

URPL624 - Urban Land Use Planning

Raghda Jaber - Thursdays 3:30-6:30

open for graduates and senior undergraduates from all departments

Description

What is land use planning? What are the institutions charged with setting regulating land use rules and regulations? How do they operate and what influences the formation of such rules and regulations? And finally, are they effective, or even needed? The simple answer is that land use planning, urban or regional, is a set of rules and policies that regulate the development and use of land for the foreseeable future. Certain polices can originate in norms, governed by social and communal behavior, that have accumulated over the years. Others are manifestations of specific ideologies, or historical events, natural or man made.

Land use planning, being the venue to provide space and context for human activities, is shaped by a multitude of factors, social, ideological, political, historical, and economic, to name some. The confluence of these factors has contributed to a set of planning “traditions” which I personally prefer to the term “theories”. The basis here is that planning itself, the parent of land use, belongs much less to the pristine crystal body of theory than to the swamp of practice. It is by reflecting on such practices, and trying to abstract and generalize on what worked and what did not, that we can move from the center of the swamp to cleaner and firmer ground of better identified “approaches” that one could study, and compare.

Those approaches, and the resulting land use practices, rules and regulations, and the institutions behind them, are the focus of this course, which will draw mainly on the experience of land use planning in Lebanon, and analyze it using comparisons from other contexts. We will be looking at the existing body of laws, tools used to implement them, institutions concerned, their mandates, and how they operate. We will examine these within the wider context of other approaches in other parts of the world in order to facilitate understanding of these laws and institutions, critiquing them where needed.

Objectives

The course proposes to examine the origins of urban and regional land use planning in Lebanon, the forces that helped conceive these specific policies, and how (or if) they are implemented. We will also study the tools used to facilitate the planning process, and their effectiveness. Finally, we will explore the new forces that will have a major role to play in urban land use planning in the next millennium, and the new tools at our disposal to deal with these factors and others that may still originate productively.

Requirements

This course will draw on local resources, and guest lecturers, local and foreign, representing the main actors involved in planning and land use, will be invited to present their perspectives in open seminars. The final requirements for this course will include three short papers, discussing specific questions, and one term paper, with presentation, on a topic that will be determined later.

for further information, contact: mh22@aub.edu.lb, xt.3668