COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course is broadly focused on the challenges of urban revitalization commercial districts of cities, suburbs, neighborhoods, and small towns. The class is focused on the problems facing older commercial centers and the range of techniques that have been employed by economic development planners, urban designers, and other civic leaders in their quest to restructure, rebrand, redevelop, and renew commercial districts in their communities and to enhance their role as centers of commerce, employment, entertainment, and culture. We will be looking at this historically—starting from the evolving understanding of commercial districts both as a place and a concept with a particular focus on downtowns, then moving to the earliest attempts at urban revitalization (think urban renewal) and ending with many of the current techniques (e.g., transit investment, public markets, events), programs (e.g., Main Street) and actors (e.g., BIDs) involved in redevelopment today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students successfully completing this course will be:
1. Able to understand the history, role, and characteristics of commercial districts (downtown, neighborhood, suburban);
2. Capable of analyzing the characteristics (e.g., physical, social, market, business, financial, political, and programmatic) of commercial districts;
3. Able to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges facing a commercial district based on the above;
4. Familiar with the types of tools, strategies, programs, and policies available to revitalize commercial districts; and
5. Aware of the implications of interventions in and on commercial districts for equity, livability, and sustainability.

TEACHING METHODS
This course is taught through a once weekly lecture/seminar. The course is organized thematically by week (see below) with the lectures, readings, discussions and exercises, and media presentations grouped around those themes. Where appropriate, guest speakers will be invited to class to share their knowledge.
and experience on a particular topic. As with any large course, generating discussion is difficult. However, I will try to keep the class as lively, interactive and engaging as possible. You can help by making sure that you keep up with the readings and come to class prepared and ready to participate in large- and small-group discussions.

TEXTS AND READINGS
There are no required texts for this course. Instead, a variety of short readings are available online via D2L and through the PSU library website. Readings for each week are listed in the matrix at the end of this syllabus. With the exception of Week 1, readings should be completed before the class period for which they are listed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Your course grade will be based on the assignments and examinations listed below. All assignments will be turned in electronically via D2L.

| Assignment 1 (Group): Neighborhood Commercial District Evaluation | 50 |
| Assignment 1 (Group): Umatilla Downtown Opportunities Analysis | |
| Assignment 2 (Individual): Policy Brief | 35 |
| Quizzes (2) | 15 |
| Total | 100 |

The following represent summaries of the assignments; further guidance and detailed instructions about the four assignments will be provided in class and via D2L.

Assignment 1: Commercial District Evaluation – SWOT Analysis Presentations Due Week 5 (April 30) in Class; Final Presentations Due Finals Week (June 11) during Finals Period (7:30-9:20pm), Report Due 11:59pm, Thursday, June 14th

Objective: This assignment will require you to work in teams of up to 4 students to explore and analyze one of the diverse commercial areas that exist in Portland and its suburbs. You will be asked to consider typical elements that influence the success of a commercial district: design, organization, promotion, and market. As a group, you will conduct a demographic analysis of the primary and secondary trade areas for the district and a physical inventory of your commercial area, including ongoing or potential development or improvement projects. In addition to taking stock of the market, uses and design, you will interview approximately 6 business owners/operators and 6 customers and evaluate the role played by the street in the retail and service “ecology” of Portland. Specific attention should be given to any organizations at work in the area and any promotional strategies being undertaken. For this assignment, students may form their own teams, but teams must include more than one discipline (i.e., a mix of MURP, MRED, CD, etc.).

Products: An evaluation of the commercial district. The evaluation will be written in the form of a report to the local business community. It will present the challenges as seen by business operators and customers, and offer perspectives on the development opportunities relative to the retail/commercial landscape of the city and the adjacent neighborhood. Students will also submit a reflection on the process used to create the report. Full reports will be shared with the rest of the class and summarized through short presentations.

Umatilla Project: This project is similar to the neighborhood commercial district evaluation. However, you will be working with an actual client, the City of Umatilla, examining their core commercial area, and the
work will be more focused on implementation rather than analysis. This project will build off last year’s Umatilla Together MURP Workshop project (which won the prestigious American Institute of Certified Planners Student Project Award). This plan made a number of recommendations for revitalizing the downtown commercial core. This group will work with the City to expand and advance this work, with a particular focus on expanding entrepreneurship, decreasing vacancies, and facilitating public-private coordination. The specific form of the final product will be negotiated with the City.

Program Learning Goals: This assignment will also be used to assess program performance and achievement of Student Learning Goal 1: Leadership. The following objectives will be assessed through an anonymous review of the report and reflection:

- **LO1:** Students demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills.
- **LO2:** Students demonstrate self-awareness and self-management competencies in team environments.
- **LO3:** Students demonstrate both inquiring and advocacy competencies in team environments.
- **LO4:** Students can effectively communicate real estate development issues, analysis and concepts through verbal, written, and graphic modalities.

**Assignment 2: Policy Brief, Due 11:59pm, Wednesday, May 30th**

**Objective:** This assignment will ask you to analyze a specific, controversial, policy-level problem associated with commercial district revitalization. You should select a problem or solutions that are of interest to you and/or potentially useful for your current or future practice. Examples of potential problem areas include promoting urban infill, reducing building/neighborhood energy consumption, promoting mixed-use development, encouraging historic preservation/renovation, or replacing Tax Increment Financing revenue.

**Products:** A policy brief outlining the scope, context, and implications of your chosen problem; exploring specific solutions available, weighing advantages and disadvantages of each; and identifying a preferred alternative.

**Assignment 3: Quizzes, Due Weeks 4 and 8**

**Objective:** Review of key concepts and terminology.

**Task:** Two online, multiple choice quizzes.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments create a variety of issues related to equity, pedagogy and integrity. Please try to avoid them if at all possible. If you have legitimate (preferably documented) reasons for a late assignment, you can petition for an extension. Communication is important; extensions will only be granted if you contact me in advance of a deadline.

**Academic Integrity:** All work done for the course must be your own. The work must be original and prepared for this class. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Copying the work of another and not citing it; lifting text from the Internet; or even presenting ideas that are not your own without proper attribution are all examples of plagiarism. Submitting work for this class that has been done for another class also counts as plagiarism, it is called “plagiarizing oneself.” **Plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and could result in higher university level sanctions.** Don’t do it! If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible to arrange needed support.
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<th>Date</th>
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Watch: The Dynamic American City (1956) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PydFzWfkdOw |
Watch: A Tale of Two Cities (1964) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf0DrEGX7XI
Review: ORS Chapter 35 – Eminent Domain; Public Acquisition of Property
ORS Chapter 457 – Urban Renewal
Prosper Portland – Urban Renewal Areas |
The Main Street Approach - https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetamerica/theapproach |


**Review:**
Portland, 1972, Downtown Plan
Portland, 1988, Central City Plan
Portland, 2016, Central City 2035


| Week 5, April 30 District SWOT Analysis Presentations | Markets, Niches, and Brands; Urban Design and Public Spaces | Read:


**Watch:**
Reeves, Michele. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZvQAYeGHc&feature=youtu.be (start at 29 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnvjULBgyRo (start at 8 minutes) |
| Week 6, May 7 | Arts, Culture, and Entertainment; Tourism and Events | Read:  
Maitland, Robert. 2006. “Culture, City Users and the Creation of New Tourism Areas in Cities” in *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*, MK Smith ed. CABI.  
Review:  
| Week 7, May 14 | Business and Community Led Revitalization Efforts; Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship | Read:  
Supporting Entrepreneurship –  
[https://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/putting-your-research-to-work/entrepreneurship/](https://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/putting-your-research-to-work/entrepreneurship/)  
Watch:  
Last Week Tonight with John Oliver – Special Districts  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE)  
Review:  
[http://www.instituteccd.org/-How-To-Do-It/-6-3-Retail-Renaissance.html](http://www.instituteccd.org/-How-To-Do-It/-6-3-Retail-Renaissance.html) |
| Week 8, May 21 | Brownfields, Greyfields, and Ghostboxes | **Read:**

**Review:**

US EPA Brownfields Program – https://www.epa.gov/brownfields |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 9, May 28 | No Class – Memorial Day | **Watch:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljlgXWH3A |

More to be Added |
| Finals Week, June 11 | Final Presentations 7:30-9:20pm |  |