

Syllabus: JPG 2150H: Toronto Urban Landscapes Field Course: Planning, Politics, and Development

Friday afternoons starting at 1:00 and extending up to 5:00 on fieldtrip days
Couse Room TBS

Instructor

Paul Hess

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Office Hours: by appointment



Left: Demolition of Regent Park social housing tower with new condos in background; credit: Vik Pahwa, Urban Toronto Flickr Photo Stream. Right: Elmhurst Drive, Kipling Heights, Rexdale, ca. 1970; credit: City of Toronto Archives Series 497, Subseries 5, File 10.

Course Description

This course examines the planning history of Toronto's post-war landscapes using local field trips linked to readings and seminars. Using historical perspectives on the changing character of selected areas, the course explores the planning, creation, reproduction, and evolution of the city's landscapes over time. The course will address the political economy of modernist planning and urbanism, metropolitan development, and the key dynamics of urban change in Toronto after 1945 with attention paid to the role of changing ideas about planning and normative models of built form. Themes such as changing social geographies, polarization, and gentrification will be explored in the context of specific neighbourhoods and places. We will also practice observing the current built environments for their urban design qualities and discuss current planning issues and initiatives.

The course uses a compressed format. Field trips will serve as class and discussion time and will extend beyond scheduled class times. There will be ten class sessions in total plus individual meetings between the instructor and students. The course will start with two on-line class sessions, followed by five field trips, and a wrap-up seminar. Extra dates will be held for make-up field trips due to weather considerations. After formal field trip and class time sessions, the remaining weeks of the semester will be for researching final research papers and individual meetings with the instructor, with two final class sessions held for student presentations.

Please note that field tours will be primarily conducted by walking, and any students who may encounter obstacles to walking several kilometers should contact me immediately to try to arrange accommodation.

Learning Outcomes

Students will practice “reading the city” by critically assessing historical and theoretical literature and discussing iterative to actual built environments on the ground. This double reading (of the literature and the city) will be discursive and integrative and will help students:

- Develop an understanding of the major processes shaping Toronto’s post-World War Two landscape;
- Develop a critical understanding of the impact and limits of planning ideas, policies and practices;
- Build a vocabulary to describe and communicate these relationships;
- Practice observation skills of current built environment
- Practice recording field information through notes, photography, and other methods;
- Develop critical thinking, reading, writing, and research skills.

Course Organization

Course materials including announcements, readings, and assignments are available on Quercus.

Class delivery

The first two sessions will be delivered online in accordance with University guidelines. The Zoom link will be posted on the Quercus page before class.

The next five sessions will be delivered in the field and students are expected to be at an arranged meeting place at the start of class time. The initial locations will be in central Toronto within 15-20 minutes of travel time from the St. George Campus. Tours will be by walking and will extend beyond 3:00, but end before 5:00. I anticipate that two tours will be conducted by van, car, or possibly transit, depending on the size of the class. These tours will depart from Sidney Smith Hall.

A final in-class seminar will wrap up the semester for general discussion, and then the class will break until the end of term, at which time, students will be expected to give a short presentation of their research findings to the rest of the class. In between the final seminar and class presentations, I will arrange individual meeting times with each student to go over their research project.

Assignments and Evaluation

The following components are used for establishing grading:

1. Active participation in field discussions;
2. Five reading reflections (one associated with each fieldtrip);
3. A field report drawing on observations from at least two field trips;
4. A research paper based on course themes drawing on academic and other sources, including field observations if relevant. Part of this assignment is to make a short, class-presentation of your findings at end of term.

1. Active Participation in Field Discussions

Weight: 20%

This course is conceived of as a seminar course that takes place in the field. Although I will have determined tour routes that showcase particular planning ideas and the city's planning and development history, all students are expected to participate in discussions during the tours. This includes making observations and asking questions. It is expected that students do not miss any field tours. If something comes up where you cannot avoid this, you must talk to me beforehand.

2. Five Reading Reflections, One for Readings Associated with Each Field Tour

Due Date: Each is due before midnight on the day before the relevant tour.

Weight: 15% (total)

Each summary should be about a page. Reflections can identify main arguments, make links between readings, and raise critical questions about planning. Summaries should be submitted via Quercus.

3. Field Report

Due date: Reports can be submitted anytime up to Friday, Nov. 5.

Weight: 20%

This is an approximately five- to seven-page double spaced report that reflects on at least two field tours and their associated readings. This is not intended to be a formal, academic exercise, but where you can be a bit experimental or expansive with your thinking by exploring relationships between the written material and what you observed in the field, particularly thinking about some relationship between planning ideas and built and social environments. You may incorporate ideas from class discussions, use your field notes, and include visual material such as photographs or sketches. You can also draw on other sources but are not required to. Reports should be in the range of 1,500-2000 words. Be prepared to talk about your approach in the wrap-up seminar after the field tours. I recommend that you prepare the field report when the field tours are still fresh in your mind, but you must submit your report on Quercus before Friday, Nov. 5.

4. Research Paper and Presentation

Due date: Presentations will be scheduled for Friday, November 26 and December 3. Final papers will be due December 10.

Weight: 40%

The assignment is an academic research paper focused on a theme drawn from the course. The focus should address planning, development, and built form in some part of the Toronto region. You should

use secondary sources including the scholarly literature but can also draw on other sources such as professional reports, news articles, and social media feeds. Sources such as Airbnb listings, for example, might give some insight into housing in certain neighbourhoods. You should also feel free to draw on your own observations, mappings, etc.

As a rough guideline only, papers should be in the range of 2,500-3500 word range (10-14 pages double spaced). Visual analysis, mapping, or other modes of communication will be considered as well as writing – so a more visual paper may have less writing. All papers should, however, have a clear introduction with research question or argument and be appropriately contextualized in terms of previous research.

As part of the paper, students will be required to give a 10 minute presentation on their topic, basic argument, and findings on either November 26 or December 3. Presentations (as PowerPoints or PDF's) and papers should be submitted via Quercus by December 10.

I will be setting up individual meetings with students during November to discuss their paper topics and support their research.

Late Penalties

Reading reflections will not be accepted late. Late penalties of 5% per day will be applied to the field report and term paper. These will not be accepted more than 1 week after due date. Extensions without penalty will be granted for reasons of accommodation, illness or emergencies when appropriate documentation is submitted to the instructor.

Course Schedule

September 10 – Introduction

Theme: What to expect from this course. Brief description of proposed tours.

No Readings

September 17 – Reading the City

Themes: Reading Urban Landscapes. Urban landscapes by and for Whom?

Readings:

Jacobs, A. (1985). "Clues," and "Seeing Change." In *Looking At Cities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 30-83 and 99-107. ISBN: 0674538919.

King, H. (2021). Rising Like a Cloud: New Histories of "Old" Toronto. In D. Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, & B. Wright-McLeod (Eds.), *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (pp. 9–16). Coach House Books.

Bondi, L. (1992). Gender symbols and urban landscapes. *Progress in Human Geography*, 16(2), 157–170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030913259201600201>

Schindler, S. (2015). Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment. *The Yale Law Journal*, 124(6), 1934–2024.

Selection of other Readings:

Cuff, D., Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Presner, T. (2020). *Urban Humanities: New Practices for Reimagining the City*. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/11666.001.0001>. See especially: Chapter 1: Introducing Urban Humanities, and Chapter 3:

Pitter, J., & Lorinc, J. (2016). *Subdivided: City-Building in an Age of Hyper-Diversity*. Coach House Books.

History of Tkaronto research guide, UofT library: <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/Toronto>

Kallus, R. (2001). From Abstract to Concrete: Subjective Reading of Urban Space. *Journal of Urban Design*, 6(2), 129–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574800120057818>

Valverde, M. (2009). Laws of the Street. *City & Society*, 21(2), 163–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2009.01020.x>

Lan, S. (2016). "Race and the Politics of Space." In E. Brown & T. Shortell (Eds.), *Walking in cities: Quotidian mobility as urban theory, method, and practice* (pp. 43–59). Temple University Press.

September 24 – Tour 1: Pre-World War Two Development Patterns in Central Toronto

Themes: Property and Development before formal Urban Planning. Scale of development. Gentrification of public space (1).

Tour location: Neighbourhoods west of St. George Campus (Seaton Village, Little Italy), Dundas Street and Kensington Market.

Readings:

Baird, G. (1978). "Theory/Vacant Lots in Toronto." *Design Quarterly* 108: 16-39.

Li, N. (2018). Kensington Market—An Urban Neighbourhood, a Cultural Metaphor. In *Kensington Market: Collective Memory, Public History, and Toronto's Urban Landscape* (pp. 12–35). University of Toronto Press, <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442616370>

Hackworth, J., & Rekers, J. (2005). Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighborhoods in Toronto. *Urban Affairs Review*, 41(2), 211–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087405280859>

Selection of other Readings:

Brace, C. (1995). Public Works in the Canadian City; the Provision of Sewers in Toronto 1870–1913. *Urban History Review*, 23(2), 33–43. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016632ar>

Mackintosh, P. G. (2017). *Newspaper city: Toronto's street surfaces and the liberal press, 1860-1935*. University of Toronto Press.

October 1 – Tour 2: Post-War Planning's Project of Modernizing the Pre-War City

Themes: Institutionalization of Planning, Urban Renewal and Redevelopment, Modernist Apartment and the Modern CBC

Tour location: East Side Downtown including St. James Town, Downtown Toronto

Readings:

Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto' Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 41-60.

Robert Lewis and Paul Hess, "Refashioning Urban Space in Post-War Toronto: The Wood-Wellesley Redevelopment Area, 1952-1972," *Planning Perspectives*, 31 (2016): 563-84

Eric Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline, 1937-1969* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 64-99.

Gunter Gad and Deryck Holdsworth, "Corporate capitalism and the emergence of the high-rise office building," *Urban Geography* 8 (1987): 212-31.

Graham Todd, "'Going global' in the semi-periphery: world cities as political projects. The case of Toronto" in Paul Knox and Peter Taylor (eds.), *World Cities in a World-System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 192-212

October 8 – Tour 3: Contemporary Planning Initiatives in the Neo-Liberal City

Themes: Post Modern Planning and the Condo City

Tour location: St. Lawrence District, King and Parliament District, Distillery District, Canary District, Regent Park

Readings:

Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto' Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 61-93.

J. David Hulchanski, *Planning New Urban Neighbourhoods: Lessons from Toronto's St Lawrence Neighborhood* (UBC Planning Papers, Canadian Planning Issues #28, 1990).

Gillad Rosen and Alan Walks, "Castles in Toronto's sky: condo-ism as urban transformation," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 37 (2014): 289-310

October 15 – Tour 4: The Modernist Suburb

Themes: Suburban Development Under Metro Toronto; Retrofitting Sprawl; Contemporary Polarization in the Inner Suburbs

Auto Tour Location: Thorncliffe Park, Don Mills, the Peanut, Agincourt, North York Centre

Readings:

Zhuang, Z. C., & Chen, A. X. (2017). The role of ethnic retailing in retrofitting suburbia: Case studies from Toronto, Canada. *Journal of Urbanism*, 10(3), 275–295.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2016.1254671>

Poppe, W., & Young, D. (2015). The Politics of Place: Place-making versus Densification in Toronto's Tower Neighbourhoods. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39(3), 613–621.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12196>

Sorensen, A., & Hess, P. (2015). Building suburbs, Toronto-style: Land development regimes, institutions, critical junctures and path dependence. *The Town Planning Review; Liverpool*, 86(4), 411–436.

<https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.2015.26>

Keil, R. (2015). Towers in the Park, Bungalows in the Garden: Peripheral Densities, Metropolitan Scales and the Political Cultures of Post-Suburbia. *Built Environment*, 41(4), 579–596.

<https://doi.org/10.2148/benv.41.4.579>

October 22 – Tour 5: The Post-Modern Suburbs

Themes: New Urbanism, Suburban Centres, Hyper Diversity
Auto Tour Location: Markham Centre, Cornell

Readings:

Pierre Filion, "Suburban mixed-use centres and urban dispersion: what differences do they make," *Environment and Planning A*, 33 (2001): 141-60

Xu, J. L. (2017). Is New Urbanism changing the suburban development pattern? A case study of the Toronto region. *Journal of Urban Design*, 22(6), 812–832.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2017.1337494>

Hackworth, J., & Stein, K. (2012). The Collision of Faith and Economic Development in Toronto's Inner Suburban Industrial Districts. *Urban Affairs Review* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), 48(1), 37–63.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087411420374>

October 29 – Make-up date if Needed

November 5 – Wrap up Seminar

Topic: General Discussion from field tours. Discussion of field reports.

November 6 – November 25 – No Class; Individual Meetings to be Scheduled.

November 26 – Student Presentations (1)

December 3 – Student Presentations (2)

Departmental Course Policies

The department's full [Graduate Course Policies](#) apply to all courses offered.

Accessibility Services

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations because you are disabled, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Where there is an accommodation recommended by [Accessibility Services](#), the department and/or instructors will be provided with an accommodation letter.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct by graduate students is taken very seriously. The University's policy on academic misconduct is found in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) (the Code). Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. For example, it is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Regarding plagiarism, the Code includes the following statements:

B.i.1. It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

(d) to represent as one's own idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.

Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing," the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Other academic offences include the possession and/or use of unauthorized aids in examinations, submitting the same paper for different courses without the knowledge of the instructors, forgery (whether of academic records or other documents), concocting facts or references to sources, personating someone, and other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty. Please refer to sections B.i.1. and B.i.3. in the Code for detailed descriptions of offences applicable to students.

The [SGS Academic Integrity Resources webpage](#) outlines the policy on academic misconduct and the process for handling an allegation of academic misconduct.

Religious Accommodations

Students must alert instructors in a timely fashion to any upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, exams or other compulsory activities at these times. In the case of an unavoidable conflict with a compulsory activity, every reasonable effort is made to give students the opportunity to make up missed work.

Copyright in Instructional Settings

If a student wishes to record (tape, video, photograph, etc.) any lecture presentations or other similar materials provided by the instructor; the instructor's written consent must be obtained beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is infringement of copyright and prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

Extension Requests

The authority to grant an extension to submit coursework beyond the sessional grade deadline is with the department and not the instructor of the course. To request a formal extension beyond a grade deadline, students must submit a Coursework Extension Form, completed by both the student and course instructor, to the relevant graduate department prior to the final grade deadline.

In order to ensure fairness in granting extensions, the department must be reasonably certain that:

- The reasons for delay are serious and substantiated.
- The student is not granted unfair advantage over other students in the course.
- The student has a reasonable chance of completing the outstanding work within the time allotted.
- The normal and satisfactory completion of any new coursework is not in jeopardy.

Extension requests for medical reasons (e.g. short-term illness) must be accompanied by a medical note. Extension requests for students with accommodations due to disability must be supported by

documentation from Accessibility Services. Extension requests for other reasons must be detailed in the form or a note to the department.

Mental Health Statement

As a student at U of T, you may experience circumstances and challenges that can affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There is no wrong time to reach out, which is why there are resources available for every situation and every level of stress.

Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources, including:

- [Geography & Planning Mental Health Support Website](#)
- [Graduate Wellness Services](#)
- [Student Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Emergency support if you're feeling distressed](#)

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Other Student Services and Support Resources

- [Links to Additional Student Services and Support Resources](#) (general services and support for students, international student support, Health & Wellness, financial aid and professional development)