

Reading Tips and Study Questions: Introductory Session—September 5th

Required reading

1. Read pp.1-7 of the syllabus, plus the “schedule at a glance,” carefully.
2. **Friedmann**, pp.21-29 (starting with “The uses of planning”) in *Planning in the Public Domain*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987.
3. **(TEXTBOOK) Klosterman**. “Arguments for and against planning,” pp.86-101 in *Readings in Planning Theory*, edited by Scott Campbell and Susan Fainstein. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003.

Tips and questions

Each of these sheets is like the rudder on a supertanker: Small in scale but really important. We'll use these sheets to provide “connective tissue” for the course, outlining the sequence of ideas and key debates on which we will focus in Gateway, punctuating important transitions between segments of the course, and in other ways illuminating *why* we're doing the work we're doing, step by step. Always read these tips and questions before doing the assigned reading for the session.

We have two aims in the first few sessions of the course: Becoming a group that can learn effectively together, in both small settings (discussion sections) and large ones (class meetings and workshops); and scanning the origins and expectations of modern planning just enough to begin the team exercise—focused on New Orleans—in week two.

We'll do the “scanning” in broad terms at first, but we'll try as much as possible to connect big ideas to practical dilemmas in the cases we use, starting right away in session one (we'll use a video case in class, so there's no case narrative to read for this particular session).

Context for what you'll read: You'll note immediately that much writing about “planning” is focused on so-called Western planning, i.e. planning after the mid-19th century in Europe and North America, and to a lesser degree on planning in the former Soviet Bloc and the developing world.

Complex systems of order and planning (broadly defined) obviously go back to ancient kingdoms and empires, such as the Roman and Persian Empires and beyond (Egypt, 2900 BC?), and China had large, elaborate systems of planned intervention—to build great cities and a Great Wall, as early as 214

BC—many centuries before Europe’s intellectual re-awakening a half millennium ago. This is something for us to talk about, and it’s something that Friedmann addresses thoughtfully in the excerpt we’ve assigned for this first session. For now, the important thing is that the most *influential* planning—for good or ill—is the form that developed and defined its role with the rise of the industrial city in Europe and North America—and also, though physical planners are not so aware of it, with the effort to efficiently fight two world wars. Understanding what’s influential is critical, though it’s very distinct from understanding all that is good or desirable or original.

Read pp.1-7 of the syllabus carefully (on basic mechanics and schedule of the course) so you can identify any questions you want to ask, plus the “schedule at a glance” of course units, assignments, and such, and then the questions below, to go with the brief excerpt by Friedmann and the *Readings in Planning Theory* (hereafter, “RPT”) article by Klosterman listed above (you read the Klosterman piece as part of the “Reading critically” summer module online).

For many sessions but not all, the Powerpoint slides we use in class will be available on the course website at least a day or two in advance, should you wish to print them out and bring them to class to help you take notes.

Questions for class prep and discussion sections:

1. What historical and intellectual changes accompany the origins of modernist “rational” planning after the 18th century, according to **Friedmann**? Setting aside for the moment its many specific forms (economic planning, etc.), in what key ways does modernist planning differ from what he calls “orthogonal design,” which is a much more ancient practice?
2. **Klosterman** outlines the decline of modernist planning in some societies, and the erosion of its claims to legitimacy, following a golden age at mid-20th century. (One could note, at this point, that such expert-led, top-down planning is on the *rise* in other societies, especially where such planning is much newer and governments are very directive, such as in China and other parts of the developing world, but we will come back to that next week.) What are the key differences between economic and “pluralist” arguments about planning? Most importantly, what does Klosterman mean, toward the end, when he claims that planning retains justifiable claims about its *ends*—as meeting social needs—but not its *means*, i.e. no agreed-upon “procedural model for defining planning problems or justifying planning solutions”?