



Module Specification

Planning Theories and Histories

Version: 2026-27, v2.0, Approved

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Planning Theories and Histories

Module code: UBGMNJ-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2026-27

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Arts, Technology and Environment

School: CATE School of Architecture and Environment

Partner institutions: None

Field: Geography and Environmental Management

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module introduces students to the historical, theoretical, and ethical foundations of urban and spatial planning.

Teaching is structured to foster critical understanding of the state's role in statutory planning, including its legitimacy, scope, and effectiveness. Students will engage with key planning concepts such as the public interest, social and environmental justice, and the political nature of planning decisions—reflecting the RTPPI's

emphasis on ethical practice and public accountability.

The module encourages reflective and analytical thinking around contemporary challenges including sustainable development, resilience in the Global South, postcolonial critiques, and revanchist urban strategies. It also introduces students to collaborative and post-political planning approaches, supporting RTPPI values around inclusivity and community engagement.

Through seminars, lectures, and fieldwork, students will develop the ability to communicate planning arguments clearly and coherently, both orally and in writing. Emphasis is placed on critical engagement with texts, policy debates, and real-world planning contexts, preparing students for professional practice and lifelong learning in line with RTPPI standards.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The overall aim of this module is to acquaint students with some of the main ideas and theories that have shaped urban and rural spatial planning (focusing especially on the period since the end of the Second World War), and then, against this background, to examine critically the fundamental justification and purposes of town planning.

Outline syllabus: A central part of this module will be two parallel lecture series, one covering urban spatial planning since 1945 and the main ideas and theories that have shaped this, the other examining critically some of the deeper philosophical questions about the justification and main purposes of statutory spatial planning.

The content of the first lecture series will include such topics as: early ideas which shaped the emergence of planning; the post-war settlement; the physical design conception of urban planning that dominated town and country planning in the 1940s and 50s; the critique of physical planning in the 1960s and the emergence of the systems and rational process views of planning; the role of values in planning and the view of spatial planning as necessarily political; communicative and collaborative planning theory; diversity and postmodern planning.

The second lecture series will examine such issues as: the "public interest", Social

Justice; Environmental Justice; public participation and the role and concept of community; the 'profession' of town planning, politics and the state. It will explore these ideas through works of contemporary and classical thinkers, and with reference to actual examples in the built environment.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: A variety of learning approaches will be employed in the teaching of this module. As noted above, there will be two parallel lecture series. In addition to this there will be seminars, workshops and site visits. There will be opportunities for both group work and for students to pursue their own interests within the general area of the module at greater depth.

Students will also be expected to engage in independent learning, mainly taking the form of reading, both to prepare for and follow up on the taught sessions.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of key ideas, theories, and historical developments that have shaped urban and spatial planning since 1945.

MO2 Critically evaluate the role of the state in planning, including the scope and purpose of statutory planning, and the debates surrounding its legitimacy and effectiveness.

MO3 Analyse and reflect on foundational planning concepts such as the public interest, social and environmental justice, public participation, community, and the political dimensions of the planning profession.

MO4 Communicate and construct clear, coherent arguments about spatial planning issues, both orally and in writing, through critical engagement with texts and debates.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ubgmnj-30-m.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ubgmnj-30-m.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The summative assessment consists of an individual Presentation along with a Critical Logbook (3500 words), that will allow students to explore the ideas in the module which interested them the most, and aims to link both theoretical ideas and practical planning issues.

Resit has a similar brief to that described above

Formative feedback takes place during the module and considers the development of the professional planner and nurtures a critical and reflective mindset.

Formative feedback will consist of:

Discussion between peers within the lectures, tutorials and other scheduled sessions

Comments on coursework drafts by the teaching team

Use of interactive online tools (e.g. Menti) for students to post ideas/questions relating to taught content/coursework

Use of marking rubric both at the start to manage expectations of what 'good' looks like as well as facilitating students to use the rubric to evaluate their own drafts.

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description:

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: Yes

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Presentation (Resit)

Description: Individual presentation (15 minutes)

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Reflective Piece (Resit)

Description: Critical Logbook (3500 words)

An individual piece of coursework which will allow students to explore the ideas in the module which interested them the most, and aims to link both theoretical ideas and practical planning issues.

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Urban Planning [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

Urban Planning {Apprenticeship-UWE} [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

Urban Planning [Frenchay] MSc 2026-27

Urban Planning [Frenchay] MSc 2026-27

Urban Planning [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

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