

LA1517HS City Builders Lab: How Good Policies Are Made

City Builders Lab: How Good Policies Are Made aims to bust the myth that cities only get built by professionals. Modern day cities get built by a dynamic array of actors- across the private, public, charitable and social purpose sector - each bringing a diverse background, a unique approach and a unique lens to how they shape our social, environmental, economic and physical infrastructure. Further, people building effective policies for 21st century cities benefit from having a diverse set of skills, including: familiarity with ideas such as design thinking, an appreciation of social power, privilege and class dynamics, as well as an understanding of how to use narrative and values to inspire action. This class will explore what a more inclusive and holistic approach to city building looks like. It will vary in its delivery, providing a unique experience from class to class. Classes will include: facilitated discussion, group challenges, hands-on-activities, dialogue-based lectures, and engagement with top city builders, all focused on bringing an introduction to concepts and techniques from a variety of disciplines outside of Urban Planning. The diversity in methods/approaches will increase students' comfort levels around working collaboratively, interactively and in real-time. Students will come away with an expanded appreciation of the different ways in which dynamic cities are built and a set of tools to ensure they can understand and address the human-complexities that are embedded in the act of Urban Planning.

How to Build Better Policy and Better Cities

Objectives:

- Gain analytical tools: Students will be introduced to a variety of conceptual frameworks for considering public policy and social issues, enabling them to take a more holistic approach to city policy
- Gain applied skills: Students will be introduced to a set of new skills to add to their city building toolbox, in areas such as human-centred design, public narrative and working with interdisciplinary teams
- Exposure to alternative career paths: A dynamic set of guest speakers students will give students a chance to consider the various ways that city building takes place

Weekly Format

Each week will be customized to the topic, potential guest speakers and activities taking place. But generally seminars will follow the model of:

- Introduction: 15-minutes of house-keeping and context setting
- Presentation: A 30-minute talk by a speaker (internal/external) who understands the topic
- Class Activity:

The content of this will vary but include:

- 60-minute facilitated/moderated conversation
- 60-minute small group activities, including potentially team challenges
- 60-minute student presentations or report back on assigned activities
- 5-minute, close debrief 'what's happening next week?'

Topics and Themes

There are 3 core modules for the class. The specific lecture order within a module may change based on availability of guest speakers and other content. But it will follow the general order laid out here:

WEEK 1 - Introduction

WEEK 2-5

ANALYTICAL SKILLS FOR CITY BUILDING

- Bringing an anti-oppressive and intersectional approach to city building
- Blindspots! Understanding how bad policies get made: Class Divides and Class Cluelessness
- Blindspots! Understanding how bad policies get made: Anti-politics and Technocracy
- Values Based Leadership

WEEK 6-8

APPLIED SKILLS IN CITYBUILDING

- Human-centred design + participatory policy
- How to lead an inter-disciplinary team
- An Introduction to Public Narrative

WEEK 8-11

DYNAMIC PATHS TO CITYBUILDING

- The Advocates and Activists
- The Independents, the unaffiliated, the credential-less
- Institutional Citybuilders (public, private, charitable, philanthropic/think tank)

WEEK 12- The Danger of a Single Story

Grading

Participation 40%

- Attendance
- In-class engagement

Briefing note #1: Analytical Skills 20%

Briefing note #2: Applied Skills 20%

Citybuilder presentation: Dynamic Paths to Citybuilding 20%

Reading List

A detailed reading list for each week will be provided first day of classes and will include articles, books, video and audio. Below are some core sources of content that will appear in the course:

Couchman, Robert (1992) "The Politics of Resistance to Change in Innovative Programming"
<https://thephilanthropist.ca/1992/10/the-politics-of-resistance-to-change-in-innovative-programming/>

Davidson, Brett (2016) "The role of narrative change in influencing policy" On Think Tanks
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/the-role-of-narrative-change-in-influencing-policy/>

Ferguson, James (1994) "The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho

Gehl, Jan (2010) "Cities for People" Island Pres

Kee, Triss (2014) "We Own The City: Enabling Community Practice in Architecture and Planning"
Valiz/Trancity

Lydon, Mike (2015) "Tactical Urbanism: Short Term Action for Long-Term Change" Island Press

TED Talk: Simon Sinek "Start with Why"

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en