

Professional Project

CMP 6971

Spring 2017

4 Credit Hours

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Introduction: Professional Project is the primary capstone course for students in the Master of City & Metropolitan Planning (MCMP) program. It is intended to serve as an integrative experience where students can synthesize and apply planning and analytic skills developed during the course of their study toward the MCMP degree. Through their professional project, students are provided with opportunities to deepen their comprehension of the theories, concepts, and methods of professional planning in the context of practical, concrete situations.

Instructors: There are two “instructors” for the professional project course: Keith Bartholomew is the convener of regular progress meetings of students engaged in creating their professional projects. But the real instructor is the faculty member who is the student’s advisor for his/her project. Any member of the CMP faculty may serve in this capacity. Faculty from other departments at the university can also serve as advisors, with approval from the MCMP program coordinator. Students are encouraged to seek advisors with skills and interests consonant with the student’s project topic.

Teaching Approach: The development and production of a professional project should occur through a collaborative and iterative process between the student and his/her primary faculty advisor on the project. The advisor’s role is to help direct the student along a constructive path of engagement with the substance of the project topic. Students may expect from his or her advisor input concerning the context of the project’s central issues, effective ways to define and analyze those issues, and suggested approaches to communicate the project’s outcomes. Students may also expect timely and constructive reviews of drafts of the project’s final products, with comments for necessary revision. Students, in turn, are expected to be assertive in seeking constructive and timely communication with their advisor.

Given the centrality of student-advisor interaction to the professional project experience, it is essential that, at the outset of the project development process, students and advisors agree on a schedule that will optimize for iterative dialog. This should be accomplished through thoughtful completion of the Professional Project Approval Form.

Project Development Process: While the specific method used in the development of the project will be left to the student and advisor, many students find it useful to think of project development processes in the form of the traditional comprehensive rational planning model, whose steps include:

1. issue identification,
2. data collection and background analysis,
3. delineation of goals and objectives,
4. identification and assessment of possible alternatives,
5. selection of a choice among alternatives,
6. plan, project or program implementation, and
7. monitoring and assessment of the choice and implementation process.

Structure of Final Product: There is a great deal of variation in the form and structure of the final products created for professional projects. The precise content and dimension of the final product will be developed and agreed upon by the student and his/her advisor through the completion of the Professional Project Approval Form. Many professional projects are completed in the form of a scholarly paper. For these projects, the following norms are recommended:

1. The paper should normally be 30 to 50 pages in length.
2. As a scholarly paper, the project must include a discussion of previously published research relevant to the topic. The project, however, must include more than a review of published research. Students should provide their own assessments/analyses of the research, fairly present contending positions on issues, and adopt and defend a position with respect to those issues.
3. The paper should entail research in sources deemed necessary to provide thorough scholarly coverage of the topic.
4. The paper should address application of research to specific planning contexts.
5. The research and analysis for the paper may address empirical and/or normative literature. It may be historical, legal, ethical, social-scientific, interpretive, phenomenological, and/or critical in method.
6. Students must observe the highest standards of academic honesty, and therefore must clearly indicate where other people's ideas, insights, and/or writing are being used. In no case should a student represent another person's work as their own.
7. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the CMP Writing Style Guide to ensure proper and thorough citation of research sources.

Objectives of the Professional Project: The professional project experience is intended to further acculturate MCMP students into primary function of city and metropolitan planning, which is to assist communities in managing social, economic, and environmental change at a variety of geographic scales within diverse cultural, economic, and ecological contexts. As such, it is expected that successful professional projects will reflect and incorporate the MCMP program's primary goals, which are:

- To integrate environmental sustainability, resilience of the built environment, social equity, and normative economic efficiency. (Goal 1: Core Values)
- To meaningfully engage a diverse society by utilizing interactive communication skills, including active listening, the understanding of a plurality of perspectives, and the ability to effectively communicate with a diverse range of audiences. (Goal 2: Communication)
- To effectively collaborate with students and professionals from the many disciplines and interests that intersect with city & metropolitan planning. (Goal 3: Collaboration)
- To provide leadership in the teaching, research, and practice of planning. (Goal 4: Leadership)
- To seek out and employ new knowledge, methods, and techniques through innovation and creativity. (Goal 5: Innovation)

Student Learning Outcomes: Naturally, the skills emphasized and developed during the creation of professional projects will vary according to the nature of each project, making a precise specification learning outcomes difficult. Nevertheless, it is expected that all students will, through the professional project experience, demonstrate:

- *Research:* ability to assemble and analyze ideas and information from prior planning practice and scholarship, and from primary and secondary sources.
- *Written, Oral, and Graphic Communication:* facility at preparing clear, accurate and compelling text, graphics and maps, and at presenting information orally.
- *Quantitative/Qualitative Methods:* ability to collect and analyze data for forecasting, policy analysis, or design applications.
- *Plan Creation and Implementation:* skill at using the integrative tools that are frequently employed for plan formulation, adoption, and implementation and enforcement functions.
- *Planning Process and Methods:* experience in the structures and practice of effective stakeholder involvement, community engagement, and working with diverse communities.
- *Leadership:* capacity in strategic decision-making, team building, and organizational/ community motivation.

Oral Presentation of Professional Projects: All professional projects are expected to be presented in oral form. Presentations are usually scheduled for the final exam period at the end the term. Faculty and students are invited to observe the presentations and to offer critiques and comments. After the presentation, the faculty advisor will work with the presenting student to determine which, if any, of the comments require alterations in the final project product.

Course Meetings: The Professional Project course will have mandatory meetings for the fall term. The dates/times listed in the university class schedule are slightly inaccurate—they are all Fridays, whereas the class actually meets on Wednesdays. We will meet the Wednesdays of the weeks indicated by the class schedule dates. We may also meet on other days, as agreed to by the group.

Evaluation: Grades for professional projects are assigned by project advisors according to the student's level of achievement in the areas listed above under project objectives and student outcomes.

University of Utah
City & Metropolitan Planning
Professional Project Approval Form

This Form is to be filled out by the student and submitted electronically to the Chair's office for approval (Jeannette.benson@utah.edu). If approved, the student will receive a class number in order to register for the Professional Project course (CMP 6971).

Student: _____ Student I.D. #: _____

Faculty Advisor: _____

Additional Faculty Reader: _____

Semester: _____ Year: _____ Submission Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

Project Description (use the space below, or append a separate page).

I. Objectives of the project:

II. How the project be undertaken (methodology):

III. Final project deliverables:

IV. Timeline for completion of the deliverables.

Signatures of Agreement:

Student

Faculty Project Advisor

Chair Approval: _____ Approval Date: _____