

URPL-GP 4632

Planning Healthy Neighborhoods Spring 2025

# Instructor Information

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* Office Address: N/A
* Office Hours: by appointment.

# Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 4:55pm-6:35pm
* Class Location: 105 E 17St Room 117

# Course Prerequisites

* CORE-GP 1022: Intro to Public Policy
* URPL-GP 2660 History and Theory of Planning

# Course Description

In the US, Health is a privilege, not a right. Approaches to health in this country have focused on treatment and cures, rather than prevention and care. Studies have shown that your zip code, where you live, matters more to your health than your genetic code. Concurrently, data continues to emerge that trauma, and the effects of trauma, can be passed through our genes, from generation to generation, suggesting that enslavement, forced displacement, and poverty of our ancestors are felt in our bones, today.

*How can we make sense of it all? What can we do to ensure that we are building healthy neighborhoods and communities for all?*

Over the semester, we’ll review the history of public health in this country, explore how it plays out in cities, regions, and neighborhoods, and understand how it helps certain populations and hurts other populations, all in the name of building healthy communities.

As you are all training to be practitioners in the space, every decision you make, policy, finance, or spatial, has public health implications. We’ll spend time looking at seemingly non public health decisions and follow it down to clear and tangible spaces, places, and populations, and understand the health implications of those decisions. Your work here will culminate in taking a space or a policy and tracing the health implications of that space or policy.

# Course and Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

* Understand that everyone (including you) has a role to play in improving the health of neighborhoods, cities, and regions
* Understand the concept of the Social Determinants of Health and use it as a concept as a bridge to connect your policy, management, finance or planning work to health
* Understand the ideas-arrangements-effect (IAE) framework as a framework of analysis:
* Understand the Design Justice framework as a framework for solutions and action
* Apply these frames to real world examples
* Recognize the importance of evaluating various health data sources, existing at various scales (quantitative, qualitative, narrative and experiential)

Learning Assessment Table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Graded Assignment** | **Course Objective Covered** |
| Final Paper | #1, #2, #5 |
| Final Pitch | #2, #5, #6 |
| Reflection Papers | #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 |

# Required Readings

Required readings are listed for each class below. When possible, links to the articles and reports will be hyperlinked. The books listed (Root Shock, Heat Wave, Emergent Strategy, and Ideas, Arrangements Effects) are all available on bookshop.org.

# Assessment Assignments and Evaluation

***Reading Reflections, 35%***

Responses will be assessed on a participatory basis (credit/no-credit). Students should be able to demonstrate that they have engaged with materials through written or multi-media formats (i.e. film, images, reels, etc.). These are due on Sunday night before class. If you choose to write a reflection, it should not exceed one page, single spaced.

***Participation and Attendance, 20%***

Your presence in class is important to me. Collective liberation takes collective work and it is my hope that we will all do our best to show up for ourselves and for each other. Participation can take many forms, including being present in class, preparing questions based on the readings, contributing to class discussions, actively listening.

***Final Paper and Presentation 45%***

We’ll collectively examine policies and practices sourced by the class. Each of you will select a policy, practice, or design decision, and present the health implications through the lens of a specific space or place in NYC. Utilize a specific data set—you can use the Community Health Profiles for NYC, PLACES Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, City Health Dashboard and when possible, I’d also like you to utilize PolicyLink’s Equity Atlas to bring Health Equity into your work.

**This final project is a powerpoint presentation, with an accompanying paper, walking us through this specific design decision, policy or practice that you’d like to change and the health implications of this decision on this place. The two key pieces here will be to answer in a way to engage and gain interest amongst NON Health professionals, and provide a policy, practice or design decision/change. We will discuss more in our first class.**

The use of generative AI tools is strictly prohibited in this course. Any use of such tools will be considered a violation of the Wagner Academic Code.

## **GRADING**

Grading will be based on engagement with the material and commitment to the work. We will prioritize learning, growth, risk-taking, and experimentation over perfection, production, and “safe” success.

**Late Submission Policy for Assignments**

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally hectic schedules. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.

# Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| **A** | 4.0 points |
| **A-** | 3.7 points |
| **B+** | 3.3 points |
| **B** | 3.0 points |
| **B-** | 2.7 points |
| **C+** | 2.3 points |
| **C** | 2.0 points |
| **C-** | 1.7 points |
| **F** | 0.0 points |

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

* (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
* (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
* (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
* (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
* (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
* (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
* (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

# Detailed Course Overview

Module 1 | ***Who Are You in This Work?***

***We’ll spend time getting to know each other, understand why you’re in this class, review the syllabus, and understand our definitions of health and health in our lives.***

3/12/2025 *In Class*

* + Introduction + Check-in
    - Who is an ELDER, ANCESTOR, or MENTOR you admire and why?
  + Why this course? Why now?
    - “What have I consented to by the fact of my presence?”
    - What are our roles as planners, managers, and public servants?
    - What is the role of HEALTH in YOUR life? What is your relationship to health? Beliefs about health?
  + Community Agreements
  + Look ahead - learning goals, coursework
  + Questions

Module 2 | *What is a Healthy Neighborhood?*

***We’ll spend time understanding the Concept of the Social Determinants of Health, and understanding the difference between health, and health care. We’ll review policies and practices that promote health care, but not health through NYC Department of Health’s Community Health Profiles, which will be a data set that can ground our conversations.***

3/19/2025 *In Class*

* + Frame: Social Determinants of Health, Health/Health Care
  + Review: Community Health Profiles
  + Video: Dr. Camara Jones Explains the Cliff of Good Health. Urban Institute, April 18, 2018
  + Discussion: Ideas, Arrangements, Effects by Design Studio for Social Intervention

*Readings/Viewings/Listenings*

* + Emergent Strategy, Adrienne Maree Brown
  + The Social Determinants of Health: It’s Time to Consider the Causes of the Causes by Paula Braveman and Laura Gottlieb. Public Health Rep. 2014 Jan-Feb; 129(Suppl 2): 19–31.
  + Scan: The United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals

*Assignments*

* + Reading Reflection: Who are you? Who are you in this work? What can you contribute to and change around building a healthy neighborhood based on your positionality?

Module 3 | ***How Did We Get Here? What’s at Stake?***

**We’ll review the history of redlining and urban displacement, and how it developed (un)healthy Communities. We’ll bring in the language of Health Equity and Health Disparities. We’ll discuss the policies that support the idea that Health is a Right in other countries, while being a privilege in the US.**

4/2/2025 *In Class*

* + Video: The Domino Effect: The Legacy of Serial Forced Displacement by University of Orange, 2016.
  + Discussion: The History of (Un)Healthy Neighborhoods in the US
    - Redlining, Urban Renewal, Serial Forced Displacement

*Readings/Viewings*

* + Podcast: There Goes the Neighborhood, Kai Wright (“Here’s the Plan”)
  + Article: Keep the Whole City in Mind, Mindy Fullilove & Nupur Chaudhury
  + Fair Society, Healthy Lives,: Strategic Review of Health Inequities in England post 2010 by Sir Michael Marmot
  + “The Curb-Cut Effect” by Angela Glover Blackwell in *Stanford Social Innovation Review,* Winter 2017
  + (optional) *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It* by Mindy Thompson Fullilove, NYU Press,

2016.

*Assignments*

* + Reading Reflection: Think about Blackwell’s example in her article. Are there other policies that have created other curb cuts? What are they? Who benefited from that policy? How do you think it influenced their health? Write a one-page reflection that brings in another policy/design change that can benefit all.

## Module 4 | What Can We Do? Design Justice

***We’ll explore the frame of Design Justice as a possible solution in the fight to build Healthy Neighborhoods.***

4/9/2025 *In Class*

* + Frame: Design Justice--Discuss the concept of Design Justice, and how it can be used as a tool to build healthy communities
  + Application: Gowanus, Brooklyn

*For Class Readings/Viewings*

* + Race, Architecture, and Tales for the Hood, by Bryan Lee Jr. (TED Talk)
  + “America’s Cities Were Designed to Oppress” Bryan Lee Jr.
  + “The Case for All-In Cities” by Angela Glover Blackwell (in *The Just City Essays: Visions for Urban Equity, Inclusivity and Opportunity* by Angela Glover Blackwell, et al.)
  + “An Antidote for the Unjust City: Planning to Stay” by Mindy Thompson Fullilove(in *The Just City Essays: Visions for Urban Equity, Inclusivity and Opportunity* by Mindy Thompson Fullilove, et al.)

*Assignment*

* + Reading Reflection: Inspired by Bryan Lee Jr.’s TED Talk, Write a one- page reflection on how the frame of Design Justice can help in building Healthy Neighborhoods.

## Module 5 | What Can We Do? Social Cohesion and Connectedness

***We’ll explore the frame of Social Cohesion as a possible solution in the fight to build Healthy Neighborhoods.***

4/16/2025 *In Class*

* + Frame: Cohesion, Connectedness and Communities
  + Discussion: What are the links between social cohesion and health?

*Readings/Viewings*

* + Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.
  + Dying Alone: An Interview with Eric Klinenberg
  + (optional) Heat Wave, Eric Klinenberg

*Assignments*

* + Reading Reflection

## Module 6 | What Can We Do? Food Justice

***We’ll explore the frame of food justice as an approach to Build Healthy Neighborhoods***

4/23/2025 *In Class*

* + Frame: discuss the idea of food justice and how it can be used as a tool to build healthy neighborhoods
  + Application: Shop Healthy NYC, Mutual Aid Community Fridges, East New York Farms, Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax

*For Class / Readings*

* + Eater Article: The Radical Origins of Free Breakfast for Children by Arielle Milkman
  + Shop Healthy NYC Report: Year 1

*Assignments*

* + Reading Reflection

## Module 7 | What Can We Do? Funding the Work

***We’ll explore funding: philanthropy, federal funding, and practitioner associations in the fight to Build Healthy Communities.***

4/30/2024 *In Class*

* + Discussion: Current Funding, Investments and Budgets—Health Care, Public Health, Health Philanthropy
  + NYSHealth Building Healthy Communities Initiative
  + California Endowments Building Healthy Communities initiative

*For Class / Readings*

* + Healthy Communities Policy Guide by American Planning Association, 2017
  + Review the Robert Wood Johnsons Foundation’s Website, and explore their 4 focus areas
  + Review the learnings of The California Endowment’s BHC Initiative
  + Review the Joint Call to Action to Promote Healthy Communities and the 10 Conversations

*Assignments*

* + Submit your pitch and paper

# Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

# Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

# Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu)](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

# NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact [religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu](mailto:religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu) for assistance.

# NYU’s Wellness Exchange

NYU’s Wellness Exchange has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.