete?
- Is it informational, readable, and available to the public?
- Is it internally consistent?
- Is it consistent with state policy?
- Does it cover all territory within its boundaries?
- Is it a long-term perspective?
- Does it address all locally relevant issues?
- Is it current?
- Does it contain the statutory criteria required by state law as demanded by the courts?
- Are the diagrams or maps adequate?
- Does it serve as a yardstick?
Does it contain an action plan or implementation plan?
Finally, was it adopted correctly?

Answering these questions is a minimum analysis and will get a minimum grade.

Product: Plan Evaluation.

This is due November 9, 2006.

Community Profile. Once you have evaluated the plan (Part One – Plan Evaluation), your team will document a neighborhood (Part Two – Community Profile). Pick an area that is covered by the plan that you reviewed as a group. Schedule a time when the entire group can visit the area. The visit should last about two hours. You’ll need a note pad and pen; you may find it helpful to bring sketchpads, graph paper, camera, tape or video recorder. You can borrow equipment from University Media Services, Library South wing, lower level. (278-6611 or 278-5758)

Walk through the area with the entire group, observing and absorbing carefully. Divide your time into ten-minute periods and stop every ten minutes so that each of you can record what you see. Then find a place to talk and compare notes about what you saw and heard. Think about relationships: to the environment, to economic activity, to adjacent areas and to the rest of Sacramento and the region. What would people from other disciplines think about your study area (engineers, attorneys, real estate appraisers, social workers, etc?)?

Once you have observed/absorbed, you must talk to at least two people who know the area — a politician, real estate agent, citizen activist, business owner, resident — as a reality check. How did your perceptions compare? Is there a person or a group that is providing a catalyst for change in this area? Has their influence worked? How important is this? Please document who you talked to with a phone number and/or an address.

Product: prepare a Community Profile that shows how well you understand and appreciate your study area. You will evaluate the area, based on the Plan Evaluation and your visit. You must also provide a portfolio of photos, drawings, charts, tables, cartoons, maps and other graphics to complement the written text. Attach your working notes that you took during your observations. Attach a copy of the Plan that you evaluated. Your written report should be 15-20 pages maximum. Your group will present your Community Profile to the class during the last several nights of class. The presentation may be formal or informal. You should use the visual resources that you used in your report. I do take the presentation into account in the grade: once in awhile, the presentation improves the group’s grade; once in awhile, the presentation can push a “wobbly” grade downward. Please be prepared to turn in a copy of your presentation.

Please remember that your group could work in an area where the residents may be uncomfortable with outsiders. Please respect the residents and act accordingly. Group members should be aware of their colleagues’ behavior and physical safety. If you have any reason for concern, leave the area and return later.

As a professional, you will talk to others who already know a lot about your group’s plan evaluation and neighborhood. Part of the experience is learning from others. Plagiarism is not.
You must give credit where credit is due. Please cite, with names, addresses and phone numbers at least two people that you consulted in the course of your work. They may be professionals, people on the street, etc. It would also be courteous to write a thank-you note to those people who have helped you.

**The second part, Community Profile, is due December 7, 2006. The entire project is 30% of your grade and is a required assignment.**

(3) **Attend a Planning Commission meeting.** You must attend one meeting of a planning commission at a city or county jurisdiction, preferably the jurisdiction you analyze in your group project. Please obtain the agenda and staff report of an item on the agenda and have the Planning Director sign off on the agenda that you have attended the meeting along with a one page summary of the agenda item(s) you heard and why the item(s) were pertinent to the class. Failure to complete this assignment will result in a failing grade in the class.

Please turn in the signed-off agenda by November 30 with the staff report and a one page summary of the agenda item(s) you heard. Please indicate why the agenda item(s) were pertinent to this class. This is a required assignment. You will not receive a grade for this class without completing this assignment on time.

**Quizzes** help the students focus on their reading assignments. The quizzes are mixtures of multiple choice, true/false, acronyms, and definition questions. There may be take-home questions or an essay question may be provided ahead of time. The lowest grade will be dropped and remaining scores averaged to obtain your overall score for the quizzes. There is a quiz every week.

The **exam** tests the students’ ability to combine their lessons. This longer exam includes short essay assignments in addition to the types of questions that appear on the quizzes. The exam will be **November 30, 2006**.

**GRADES.** The semester’s grades will reflect this schedule:

- Quizzes (8)  
  25%
- Book report  
  20%
- Group project: Plan Evaluation and Community Profile  
  30%
- Examination  
  25%
READING LIST

The semester’s readings consist of two books, and occasional handouts.


There is also a Course Reader that will be made available.

SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

September 7: Course Overview

Introduction
Small Urban Spaces (video)
Ahwahnee Principles (CD)

September 14: Concept of Property and Basis For Planning

Fulton, Chapters 1 & 3
Detwiler, “Jello Without the Mold” handout
Course Reader: Jacobs, Harvey M. “Fighting Over Land”

September 21: Local Planning Process: Local Governments, Players and the General Plan

Fulton, Chapters 4, 5 & 6

Please go to www.opr.ca.gov/planning and review the General Plan Guidelines. Print out several pages. Please review the section on environmental justice. Then look up a General Plan to use as your reference tool. It need not be the same city that you are using for your project but it might make it a little easier. Please make sure that the city that you choose has its general plan on line. Please bring a copy to class or bring your laptop so you can review it during class.

Special Topic: Environmental Equity

Course Reader: Bullard, Robert D. “Environmental Equity” (last article in the Reader)

September 28: Basic Tools: Zoning

Fulton, Chapter 7
Course Reader: Duany, Andres and Talen, Emily “Transect Planning”
OPR, The Conditional Use Permit
OPR, The Variance
Please go to www.ceres.ca.gov/planning/zoning/city.html or other internet site and review a zoning ordinance that you want to use as your reference tool. It need not be the same city that you are using for your project but it might make it a little easier. Please make sure that the city that you choose has its zoning ordinance on line. Print out the information on at least two different zones including the internet address. You will be tested on this information and you will need to turn in the material that you printed out. Please be prepared in class to discuss what you have learned.

October 3: Basic Tools: Subdivisions and Specific Plans

Fulton, Chapters 8 & 12
Course Reader: Brown, Barbara and Cropper, Vivian “New Urban and Standard Suburban Subdivisions”

Please go online and search for an example of a subdivision and a Specific Plan. Please look it over and be prepared to answer a short essay question on the quiz about the subdivision and that specific plan. Please include the internet address for the subdivision and the specific plan you choose. Failure to include the Internet address will result in no credit for that question.

October 12: Basic Tools: Environmental Review (CEQA)

Fulton, Chapters 9 and 22
Course Reader: Olshansky, Robert “The California Environmental Quality Act and Local Planning”

Please go online and search for a relatively recent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or you may review the EIR for the General Plan that you are evaluating in your group. Please look it over and be prepared to answer a short essay question on the quiz about that EIR. Please include the internet address for the EIR you choose. Failure to include the Internet address will result in no credit for that question.

Due on this date: Wye Island book report

October 19: CEQA Continued and Jurisdictional Boundaries (LAFCO)

Fulton, Chapters 23 and 24; Pages 73-78
Course Reader: Growth Within Bounds, Executive Summary and Chapters 1& 2

Special Topic: Regionalism
Course Reader: Prey, William H. “Three Americas”

Please go online and search for a relatively recent document prepared for a LAFCO action. This may be an annexation, approval of a sphere of influence, etc. Please look it over and be prepared to answer a short essay question on the quiz about that LAFCO action. Please include the internet address for the action you choose. Failure to include the Internet address will result in no credit for that question.
October 26: Governmental Authority To “Take” Property

Fulton, Chapter 13 & 10, in that order
Course Reader: Abbott, Chapter 3, *Exactions and Impact Fees in California*

Special Topic – Property Rights, the Kelo Decision and Proposition XX

November 2: No class

November 9: Urban Design

Fulton, Chapter 18

Due on this date:  first part of group project – the “Plan Evaluation” paper

November 16: Fiscalization of Land Use

Fulton, Chapters 14, 19 and skim 20

November 23: No class but read:  Smart Growth

Fulton, Chapter 11 and 17

November 30: Exam

Students will take the exam in class. The exam format may include a mixture of multiple choice and true/false questions, definitions and short essays. This is closed book, no notes.

Last day to turn in verification of attendance at Planning Commission meeting

December 7:  Class Presentations of Group Projects

Due on this date:  second part of group project, “Plan and Neighborhood Evaluation”

December 14: Continuation of Group Project Presentations