

SCHOOL OF URBAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON | TACOMA

MASTER OF ARTS IN
COMMUNITY
PLANNING

2021 – 2022
GRADUATE
STUDENT
HANDBOOK



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the University of Washington Tacoma's Master of Arts in Community Planning (MACP) Program. You are among a select few students to have been admitted to this year's cohort! As graduate students in the MACP Program you will be prepared to be competent, collaborative professionals who work with and empower community constituents to influence the processes of policy formation, resource generation, community change, and urban development. The program's emphasis is on urban social issues, community development, and urban problem solving. Our faculty are committed to training students to think critically and creatively, to work collaboratively in the interest of creating sustainable communities, and to effectively communicate knowledge in a variety of ways. These are a direct expression of the UW Tacoma's mission as an institution of higher education.

There are several key elements that distinguish the UW Tacoma approach to Community Planning – that inform the degree you are pursuing.

1. **What/who counts as “community.”** We do not believe that there is any one such thing, even though that is the way the word is often used in urban development – and moreover we know, through our own research and others', that those singular notions of community tend to leave a lot of people out. In this program, you will need to think about communities, *plural*, and ask: Who is not at the table? Why not? What can be done about that, and how, in what venues?
2. **Where does “planning” happen.** There are a lot of planning programs out there, and almost all of them come out of an architecture and design tradition, or a public policy and government affairs tradition. These are important. But what research and experience tell us, repeatedly, is that urban development is organized by forces external to the city planning department. So planning, for our purposes, is what happens wherever people are influencing how a city is developed and to what ends – and “planners” are the ones doing that work – YOU – across the public, private and non-profit sector.
3. **Action and structure.** This is a faculty of social scientists and practitioners. We want you to go out and make change in the world, and we believe that in order to do that, one has to start with the premise that context matters. What you can do – action – is going to be framed and constrained by the setting you are in – structure. “Structure” is what many social scientists are most comfortable studying and teaching. It is the economic history of a place like Tacoma. It is the cultural norms of a place like Dalian, China. It is the decentralized governance arrangements of the 21st century. It is the nature of lending markets, where people borrow money to build things. If you start to recognize what is structuring the environment you are operating in – economics, history, culture, politics, spatial design – then as we are learning to listen, to more, and less visible, and less empowered communities, you are also in a position to engage those structures intentionally, with inclusive ends in mind. To act. To lead. To elevate different voices. To seek out hidden data. To create more just urban places, different kinds of spaces and programs and opportunities.

This is ambitious. There is not a single other program like it in the country. We have literally reverse-engineered a program that says, not ‘what are we supposed to teach in a planning program’ – but rather, **what do students need to know to get things done, to plan for the common good, to make better cities**. We want you to have the skills to operate in the marketplace, to be good leaders and take your place in the world, but we also want you to have a critical edge, so that you recognize the inequity embedded in social structures, and you feel empowered to act, strategically and at times incrementally, to create change. In this way, we intend to develop a concern with social justice in the classroom, and to enable it to become part of your practice, and your identity as effective urban professionals.

Program Length

The MACP requires two academic years (six academic quarters). The program begins in the autumn quarter and runs through the following winter, and spring; after a summer break, the same three-term schedule (autumn, winter, spring) completes the second year.

Cohort Structure

The MACP employs a cohort-based curriculum. This means that students may begin the program only in the autumn quarter as a part of a new cohort and are expected to complete the program alongside other members of their cohort. Occasionally students may arrange to complete the program part-time. The curriculum in this program is established by the graduate faculty and does not include any elective or optional units. It is important that any students seeking to complete the program part-time work closely with the Graduate Program Advisor and Graduate Program Coordinator to select courses in the appropriate sequence.



Maintenance of Student Status

It is expected that graduate students will enroll in all required courses during each of two years. Full time students who fail to enroll in (and complete) any one of the required twelve courses shall be placed on probation and will be required to meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator and Graduate Program Advisor to create an academic plan to satisfy the program's academic requirements, or formally withdraw from the program.

Satisfactory Performance and Grade Expectations

In order to remain active in the MACP program students must maintain a quarterly and cumulative minimum 3.0 GPA, and (per the UW's Graduate School's requirements) earn at least 2.7 GPA in each of the twelve required courses. If over the course of a given quarter a student's work should fall below this performance threshold and the course(s) are not satisfactorily completed, the student will be notified in writing by the Graduate Program Coordinator and Graduate Program Advisor that she/he will be placed on academic probation. After the completion of a quarter if a student has not satisfactorily completed any of their courses then, at the discretion of the Graduate Program Coordinator and Director of Urban Studies, the student may be placed on probation. Refer to item #3 below for detailed policy on academic performance expectations.

Important Dates

Please be aware of all important dates: [Registration dates](#) and [Graduate School deadlines](#)

Tuition-Exempt Status

Beginning Summer Quarter 2021, the University of Washington Tacoma will limit the number of graduate credits to which a state employee may apply tuition exemption benefits to a total of **twelve (12) credits** toward the requirements of any graduate degree program it offers. More information about tuition exemption policies can be found [online](#).

Filing for Graduation – Request a Master's Degree

Students will [apply for graduation](#) online.

Below is a timeline in which students may submit their Master's Degree Request. If students miss the deadline to file their request, they must register for credits in the following quarter. Please check the [Graduate School's timeline](#) often during your last quarter.

The annual graduation and hooding ceremonies only occur once a year. Participation requires online or in-person registration. Please watch your email during spring quarter and contact the graduate advisor for information. The MSGT program concludes in summer quarter, thus all students may participate in commencement ceremony in the spring prior to completing.

International Students

Students on F-1 visas will pay non-resident tuition. F-1 students are eligible to apply for research assistantship positions and may work on campus for up to 20 hours per week. Students on H-4 visas can qualify for in-state tuition if they have lived in Washington for 12 consecutive months. H-14 students are not eligible for any paid positions but may convert to an F-1 visa after three full-time quarters. Students must contact the UWTacoma Office of the [Registrar for residency petitions](#) and all related information.

Students should contact the International Student Services office for advising prior to making any visa changes. In addition, the ISS coordinates the CPT and OPT approval process. Students should contact ISS first, then follow up with the graduate advisor. Please note that new students are not eligible for CPT.

INDEX OF GRADUATE SCHOOL MEMORANDA

The Index of Graduate School Memoranda includes graduate program policies maintained by the Graduate School. Content is reviewed and modified as needed. Final decisions regarding implementation or continuation of policies receive the advice of the Graduate School Council. Below are a few memorandums that Urban Studies would like to make sure you are aware of. All of the [memorandums](#) are available online.

> Continuous Enrollment and On Leave Status

Graduate students are required to maintain graduate status during their program of study. Failure to maintain this status requires reinstatement to the University of Washington. Students who desire to take a quarter or quarters off without going through the reinstatement process must apply for on-leave status for each quarter they do not register. For complete details regarding the on-leave policy, refer to [Memo 9](#).

> On-leave Eligibility

- Must be a graduate student in good standing.
- Must have been registered or on-leave the previous quarter.
- Must satisfy any graduate program policies pertaining to going/remaining on-leave.
- US citizen and permanent residents must have registered for at least one quarter of graduate study at UW and have approval from their graduate program.
- International students must have registered full-time (10 or more credits) for three consecutive quarters and have approval from both their graduate program and the International Student Services Office.
- You may not go on leave after registering for capstone course credits.
- Pre-registered students must officially withdraw via [MyUW](#) or the Registration office prior to the first day of the quarter. Registered students are not eligible for on leave status.

> Students on-leave **are** entitled to:

- return as a graduate student to the graduate program
- use University libraries
- maintain access to the UW email account
- use Hall Health Primary Care Center on a pay-for-service basis
- use the IMA with additional fee

> Students on-leave are **not** entitled to:

- faculty and staff counsel/resources (very limited counsel/resources are permitted)
- examinations of any type (except for language competency)
- university housing
- student insurance
- financial assistance

Procedure for Requesting Leave

Beginning September 28, 2011, student's requesting on-leave status must submit an online request for On-leave of status via [MyGrad](#) program. For a given quarter, students can submit the request as early as two weeks prior to the first day of instruction and must submit payment of the nonrefundable fee no later than 11:59:59 p.m. PST on the last day of instruction. Leave is granted on a quarterly basis, though the following students may request up to four consecutive quarters of leave at one time: PCMI students, military personnel with deployment orders, and some UW Fulbright grantees (with the exception of military personnel with deployment orders, these students will be required to pay the fee for each quarter of leave requested).



Reinstatement to the Graduate School

Students previously registered in the Graduate School who have failed to maintain graduate student status (on-leave status was not secured and registration was not maintained) but wish to resume studies within the same degree program must file a request for reinstatement to the Graduate School. Requests will first be reviewed and approved by the department. Once the department has approved the request and the Graduate School has confirmed students' eligibility for reinstatement, students will be notified to pay a non-refundable reinstatement fee before registering for the requested quarter of reinstatement.

Time to Degree and Limits for On-Leave Status

The Graduate School normally allows six years from the quarter of admission to complete requirements for a master's degree. **Periods spent On-Leave or out of status are included in these limits.** Before approving a Petition for On-Leave Status for a student whose leave period will take them in excess of these limits, the department must first file a Petition to the Dean of the Graduate School (via [MyGrad](#)) explaining why this action is being requested. This Petition to the Dean must be approved by the Graduate School before the Petition for On-Leave Status is filed.

Grading System

Grades shall be entered as numbers, the possible values being 4.0, 3.9, . . . and decreasing by one-tenth until 1.7 is reached. Grades below 1.7 will be recorded as 0.0 by the Registrar and no credit is earned. A minimum of 2.7 is required in **each course** that is to be counted toward a graduate degree. A minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 is required for graduation. See Memo 19 for more information. Fulbright grantees (with the exception of military personnel with deployment orders, these students will be required to pay the fee for each quarter of leave requested).

Incomplete Grades

Grades may be given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work to within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control. To obtain credit for the course, a student must successfully complete the work and the instructor must submit a grade. In no case may an Incomplete be converted into a passing grade after a lapse of two years or more. An incomplete received by the graduate student does not automatically convert to a grade of 0.0 but the "I" will remain as a permanent part of the student's record.



Low Scholarship Status

Students in the Master's program are graduate students at the University of Washington, and as such must abide by general graduate-school regulations regarding progress through the program. Grades earned in prerequisite courses are considered when evaluating low scholarship status. Students should be aware of the following regulations detailed in [Memo 16](#).

1. A minimum grade of 2.7 is required for a course to be counted toward the graduate degree.
2. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation.

The Graduate Program Coordinator, Graduate Program Advisor and the Urban Studies' graduate faculty are expected to review the status of each student who violates the above policies and to transmit to the Dean of the Graduate School a specific recommendation: **no action, warn, probation, final probation, or drop**.

> No Action

May be recommended for those students whose cumulative GPA is above 3.0 but whose most recent quarter's work is below 3.0, if the review has determined that this condition is not cause for immediate concern.

> Warn

May be recommended for those students whose cumulative GPA has dropped slightly below 3.0--i.e. 2.99- 2.95. May be recommended for those students who have failed to meet expectations for performance and progress as determined by the graduate program.

ACTION TAKEN AS INDICATED ABOVE WILL BE INITIATED BY THE GRADUATE PROGRAM, AND REPORTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, BUT WILL NOT APPEAR ON THE STUDENT'S PERMANENT RECORD.

> Probation

May be recommended for those students who have not corrected the deficiency which caused the warn action within the time limit specified by the graduate program.

May be recommended for those students who depart suddenly and substantially from scholarly achievement as defined by the graduate program. (A previous warn recommendation is not necessary). Programs may determine the length of probationary status. (The Graduate School recommends no less than one quarter and no more than three quarters of probationary status). Students should be informed of the current program policy regarding the length of the probationary period.

> Final Probation

May be recommended for those students who depart suddenly and substantially from scholarly achievement as defined by the graduate program. (A previous warn recommendation is not necessary). Programs may determine the length of probationary status. (The Graduate School recommends no less than one quarter and no more than three quarters of probationary status). Students should be informed of the current program policy regarding the length of the probationary period.

> Drop

Final action to be recommended. A drop recommendation means immediate drop from the University of Washington. Therefore, this recommendation must be received in the Graduate School soon after the beginning of the quarter following the quarter on which the decision is based. Recommendations for action on low grade point average or unsatisfactory performance and progress will be reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School, and students will be informed of a change in status by letter from the Dean.

> Appeals

Students may appeal change of status, as explained above, directly to the Chairperson of the graduate degree granting unit. Appeals beyond this point should follow the process outlined in [Memo 33](#), Academic Grievance Procedure.

> **Repeating a Course**

Graduate students may repeat any course. Both the first and second grades will be included in the cumulative GPA. Subsequent grades will not be calculated, but will appear on the permanent record. The number of credits earned in the course will apply toward degree requirements only once.

POLICY ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

In order to remain in good academic standing, students must maintain a quarterly and cumulative minimum 3.0 GPA, and earn at least 2.7 GPA in each of the twelve required courses.

In the event that these standards are not being met, the Graduate Program Coordinator – in consultation and coordination with individual course faculty, the Graduate Program Advisor, and the Director of Urban Studies, as appropriate – will take the following steps:

- > During a given quarter, if a student's low performance raises concerns about reaching the 2.7 threshold for the course, the student will receive a letter of academic warning from the Graduate Program Coordinator. A warning letter conveys the message that a student's effort and/or quality of work may be insufficient to maintain good academic standing, ideally with enough time for the student to adapt, and meet or surpass the 2.7 threshold by the end of term.
- > If an individual course grade is lower than 2.7, or a student's quarterly or cumulative GPA in the program falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. In such circumstances the student receives a letter from the Graduate Program Coordinator documenting the reason for academic probation, and offering options for resolving the issue and returning to good academic standing. For a low course grade this may involve re-taking the course the following year, and possibly moving to part-time status; in rare cases course faculty may work with a student to complete or revise assignments, in order to raise the existing grade. For a low cumulative GPA, subsequent courses must raise the average above 3.0.



It should be noted that no student on academic probation can register for and complete the community studio practicum, a requirement for graduation; and that no student on academic probation will be permitted to graduate (i.e. the standard must be maintained through the final practicum terms).

- > A student may remain on academic probation for up to one calendar year. If satisfactory progress has not been made during that time to raise an individual course grade and/or improve the cumulative GPA to 3.0, the student will be placed on final probation. This is the last step before being dropped from the program.

In all cases above, the UW Graduate School will be notified, and any letters detailing changes in academic status will be added to the student's file. Probation, final probation, and drop statuses will be noted on the students transcripts.

KEY PERSONNEL



Yonn Dierwechter, Ph.D., Professor and Faculty in MCMP. Dr. Dierwechter's research focuses on the emerging geographies of comparative metropolitan planning practices; state/space relationships; and the links between urban growth management/smart growth, sustainability policies, internationalism, and city-regionalism. He worked professionally in South Africa in the 1990s and has also consulted extensively with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and is the 2014 winner of UWT's Distinguished Research Award.



Ali Modarres, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Urban Studies, Professor and Director of Urban Studies. Dr. Modarres earned his Ph.D. in geography from the University of Arizona and holds master and bachelor degrees in landscape architecture from the same institution. He is the former editor of *Cities: The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning* and serves on a number of research and policy advisory boards. He specializes in urban geography and his primary research and publication interests are socio-spatial urban dynamics and the political economy of urban design. He has published in the areas of immigration, race and ethnicity in American cities, social geography, transportation planning, environmental equity, urban development and public policy.



Lisa Hoffman, Ph.D., Professor and Faculty in MCMP. Dr. Hoffman came to UW Tacoma in the fall of 2002. She received her BA in Philosophy from Yale University (1988), her MA in China Regional Studies from UW Seattle's Jackson School of International Studies (1992) and her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at UC Berkeley (2000). She defines her interdisciplinary and yet anthropological work as anthropology of the urban. Broadly speaking, her scholarship has focused on questions of power, governing and social change, with a particular interest in subjectivity.



Mark Pendras, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Faculty in MCMP. Dr. Pendras concentrates on three primary areas of inquiry: urban political economy, alternative urban and regional development politics and policy, and university/community relations. He holds a Ph.D. and MA in Geography from Rutgers University, and an undergraduate degree in International Studies from the University of Washington, Seattle. His graduate teaching focuses on aspects of his work in critical legal geography, including the creation of advancement opportunities for the low-skilled and/or poorly educated members of the city.



Anne Taufen, Ph.D., Associate Professor and MA Program Coordinator. Dr. Taufen is a planning and public policy scholar whose work focuses on the governance of urban space, in particular waterfronts and urban waterways. She holds a Ph.D. in Social Ecology from the University of California, Irvine, and a master's in public administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Her work in sustainable urban development is concerned with the relationship between planning discourse and pragmatic action. This includes questions of inclusivity and equity – whom governance serves, and with what outcomes; as well as questions of socio-material change – how governing processes are held in place, influenced or transformed, with a focus on things, practices, and technologies.



Anaïd Yerena, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Faculty in MCMP. Dr. Yerena holds degrees from the Universidad de Monterrey (B.Arch.) and University of California, Irvine (M.U.R.P. & Ph.D.). As an architect, planner, and researcher she is interested in the public participation processes and activities related to housing and community development. Her research has a strong community-based component that provides knowledge to advocate for and empower disenfranchised groups. While completing her Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at UC Irvine, she conducted research for the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation assessing potential housing sites for extremely low-income households in Long Beach, California



Sally A. Murphy, M.A., Graduate Program Advisor Sally earned a B.A. in Sociology from the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) and M.A. in International Education from New York University (NYU). Her graduate research focused on international development and education, peace and conflict studies, and cross-cultural exchange. Sally has a professional background in international education, study abroad, student advising, international and domestic student services, recruitment, program management, alumni engagement, curriculum development and faculty collaborations. She is passionate about student success and considers it a privilege to support students throughout their time in college.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

There are sixty required credits (twelve courses). Courses are offered in the autumn, winter, and spring quarters. More information about individual courses is available on the program website, and course content, learning outcomes, and assignments are detailed in the syllabi provided by faculty for each class.

> [Courses](#)

Appendix 1 provides a list of required courses for this degree.

> [Scheduling](#)

Courses will typically take place in the evening. Most classes are approximately four hours in length and will usually meet on the UW Tacoma campus. The schedule will be available one quarter in advance. Some classes may require daytime activities even if class meets in the evening. Courses will require additional work, which will happen on the student's own time.

The practicum studio course will sometimes require smaller group meetings, in addition to the regularly scheduled classroom hours. This course takes place during the last two terms of the program.

COMMUNITY STUDIO PRACTICUM PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

The culminating project experience for MA students will be a studio-style practicum, conducted over two consecutive terms. The studio will be led by an Urban Studies faculty member, who will identify and establish a working relationship with appropriate community partners. Initial scoping of the project will be undertaken by the faculty member and the partner and framed by the interests and needs of the community group(s).

Over the course of the first practicum term, students meet with the partner organization, visit the organization's location, observe activities of the organization, listen and gather information to provide a contextual understanding of the issue, problem, and overall workings of the group and community, and with guidance from the faculty member, establish the scope and aims of the project. The process is partner-led, collaborative, and emergent; students use skills drawn from coursework in prior classes as well as those taught during the practicum. The work product is a group effort. At the end of the second term, the finished project or multiple

solutions/approaches to the same problem, will be presented and shared in a public setting with the community partner and other invited guests, furthering the community planning goals of the partner organization, as well as the professional development of students.

The collaborative, studio-style format of the practicum serves multiple purposes.

- > **Pedagogically**, it enables students to learn from one another, share insights and resources, and experience the relational challenges and opportunities characteristic of community organizing and planning, including respect for diverse experiences and voices, understanding competing interests and needs, listening to partners, “clients,” and the broader community; continual learning, trust building, division of labor, conflict management, contextual challenges required to understand the uniqueness of each community, and collective impact.
- > **Institutionally**, it allows faculty to structure an experiential learning environment where students can maximize their practical skill development, community partner expectations and feedback are continually foregrounded, and points of contact between the university and the community partner are well understood. This allows students to focus on the process, the product, and varied approaches to problem solving; and allows the partner to engage the insight and capacity of an entire cohort and increases the likelihood of truly useful project outcomes.
- > **Locally and regionally**, it enables the program and its students to develop a reputation for delivering value. Projects that are taken on should be sufficiently complex and ambitious to impact the community; and simultaneously benefit students from the structure of a shared endeavor.