



**SCARP**  
School of Community  
And Regional Planning



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## Omnibus: Becoming a Good Sustainability Planning Practitioner

Other Faculty: Timothy McDaniels

### PLAN 540A

**SECTION NUMBER:** 001

2011W Term 1 Monday 13:30 - 17:00

**Location:** WMAX 150

**Credit Hours:** (3)

*This Course is currently offered*

### Course Description:

Students enter SCARP's masters program with a rich diversity of education, employment and volunteer experiences. Their undergraduate majors may be in the natural, applied or social sciences, or the humanities or the arts. A few already have a masters degree and occasionally a doctorate in a field other than planning. Work and volunteer experiences are often equally varied with some students having been out of school for several years. Most bring some international experience and a few are coming to study in Canada from homes in other countries. The Omnibus course is designed to capitalize on the wealth of knowledge, skills and perspectives that students bring to the program, while introducing them to the ever increasing variety of sustainability planning principles, practices and practitioners, and helping each student develop personal learning goals and strategies that meet their individual needs and career ambitions.

This year, the course will build on the excellent design for Omnibus that has evolved in recent years under Tony Dorcey's leadership. It will broaden into three themes: (i) an introduction to the field and to SCARP, as in recent years, (ii) a focus on what planners do in practice and what tools and approaches they employ on an ongoing basis, which will be led by Kira Gerwing of the City of Vancouver, and (iii) how the writing on decision making, particularly *structured decision making*, provides an excellent basis for understanding, deigning and implementing any planning process.

### Learning Objectives:

Six Primary Learning Objectives

1. To develop a preliminary understanding of planning practice and practitioners.
2. To explore differing perspectives on sustainability planning.
3. To introduce planning models, methods and analysis.
4. To acquire an initial familiarity with governance processes within which sustainability planning and actions take place
5. To practice communication and interaction skills essential to planning practitioners.
6. To design a personal development strategy

### Course Organization:

A variety of active learning formats will be used to present, discuss and develop ideas and to build communication and interaction skills. There will always be preparatory work for a class session. *The three themes outlined above will generally be pursued in sessions within each class meeting.* We will strive for a combination of presentations and discussion. Some of the time we will serve as facilitators for the class and thus model for you this critically important skill. We will try to pose questions that stimulate critical thinking and discussion, in hopes of using values and evidence wisely, in order to help create imaginative solutions. At times we will use breakout groups to expand the opportunities for involvement in discussion, to open up topics for exploration and to create ideas. They will also be used to provide opportunities to practice the skills and techniques for productive group work including facilitation, recording ideas and reporting results.

Frequently we will use examples of the issues addressed by sustainability planning practitioners in a particular context. For example: "Assume that you are planning practitioners supporting Vancouver's Mayor. Please identify the criticisms of the City's ecodensity proposal that he should anticipate arising when he speaks in the community and recommend how he should respond to them. You have 30 minutes to generate your suggestions. We will then compare and contrast the proposals created by the three breakout groups." Increasingly web based tools are becoming readily available to assist in learning and in planning practice. We will experiment with the use of some of

them including Google Apps.

## Course Requirements and Grading:

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Grades for the course will be allocated as follows:

- Participation throughout the term (10%)
- Individual Assignment (35%)
- Group Assignment on a case (35%)
- Leading and facilitating session on case (20%)

## Course Assignments:

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There will be two assignments, one Individual and the other Group. They will each have component parts with drafts of each staged through the term. They will be assigned at the first class and the final products due before the final class of the term.

## Course Policies:

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For policies on participation in class and group work please see materials on the course website:

<http://timmcdaniels.ca>

## Course Materials:

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Almost all the materials for the course will be available from the course website or from a Dropbox site that has been created to go with this class. There will be an agenda for each class which provides links to the preparatory readings, indicates questions to consider in preparing for the session, and lists the items we will address along with how we will approach them. The agenda will usually include links and references to other sources where additional information can be found. As products are created during the course they will be uploaded to the web site. Class sessions will vary in length sometimes being four 45 minute sessions with a 10 break in between; other times, three 50-minute sessions with a 15-minute break in between; and on other occasions, two 90-minute sessions with a 30-minute break in between.

## Special Needs:

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Please inform the course instructor as soon as possible if you have special needs and require accommodation of any kind. Please visit <http://www.students.ubc.ca/access/> for more information on campus resources.

## Academic Integrity:

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The University is an environment that fosters learning and the free exchange of ideas while maintaining responsibility and integrity. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating, dishonesty, fabrication of information, submitting previously completed work and misusing or destroying school property. Any material or ideas obtained from digital or hard copy sources must be appropriately and fully referenced. Students are expected to uphold all the standards articulated in [UBC's academic integrity site](#).

## Supplemental Materials:

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UBC has numerous research, pedagogical and health resources available to students. These include The Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG), the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, the Writing Centre, Student Health Services and Student Counselling Services. Please make use of these resources or contact the instructor if you have any questions. Students new to UBC are especially encouraged to become familiar with the [broad spectrum of resources that UBC provides](#).

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