

San José State University
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
URBP 260 - Environmental Planning Topics
Parks, Public Space, and Sustainable Public Life
Fall, 2022

Course and Contact Information

Units: 4
Instructor(s): Zacharias Mendez, MUP
Office Location: Online
Telephone: (email preferred)
Email: zacharias.mendez@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 6 pm – 8 pm (by appointment)
Sign up for office hours using the following link:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ljWj4SZZ4tcol8au2N3Sn2jyLC4agg7daKw1PT4aMQU/edit?usp=sharing>
Class Days/Time: Monday 7:30 pm – 10:15 pm
Classroom: Online - regular class meetings will take place using a zoom link that will be made available through Canvas prior to each class meeting.

Course Description

URBP 260: In-depth examination of selected topics specifically related to environmental planning.

In recent years, parks and public spaces have become an increasingly important part of our environment. The recent pandemic, climate change, and ongoing civil discourse have placed a spotlight on our shared spaces and how they might play a part in planning for solutions. This growing emphasis on public spaces as an essential aspect of our environment elevates the need to understand them, how they influence people, and how people influence them. It is important to explore the relationship between public space and public life. Seeking to understand better the role that built environments play in our lives can help us plan for better, more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable public spaces in the future.

This URBP 260 course is an in-depth investigation of the environment of public spaces, their production, consumption, design, and meaning, as well as an analysis of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural factors that lie behind them. The course will focus on how public life takes shape in the urban environment and how to conduct ethnographic and observational assessments of public space. Through readings, discussion, and site analysis, students will explore the meaning of public space and emphasize the human experience in the urban environment.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the concepts of public space and public life, as defined in the readings and theories explored in the course, and explain the relationship between them.

2. Conduct observational public life studies of public space, including the development of a survey tool and research methodology.
3. Identify and describe instances of inequity in public space and public life across different community contexts, both historically and today.
4. Apply principles of urban design, planning practice, and social justice and equity considerations to the analysis of public spaces.

Required Texts/Readings

The course has no textbook. The readings assigned for each topic/session are drawn from different sources. When possible, a digital copy of the readings will be provided to students prior to each class meeting. However, most readings are available online and/or via the university library’s electronic reserves. Please see the class schedule below for week-by-week reading assignments and links to the library’s resources.

However, please note that we will be utilizing *How to Study Public Life* by Jan Gehl and Bridgette Svarre (Island Press, 2013) extensively in this course. This book is available as an ebook through the San Jose State Library. Though it is not required, I would highly recommend purchasing this book if you are very interested in this topic. It is a great addition to your bookshelf!

Library Liaison

The SJSU Liaison Librarian for the Urban and Regional Planning Department is Peggy Cabrera. If you have questions, you can contact her at peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu or 408-808-2034.

Course Requirements and Assignments

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| Observational Study | See Course Calendar | 40% | 2,4 |
| To prepare for the required report, students will complete a study of public space and public life. The study will comprise four parts. | | | |
| 1. Public Space Exploration <i>Engagement Unit (5%)*</i> | | | |
| Students are to explore three public spaces or parks and report a three-page report discussing their observations of the site. Site sketches and photos are encouraged. | | | |
| 2. Site Selection and History <i>Engagement Unit (5%)*</i> | | | |
| Students are to select a site for observational analysis over the course of the semester and submit a four-page report detailing initial observations of the site and a brief history of the space. Site sketches and photos are encouraged. | | | |
| 3. Survey Tools (5%) | | | |
| Students are to prepare the survey instrument they will use for their on-site analysis. | | | |
| 4. Research Notes <i>Engagement Unit (15%)*</i> | | | |
| Over the course of the semester, students will be required to conduct an onsite analysis of their selected site. This time will be used to collect data, take field notes and sketch, and conduct observations. Students are expected to spend approximately one hour each week conducting on-site observations. This time can be divided up however the student chooses, though it is recommended that you conduct at least two separate observations during the week. In exchange for this expectation and to allow enough time to conduct this work, course meetings will conclude approximately one hour early on most meeting days. | | | |

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| Public Life and Public Space Report | End of the Semester | 40% | 1,2,3,4 |
| <p>Students will complete a study of public space and life. Over the course of the semester, students will look to bring academic and data-driven approaches to analyze public life. This study will culminate in the preparation of a final report summarizing the findings of their report. The report is expected to be 10 to 15 pages in length, including charts, diagrams, photographs, and sketches. Students will also be expected to prepare a presentation of their findings and report.</p> <p>The report will be due at the end of the semester and presentations will take place during the final class. Submission of the final report is due on the last day of instruction (12/5). Reports will be made publicly to SJSU MUP faculty, students, and other guests to learn from!</p> | | | |
| Student Presentations | Sign-Up Will be Provided | 10% | 1,3 |
| <p>In the second half of the semester, each student is to be assigned readings from a week to read and conduct a presentation on the material and facilitate a discussion. The presentation is expected to be 10 to 15 minutes in length. A sign-up sheet will be provided where students can select a topic area (see schedule below) and will be assigned readings from that week. Presentation slides are due at 11:59 pm the Sunday before class and the presentation will take place on the day of the class.</p> | | | |
| Weekly Reflections and Discussion | See Course Calendar | 10% | 1,3 |
| <p>For each course week (see schedule below), all students are required to write and submit a one-page reflection on the material reviewed in this course and develop at least two questions on one or more of the readings for that topic. The reflections should be short and semi-informal (think five sentences each, though more is welcome), and can explore your personal experience and observations in public space as it relates to the readings. The questions must thoughtfully connect to the readings and be potentially used for class discussion. This must be submitted via email by 11:59 pm the Sunday before class. I will read through them and grade them (10 points for complete, 5 or fewer points for late or unsatisfactory, 0 if not submitted), and we will use some of them to guide our discussion during class. For those student questions selected for in-class discussion, the student who submitted them will be invited to expand/explain them to the group, and then we will all discuss them.</p> | | | |

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be discussed and distributed in class and posted as necessary on the course Canvas website.

- Additional general syllabus information:
- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](#)
 - [University's Syllabus Information web page](#)

Final Examination or Evaluation

This course is evaluated through completion of the public space and public life study and report requirements, the weekly reflections, and participation in the student presentation. The public space and public life report constitutes the culminating evaluation assignment for the course. There is no final exam.

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*, 8th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2013, ISBN 780226816388). 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. Students may use either of the styles in this course, as long as they pick one or the other to use consistently throughout any given assignment. In planning, footnotes or endnotes are typical. In some other academic writing, using parenthetical citations in-text, with footnotes/endnotes reserved for more discursive asides, is more common.

Grading Information

For course letter grade: A plus = 98 and above; A = 93 to 97; A minus = 90 to 92; B plus = 88 to 89; B = 83 to 87; B minus = 80 to 82; C plus = 78 to 79; C = 73 to 77; C minus = 70 to 72; D plus = 68 to 69; D = 63 to 67; D minus = 60 to 62; F = below 60.

| <i>Grade</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>A plus</i> | <i>98 to 100%</i> |
| <i>A</i> | <i>93 to 97%</i> |
| <i>A minus</i> | <i>90 to 92%</i> |
| <i>B plus</i> | <i>88 to 89 %</i> |
| <i>B</i> | <i>83 to 87%</i> |
| <i>B minus</i> | <i>80 to 82%</i> |
| <i>C plus</i> | <i>78 to 79%</i> |
| <i>C</i> | <i>73 to 77%</i> |
| <i>C minus</i> | <i>70 to 72%</i> |
| <i>D plus</i> | <i>68 to 69%</i> |
| <i>D</i> | <i>63 to 67%</i> |
| <i>D minus</i> | <i>60 to 62%</i> |

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates stated on the course schedule and readings are to be completed before class. Because our in-class discussion depends on students having done the reading, and some class meetings will be devoted to presentations and reviews of student work, the assessment will often rely on students being present in class with their work completed. Written, field notes and other assignments will be accepted late for half credit. For example, if an assignment is worth 10 points, it will receive 5 points if submitted late. The final report will be accepted late, but your grade will be reduced by one full letter grade every two days it is late.

Course Workload

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of two hours per unit per week for readings and assignments, one hour for fieldwork, and .5 of the hours used for lecture for instruction or preparation/studying or course-related activities. Because this is a four-unit class, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week on completing course assignments, in addition to time

spent in class and conducting fieldwork. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. For this class, you will have to undertake additional activities outside the class hours such as completing the assigned reading, visiting your field site numerous times, and completing research components and assignments. Details on how to complete these activities will be provided in class.

Engagement Units: As with all 4 unit classes, 1 unit of this course is designated as an “engagement unit”. Activities related to the engagement unit will take place outside the regular class meeting time. Engagement activities make up 25% of this course. Throughout the semester, students will be required to engage in an ongoing study of public life, where you will be expected to conduct observations of your selected public space. Fieldwork and sub-assignments related to the observational study assignment of this course will make up the engagement unit for this semester.

Classroom Protocol

This class will take place online via zoom on a weekly basis unless notified otherwise by the professor. Please plan to arrive on time and we will begin the class as soon as a majority of students have entered the meeting. I understand there may be times when it is necessary to turn off your video. However, as this is a course about public places, public life, and people, I ask that you keep your cameras on during class discussions as much as possible. Class time relies on students actively participating and being thoughtfully engaged in our discussions, all students are expected to arrive having completed the readings and prepared to participate and contribute. I recognize the difficulty in engaging online, which can make it even more difficult for those who are quieter to engage. However, there are many ways to participate and demonstrate you are actively engaged in the subject matter, including doing the readings which were carefully selected for this course and providing insightful reflections.

Plagiarism and Citing Sources Properly

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without properly citing the individual in the use of their work. 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 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 a draft or final work. Please reach out to the professor with any questions or concerns about plagiarism or properly citing sources.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

URBP 260 – Course Schedule

Readings listed here are to be completed *before* that day's class.

| Date | Subject | Readings/Videos | Assignments |
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| Week 1 8/22/2022 | Overview of Class Public Realm and Public Space Introduction | How to Study Public Life - Ch. 1 Public Space, Public Life: An Interaction (Gehl, Svarre) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/tu4ck5/alma991013596273002919 | |
| Week 2 8/29/2022 (NO CLASS MEETING) | Cities for People | Video - Social Life of Small Urban Spaces (William Whyte) Social life in the public realm: A review (Lofland, L. H. 1989) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_60937086 Cities for People - The Human Dimension Ch. 1 (Jan Gehl) | Visit Three Parks or Public Spaces + Four Page Report Video/Reading Reflection (No Discussion Question Required) |
| Week 3 9/5/2022 (NO CLASS MEETING - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY) | Image of the City | The Image of the City - Image of the Environment Ch. 1 (Kevin Lynch) The Image of the City - The City Image and its Elements Ch. 3 (Kevin Lynch) | Reading Reflection (No Discussion Question Required) |
| Week 4 9/12/2022 | Public Life /Places for People | Happy City - Ch. 2: The City Has Always Been a Happiness Project (Charles Montgomery) Happy City - Ch. 10: Who is the City For? (Charles Montgomery) Cities for People: The City at Eye Level Ch. 4 (Jan Gehl) | Site Selection and History Reading Reflection/Discussion Question |
| Week 5 9/19/2022 | How to Study Public Life | How to Study Public Life - Ch. 2 Who, What, Where? (Gehl, Svarre) How to Study Public Life - Ch. 3 Counting, Mapping, Tracking and Other Tools (Gehl, Svarre) How to Study Public Life - Ch. 4 Public Life Studies From a Historical Perspective (Gehl, Svarre) Gehl Public Life Tools (PDF, https://gehlpeople.com/) | Site Analysis Reading Reflection/Discussion Question |

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| <p>Week 6 9/26/2022</p> | <p>How to Study Public Life</p> | <p>How to Study Public Life - Ch. 5 How They Did It: Research Notes (Gehl, Svarre)</p> <p>How to Study Public Life - Ch. 6 Public Life Studies In Practice (Gehl, Svarre)</p> <p>How to Study Public Life - Ch. 7 Public Life Studies and Urban Policy (Gehl, Svarre)</p> | <p>Survey Tools Due</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 7 10/3/2022</p> | <p>Politics of Public Space/Use of Public Space</p> | <p>Creating a sense of community: The role of public space. (Francis, Jacinta, Billie Giles-Corti, Lisa J. Wood, and Matthew Knuiman. 2012.) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_gale_infotracacademiconefile_A303251076</p> <p>Companion to public space: Planetary public space: Scale, context, and politics. In (V. Mehta and D. Palazzo.) pg 73-84. - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781351002172</p> <p>In Companion to public space: Social justice as a framework for evaluating public space. (V. Mehta and D. Palazzo.) pg 59-69.</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 1</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 8 10/17/2022</p> | <p>Politics of Public Space/Use of Public</p> | <p>The Politics of Public Space - Ch. 2: The Political Economy of Public Space (Setha Low, Neil Smith)</p> <p>The Help-Yourself City - Ch. 5: The Spatial Reproduction of Inequality: Social Privilege and Hubris in Creative Transgression (Douglas) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/tu4ck5/alma991013660517702919</p> <p>The Help-Yourself City - Ch.6 Conclusions: Inequality, Legitimacy, and the Momentary Potential of Participation (Douglas)</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 2</p> <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 9 10/17/2022</p> | <p>Parks and Public Space: Climate Change and Climate Vulnerability</p> | <p>Webinar: Issues in Contemporary Urbanism: Climate Change and Public Space - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWp7LTW20IE</p> <p>Biocultural diversity (BCD) in European cities – Interactions between motivations, experiences and environment in public parks. (Vierikko, et al. (2020). Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 48 https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1tsidhc/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1016_j_ufig_2019_126501</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 3</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |

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| <p>Week 10 10/24/2022</p> | <p>Parks and Public Space: Climate Change and Climate Vulnerability</p> | <p>Effects of urban planning indicators on urban heat island: a case study of pocket parks in high-rise high-density environments. (Lin, Lau, S. S. Y., Qin, H., & Gou, Z. 2017) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1tsidhc/cdi_gale_infotraccadematiconefile_A52299_9315</p> <p>Exposure of U.S. National Parks to land use and climate change 1900-2100. (Hansen, A. J., et al. 2014) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1tsidhc/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1890_13_0905_1</p> <p>The Science of Climate Change in National Parks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts7FDt3oqRY</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 4</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 11 10/31/2022</p> | <p>Privatization of Public Spaces</p> | <p>The public realm: Exploring the city's quintessential social territory. (Lofland, L. 1998) - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_38783474</p> <p>The Politics of Public Space - Ch. 5: How Private Interests Take Over Public Space (Setha Low, Neil Smith)</p> <p>Putting the public back in public space. (Iveson, K. 1998.) pg 21-33 - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_rmit_apaft_https_data_informit_org_doi_10_3316_jelapa_980808545</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 5</p> <p>Student Presentation</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 12 11/7/2022</p> | <p>Report Design</p> | <p>https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/communicationatwork/chapter/4-6-effective-document-design/</p> <p>https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_engineering/indot_workshop_resources_for_engineers/document_design_presentation.html</p> <p>Word Design Tutorial - https://business.tutsplus.com/tutorials/make-page-layout-designs-microsoft-word--cms-34172</p> <p>Indesign for Beginners Tutorial - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXRT3dHu6_o</p> | <p>Field Work - Site Observations</p> <p>Research Notes 6</p> |

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| <p>Week 13 11/14/2022</p> | <p>Reimagining Public Space</p> | <p>Streets and Places: Using Streets to Rebuild Communities - https://www.pps.org/product/streets-as-places-using-streets-to-rebuild-communities (Project for Public Spaces)</p> <p>Creative placemaking. (Markusen, A., and A. Gadwa. 2010) Chapters 3 & 4 - https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/creative-placemaking</p> <p>The Help-Yourself City - Ch. 6: Pop-up Planning: From Park(ing) day to Parklet Dining, DIY Goes Official. (Douglas)</p> | <p>Field Work</p> <p>Research Notes 7</p> <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 14 11/21/2022</p> | <p>Planning for Public Parks</p> | <p>Webinar - Park Equity https://preventioninstitute.org/webinar-series-park-equity-life-expectancy-and-power-building</p> <p>Webinar - Minneapolis Parks Planning and Prioritization Equity Analysis (Government Alliance on Race and Equity)</p> <p>Parks for profit: The high line, growth machines, and the uneven development of urban public spaces. (Loughran, K. 2014.) pg 49-68 - https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CAL_S_SJO/1nj5q0c/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_1531932942</p> | <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 15 11/28/2022</p> | <p>Planning for Parks in San Jose</p> | <p>Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Activate SJ Strategic Plan - https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/43503/637178743945470000</p> <p>California Quimby Act - https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-66477.html#:~:text=(A)%20The%20park%20area%20per.most%20recent%20available%20federal%20census.</p> <p>San Jose Parkland Dedication Ordinance - https://library.municode.com/ca/san_jose/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodet=TIT19SU_CH19.38PADEv</p> | <p>Reading Reflection/Discussion Question</p> |
| <p>Week 16 12/5/2022</p> | <p>FINALS</p> | | <p>Public Life Report Due</p> <p>Report Presentations</p> |