1. 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 UW Tacoma 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.

a. **Program Length**
   The UW Tacoma 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.

b. **Cohort Structure**
   The UW Tacoma 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 to select courses in the appropriate sequence.

c. **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.

d. **Satisfactory Performance and Grade Expectations**
   In order to remain active in the MACP graduate 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, the student will be notified by the graduate program coordinator that she/he will be placed on academic probation should the course(s) not be satisfactorily completed. 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 the Urban Studies Program, the student may be placed on probation.

*Appendix 2 provides an overview of the program policy on academic performance and probation.*

*Please see your Graduate Program Advisor or Graduate Program Coordinator for clarification.*

September 22, 2017
2. KEY FACULTY AND STAFF

Ali Modarres, PhD | 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 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.

Anne Taufen Wessells, PhD | Associate Professor and MA Program Coordinator
Dr. Wessells 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 PhD 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.

Sarah Young | Graduate Program Advisor
Sarah earned a BA in Urban Studies at UW Tacoma in 2010. Sarah has worked for a local nonprofit organization supporting first-generation students, served on advisory boards for local nonprofits and community organizations, and spent four years writing and editing a local blog called Exit133 about civic life in Tacoma.

Anaid Yerena, PhD | 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 Masters 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.

Fern Tiger, MFA | Professor and Faculty in MCMP
Fern Tiger joined the UW Tacoma faculty in 2012. An artist by training (with post-graduate work in man-environment relations and cognitive psychology), Fern’s early interest in the importance of integrating diverse disciplines in order to address contemporary issues, led to a career as a strategist, combining the innovative, perceptive, and holistic insights of an artist/designer with the practical and systemic tools of planners and researchers.

Mark Pendras, PhD | 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 PhD 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.

September 22, 2017
**Linda Ishem, PhD** | Senior Lecturer and Faculty in MOMP

Dr. Ishem holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Black Studies from Wellesley College and a Master of Management (MBA) degree from the Northwestern University, Kellogg Graduate School of Management. In recent years, Linda served as the Director of the Pierce County, Washington, Department of Community Services, where she was responsible for operating a public Community Action Agency, and administering arts and cultural services, Housing, Community Development, and Economic Development programs.

**Lisa Hoffman, PhD** | Professor and Faculty in MOMP

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.

**J.W. Harrington, PhD** | Professor and Faculty in MOMP

Dr. Harrington holds doctoral and master degrees in Geography from the University of Washington, and a bachelor of arts from Harvard University. His research and teaching interests include economic geography, specifically subnational, regional economic development, occupational attainment, international trade. His work focuses on the U.S., Canada and China. Harrington has been a professor of geography at UW since 1997, and served as department chairman from 2000 to 2005.

**Yonn Dierwechter, PhD** | Professor and Faculty in MOMP

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 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and is the 2014 winner of UWT’s Distinguished Research Award.

### 3. CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

There are sixty required credits (twelve courses) in the UW Tacoma MACP program. 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 requires smaller group meetings, in addition to the regularly scheduled classroom hours. This course takes place during the last two terms of the program.

September 22, 2017
4. **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.