Introduction to Urban & Regional Planning
Lecture Outline

- Introduction
- What is Planning?
- What is Urban & Regional Planning?
- Evolution of Planning Theory & Practice
- What do urban planners do?
- Relevance of course
- Overview of course
Introduction

- Urban Planning is a process of guiding the use and development of land with the aim of making the city a better place to live and work.

- Particularly important today as more than one-half of the world’s population now resides in urban places.

- Cities, towns and other urban forms are therefore the sites for most of mankind’s activities. Yet in most cities and towns, land and access to basic resources and services are usually scarce and unevenly distributed.
What is Planning?

- Planning is ‘a general activity…the making of an orderly sequence of action that will lead to the achievement of a stated goal or goals’ (Hall 2002).

- Involves written statements supplemented as appropriate by statistical projections, quantified evaluations and diagrams.

- ...may, but need not necessarily, include exact physical blueprints of objects

- Planning involves an attempt to (re)shape prevailing social and economic dynamics to achieve particular developmental ends
What is Urban and Regional Planning?

- Many different names e.g. town & country planning, town planning, city planning, physical planning etc.

- URP is simply a special case of general planning which incorporates a spatial component

- Understood as a rational (highly technical) and systemic process of forethought set in motion by the need to resolve urban and regional problems.

- Yet may be interpreted as a highly political and economistic process
Evolution of Planning Theory and Practice

- **Traditional view of planning:** the art and science of ordering land/land uses and siting buildings and communication routes so as to secure the maximum level of economy, convenience and beauty (Keeble, 1969 in Greed, 1996).

- **1960s** marked a shift in planning from detailed blue prints to include broader principles
- **Planning as socio-political and economic activity**
Yet may be interpreted as a *highly political* and *economistic process*

“Towns and cities are not God-given or ‘natural’. They are the result of centuries of decision-making by individual owners and developers, and of government intervention. Whilst topography and geography do play a part, they do not absolutely determine development. The nature of towns and cities, to a considerable extent, is dependent on who shouts the loudest, and who has the greatest influence over policy.”

*Clara Greed, 1996*
Urban and Regional Planning defined

- Planning with a geographical component, in which the general objective is to provide for a spatial structure of activities (or of land uses) which in some way is better than the pattern that would exist without planning (Hall, 2002)

- Generally involves physical development

- Shift in planning from detailed blue prints to include broader principles (1960s)

- Planning today is more flexible, working with far more information & highly complexed computerized systems; has not necessarily made planning easier though!
What do urban planners do?

- Determine the best uses of land and resources for homes, businesses, and recreation.

- Devise ways to renovate slums, expand cities, modernize transportation systems, and distribute public facilities such as schools and parks.

- Urban planners design new communities and develop programs to revitalize and expand existing cities.

- Regional planners work on a much larger scale, studying the problems of states, multistate regions, and sometimes entire countries.
Relevance of this course

- Major aim of planning is to make society a better place to live and work especially for cities and towns.

- Yet this is lacking in most cities, particularly those in the developing world.

- URP can be an effective regulatory tool in balancing economic, social and environmental needs arising from both local and global interests.
Activity section

Scenario 1
- You are working for a consultancy firm as an urban planner, and you have been asked to devise a plan to alleviate the traffic flow problem in Port-of-Spain without adversely affecting the city’s road network and business sector. Outline how you would go about this.

Scenario 2
- The GoJ is proposing to build a chemical processing plant along Spanish Town Road to provide additional employment to the low-income communities situated in that area. As a planner, assess the potential socio-economic and environmental impacts of such a plan to the surrounding communities and recommend ways of alleviating some of the possible negative outcomes.
Overview of course

- Introduce students to key theoretical and practical aspects of planning

- First section focuses on basic concepts and tools in planning

- Second section looks at different planning issues at the local, regional and global scales
  - Urban Planning in the LEDCs (water, transportation and housing cha, Urban Governance & Participatory Planning, Cities & Climate Change.)
Assessment & Important dates

Assessment
- Mid-term test scheduled for March 7th 2012 – 15%
- Term paper due March 21st 2012 – 25%
- Exam (April 30-May 18, 2012) – 60%

Class activities
- Media class - Wednesday February 29th 2012
- Field trip – tentative date Thursday March 29th 2012
- Guest Lecture – Wednesday April 11th 2012
Key Readings

