Course Description
In this course, students will explore in theory, policy and practice community engagement through a case study (e.g., Chicago Transit Authority Red Line Extension project), and observe actual planning and decision-making processes at different scales and contexts. Students will learn different tools and strategies that bring people together, particularly in low-income neighborhoods and culturally diverse metropolitan regions. Collectively, students will design a participatory process. Throughout the semester, students will make field trips to stakeholder communities and planning agencies, and grapple with the myriad challenges and dilemmas faced by nonprofit advocates, community activists, and equity-oriented public planners.

Course Objectives
At the conclusion of this course, students will have acquired the following capabilities:

1. Comprehend the processes and dynamics of community engagement in facilitating urban planning objectives, including assessing power relations between community residents and political actors (power analysis);

2. Be able to identify issue areas, how to “cut” an issue, create visualizations of alternative or future scenarios with community residents, ascertain potential conflicts between urban fast growth and equity-oriented criteria used in decision-making and select practical alternatives, as well as develop and communicate community-based equity alternatives in a professional manner.

3. Understand how planners engage underserved communities undergoing structural changes due to socioeconomic forces, e.g., unemployment, housing and educational crises, or urban redevelopment, while investigating the contexts in which planning decisions are made.

4. Understand how planners collaborate with community stakeholders and within their own teams work through differences in order to process decisions collectively.

5. Learn scoping practices of planning agencies used to design engagement and outreach initiatives for the purpose of eliciting, measuring and communicating community responses.

6. Learn how to translate community engagement objectives and results into the legal, policy and administrative terms of planning implementation.

7. Learn and combine a cross-section of community engagement skills, including writing, public speaking, strategic planning, visualizing, and designing organizational spaces of collaboration.

8. Learn how to make professional planning assessments and judgments consistent with social justice and equity norms, which often conflict with efficiency and sustainability criteria.
Course Format and Grade Components

The course will be a combination of lectures, discussions, collaborative work in class and in the field (two field trips).

Student grades comprise the following activities:

1. Active Participation & Attendance 10%
2. Short Essays 15%
3. Discussion Leader 15%
4. Assignment 1: Individual Community Meeting Analysis Memo 15%
5. Assignment 2: Team Community Engagement Impact Memo 20%
6. Assignment 3: Team Community Engagement Plan 25%

Active Participation and Attendance. Because there will be much discussion among the members of the class, students must be diligent doing the required readings assigned to specific days and come prepared to ask questions and make comments. In addition, students are encouraged to keep notes in a systematic way. This is an important habit to develop as future researchers, scholars, planners and policy makers. Students should bring the reading material and their notes to class.

Short Essays. Undergraduate Students Only. All the reading is required. However, for a deeper reflection, undergraduate students will write four short essays. This entails picking two weeks and writing two essays for each of those weeks. For the Tuesday readings, summarize the major points about community engagement, then that same week analyze the Thursday reading using the Tuesday reading as an analytical lens. The essays should be approximately 750 words. Essays are due before class the day that the reading is discussed. Readings should be selected from weeks 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 or 14.

Discussion Leader. Graduate Students Only. Graduate students will be responsible for leading the discussions for an entire week during the semester. This entails creating a one-page handout with discussion questions about the required reading and facilitating a discussion on a Tuesday. A student will then lead the class through a discussion of the Thursday reading using the Tuesday reading as an analytical lens. The discussion leaders should expect that everyone is fully prepared to summarize the major ideas in each assigned reading and able to give a brief critique of those readings as well. Discussion leaders should meet with the instructor a few weeks in advance to discuss what they hope to accomplish in the classroom discussion (the discussion leader should have done the reading before the meeting). Reading should be selected from weeks 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 or 14.

Assignment 1: Individual Community Meeting Analysis Memo. The aim of this assignment is to observe different strategies planners use to engage communities and stakeholders in the plan-making process. For the individual memo, students will analyze three different community engagement processes to learn how public input is attained. Students must attend at least one public/community meeting in person. The other two may include some combination of additional meetings, like an on-line survey or video from the “Great Footage of BAD public meetings”
The memo should be 1,000 words and will compare the approaches to soliciting community input and engagement.

Assignment 2: Team Community Engagement Impact Memo. The purpose of this team memo is to analyze community engagement with communities impacted in the case study chosen for the class. This will give students an opportunity to observe and analyze different formats and contexts for community engagement, as well as explore alternatives and tradeoffs between different processes. Teams will decide on the focus of their memo, e.g., a planning phase, issue area or environmental impact. Field trips, class discussion, and reading materials will provide much of the content needed to produce the memo. The memo should be 1,000 words and will compare the approaches of soliciting community input and engagement.

Assignment 3: Engagement Plan – Engaging Residents at the Neighborhood Level. This class will engage community-organizing initiatives involved in the case study. Students will assess the level, scale and intensity of engagement and advocacy of community stakeholders involved in the case study to determine the scope of their community engagement plan. The class will collaborate with community residents and organizations, activists, public officials, planners and policy-makers in developing a three-year collaborative plan to facilitate public input for the case study. Moreover, the class will be attuned to the challenging fiscal and policy environment of the case study. Each student will be a member of a team, which will assess the intersection of three local and regional trends or patterns with the potential to impact the case study initiative. Because racial and socioeconomic inequalities form the context of the intersectionality of local and regional trends, students’ community engagement plan must include some assessment of how these may affect future planning scenarios. The different teams will be assembled into a community engagement plan for the case study.

Course Themes (weekly schedule)

Week 1. What is community engagement?
Week 2. Why does planning equity matters and how to deploy it as a community engagement frame?
Week 3. What problem is the case study initiative supposed to be answer?
Week 4. Solving Problems through Community Engagement [Field trip to community areas]
Week 5. Analyzing & Evaluating Engagement & Participation
Week 6. Organizing and Engaging Stakeholders
Week 7. Activating Space & Testing Ideas through Community Engagement
Week 8. Incorporating Public Input into Plans
Week 9. Engaging Stakeholders in Planning Continued [Field trip to planning agencies]
Week 10. Determining Community Priorities: Participatory Budgeting
Week 11. Engaging Communities by Mapping Community Problems
Week 12. Problem Solving through Negotiation, Mediation and Consensus Building
Week 13. FALL BREAK
Week 14. Partnering for Implementation and Impact
Week 15. Final community plans presented in class
Week 16. Class community engagement plan presented in class
Readings (in sequential order)

Week 1


T. Nabatchi and I. Mergel, Participation 2.0: Using Internet and Social Media Technologies to Promote Distributed Democracy and Create Digital Neighborhoods (2010), 8pp.


Week 2


Week 3

The Case for Transit-Oriented Development in the Greater Roseland Area, A report prepared for and in association with Developing Communities Project by the Voorhees Center (2005), 88pp (plus appendix, 52pp).

L. Turner, Organizing for Power & Policy Wins: Thinking Regionally, Organizing Locally (Wetmore Lecture power point, 2015), 33 slides.

Week 4

IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox – Small and Large Group Problem-Solving Techniques, 2pp.


Dialogue and Deliberation in Practice: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6EA2A90FF6BB03BF (Watch a couple of videos).
Week 5


Week 6


Week 7


What Will Your Station Look Like? A Summary Report of the Developing Communities Project Community Visioning Session for the Proposed Red Line Extension, prepared in collaboration with Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) (2010), 22pp.

Week 8
G. Sandoval and J. Rongerude, Telling a Story that Must Be Heard: Participatory Indicators as Tools for Community Empowerment (2015), 403-414.

Week 9


Week 10


Rebecca Abers on Participatory Budgeting, Porto Alegre, Brazil

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=porta+alegra+participatory+budgeting+video&&view=detail&mid=B121A7D14BB1DC8A4219B121A7D14BB1DC8A4219&rvsmid=9FE0802769148434DF049FE0802769148434DF04&FORM=VDQVAP.

L. Turner, Red Line Extension Trust Fund: Sources for a Corridor Funding Pool [power point] (August 2012), 12 slides.

DCP and Voorhees Center, Transit Linked Development Equity Index, meeting power point (March 2009), 11 slides.

Week 11


Graphic Recording Videos: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0B5F6BEBAC8CBFC2 (watch a couple of these).

Week 12


How to Facilitate Videos: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL344B612CF74144E7](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL344B612CF74144E7) (watch a couple of these).


**Week 13**  
**FALL BREAK**

**Week 14**


Kubisch, et al., Strengthening the Connections between Communities and External Resources. In Voices from the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community Change (Aspen Institute, 2002), 78-99.
