

JPG 1812 Y

Planning for Change: Community Development in Practice

Anna Kramer

Fall 2018/Winter 2019

Fridays from 9am – 12pm

Room 5017

anna.kramer@utoronto.ca

Office hours by appointment

Course Description

Planning for Change is a full-year service learning course that facilitates practical experience in community-engaged planning. Service learning is a reciprocal work placement between students and community partners. Students are placed with an organization in the public or nonprofit sector for one day per week, on average, from early October to late March to work in community development and planning. Placement organizations practice a range of planning-related work, including housing, transportation, social planning, and environmental issues. We meet as a class in a seminar format to support the students work, reflect on theory and practice, and learn from their experience.

This is a challenging course that applies theory to practice (praxis). This works well when students are matched with placements by skills and interests and are open to learning and contributing; and when community partners can offer enough guidance and structure to support the work while allowing the student to develop their skills and experience. Our community partners value your work, and we maintain ongoing relationships with them. This placement can fulfill the internship requirement for MscPI students.

The objectives of the service-learning placement are to allow graduate students to assist community groups or municipal planning departments in real-world community planning projects, to practice diverse planning skills, and begin to build longer-term commitments to communities and neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

Learning Objectives

The main learning goals of the course are:

- to develop practical research skills and a critical understanding of the opportunities and limitations of applying theoretical approaches in professional settings and to develop a further understanding of crucial and timely issues within urban communities
- to incorporate the practice of critical reflection and apply a critical awareness of positionality and praxis into planning work
- to learn through practice about community engaged work, community service learning, and reciprocal university-community learning
- to develop effective planning, collaboration, and communication skills in creating and following a project proposal in conjunction with community partners
- to complete a professional-quality project in community planning and/or community-based development

Organization

There are several touchpoints throughout the academic year to structure the placement:

- In September, I introduce the community placements, including a description of the organization, the kind of work they do, and some projects they have in mind for the student to work on. These could evolve and change over the year, but it helps to give a sense of the placement. I ask students to choose three placements they are interested in. I interview them individually to get a sense of their skills, interests and facility, and match them with placements. There may also be a conversation with the potential community partner before placements are made.
- Once students are matched with placements, you meet with their community partner. (There is some paperwork to cover insurance and liability for the unpaid placement – this is a standardized legal agreement between your organization and the University of Toronto Centre for Community Partnerships.)

You will develop a work plan and schedule to guide their work for the year. The student will work for one day per week, either at their location or independently, and have regular check-ins with their supervisor. There is some flexibility if it makes sense for you to group your work into more continuous times if you have a particular deadline or event, followed by a pause.

- I will check in with the community partners before the winter break in mid-December to see how things are going. Placements will continue in January until March.
- In the spring, at the end of the semester, the students will present their work. Community partners are invited and encouraged to attend and be part of the discussion. There will also be an opportunity to share their comments on the student placement with me and/or the student at the end of the course. Students will be evaluated on their course participation, their placement work plan and work report, and in-class workshop and reflection.

Schedule

Friday, September 14	Introduction to placements
Friday, September 21	Interviews
Friday, September 28	Placement contracts Discuss project proposal and work planning: Cultivating your community partner as a mentor Setting realistic goals for your project. (You will have 20-25 work days with your community partner over the academic year).
Friday, October 5	No class – meet with your community partner and start your regular placement
Friday, October 12	Praxis, reflexivity, and service learning Your positionality with the community partner - Reflection and discussion

Why are you interested in this course?

How do you define planning?

What is it about this placement that you are committed to?

How do your identity, experiences and background shape your approach to this placement?

What do you hope to learn? What do you hope to contribute?

Readings:

Ward, K. & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2000). Community-Centered Service Learning: Moving from *doing for* to *doing with*

Allahwala, A., Bunce, S., Beagrie, L. et al. (2013). Building and Sustaining Community Partnerships in Marginalized Urban Areas *Journal of Geography* 112, 43-57

Reference for discussion:

Rankin, K. (2010). Reflexivity and post-colonial critique: Toward an ethics of accountability in planning praxis. *Planning Theory*, 9(3), 181-199.

Friday, October 19 Project proposal, work plan and paperwork due
Placements - Reflection and discussion

What are the biggest challenges and issues that the work you will be doing attempts to address? How are these problems framed? Are there any problems that you can think of with the way these problems are defined?

Who are you working for and with? Who are you responsible and accountable to?

What definition of planning does this placement emphasize?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this?

How can we as a class help you with this placement?

Friday, October 26 No class – continue work placement

Friday, November 2 No class – continue work placement

Friday, November 9 Introduction to workshops – bringing interesting questions to the group
Practice workshop

Friday, November 16 No class – continue work placement

Friday, November 23 Workshop

Friday, November 30 Workshop

Friday, January 11 Mid-year communication

Friday, January 18 No class – continue work placement

Friday, January 25 Workshop

Friday, February 1 Workshop

Friday, February 8 Workshop

Friday, February 15 No class – continue work placement

Friday, February 22 Workshop

Friday, March 1 Workshop as needed

Friday, March 8 Workshop as needed

Friday, March 15 Intro to presentations, report and reflection

Friday, March 22 Presentations

Friday, March 29 Presentations

Friday, April 5 Report and Reflection

Course work

Project proposal and work plan (10)

Students will collaborate with their assigned community partner to plan their work for the year, which could take the form of a specific project or projects.

Workshop (30)

In the student-led workshops, through presentations, discussion, readings, and participation, we will grapple with the highlights and challenges of a broad range of planning practices and learn from your placement experiences. This will be an opportunity to think through diverse issues in community planning and community-based development as a group. We will update the course outline with workshop readings and topics as they are scheduled.

Workshop participation (20)

Participate substantively in at least 5 workshops and in class discussion and reflections.

Report and reflection (30)

Describe the work you did with your community partner. Reflect on what you contributed and what you learned, surprises and challenges. How does this experience of practice inform your understanding of planning and community development? Draw from relevant scholarly literature for this discussion. Please append any work deliverables for your community partner. This could be a literature review, policy analysis, documentation of an event that you organized, etc. The final project deliverable will vary by placement and will have evolved with the work conducted over the course of the placement.

Presentation (10)

At the end of the year, students will present to the class and community partners that provides an overview of the project work conducted during the placement along with key learning experiences. Community partners are invited to attend the final presentations.

Accessibility Needs

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please let us know and contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Course Website

The course website is available through the University of Toronto quercus/canvas site (g.utoronto.ca). All students enrolled in the class should be able to view the link to the course once they enter the portal using their UTORID and password. All course materials will be posted on the website, and assignments can be uploaded here.

Writing

Clear writing and communicating is essential. You will be expected to write clearly and effectively on assignments. The University provides some resources through the writing centres located on campus: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/centres/arts-and-science>). Brief advice on specific

elements of writing for university courses can also be found at (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>).
Your writing should be your own.

Confirmed Community partners and projects

City of Toronto

- Affordable Housing Office – public consultation for a 10-year housing plan
- Strategic Initiatives and Policy Analysis – Major transit station areas and employment lands
- Heritage Planning – feasibility of city-wide heritage survey
- Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy – resident engagement and program evaluation
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Office – research and policy development on various initiatives
- Toronto Food Strategy – food resilience planning

Toronto District School Board

- Rose Avenue Public School Grade 1 class – teaching 6 & 7 year-olds about community, greenspace, urban planning
- George Webster Public School – community outreach with parents

- Park People - State of the Parks report
- Toronto Centre for Active Transportation – Complete Streets Initiative
- Greenest City – Milky Way Garden
- Evergreen - Housing Action Lab
- Jay Pitter – social urbanism practice
- Neptis Foundation – growth planning
- Working Women Community Centre – Golden Mile impact study

Possible Placements

- Friends of the Greenbelt
- East Scarborough Storefront/Connected Communities
- Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
- Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
- Federation of Metro Tenants
- Social Planning Toronto
- Canadian Urban Institute
- Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network
- Collective Community Building Initiative (Moss Park)
- Toronto Environmental Alliance