

# Urban Studies and Planning

## Course 11

Do you care about the way cities work and change? Do you want to know how citizens can minimize their environmental footprint? Do you have ideas about how society could be improved? Are you an activist? The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT can teach you how to put those ideas into action.

City and regional planning is about shaping the patterns of human settlement: providing housing, public services, employment opportunities, and other crucial support systems that make up a sustainable living environment. The subjects in the major teach students how the tools of economics, policy analysis, political science, and urban design can be used to solve social and environmental problems in the United States and abroad. In addition, students learn the skills and responsibilities of planners who seek to promote effective and equitable social change.

### Urban Studies and Planning at MIT

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT is the top-ranked department of its kind in the country. The undergraduate program is intimate and offers the motivated student a flexible environment with a high degree of faculty contact.

Since its inception in 1933, the department has consistently remained one of the top planning schools in the country. It has the largest planning faculty in the United States, now totaling close to 60 teaching faculty members. The department is organized around the following core questions of progressive change: "Can we make a difference in the world? Can we design better cities? Can we help places grow more sustainably? Can we help communities thrive? Can we help advance equitable world development?"

Students at DUSP find a unique program reflected in the department's goals and objectives:

- The integration of MIT's vast technological resources into planning practice and education.
- The presence of practitioners as well as scholars among the faculty.
- The education of students for practice in the public, private, and nonprofit arenas.

### Undergraduate Program

Nearly two dozen undergraduate subjects are offered within the department every year. Undergraduate students are also welcome to enroll in most Master's level subjects offered by the department. Joint classes are offered with the Center for Real Estate and the Departments of Architecture, Engineering, Political Science, and Economics.

Students majoring in Course 11 are required to take six subjects that introduce the field's core theories, methods, issues, history and competencies. In addition, majors may focus on one of the three streams of planned electives around the topics of environmental policy, international development, or urban history and society. Alternatively, students may create their own streams under the guidance of their major academic advisor.

In addition, DUSP also hosts MIT's Teacher Education Program (TEP), which provides an option for students interested in exploring new ideas in teaching and learning as applied to K-12 schools. Studies in TEP can also lead to licensure in math or science teaching at the high school or middle school levels.

### Minor in Urban Studies & Planning

The six-subject Minor in Urban Studies and Planning offers students an excellent opportunity to explore issues in urban studies and planning with some depth. Students are first required to take two subjects that establish the government, economic, and urban design contexts for local, urban, and regional decision-making. Next, students choose three elective subjects, which provide an opportunity to explore the sub-fields of planning. Finally, students take course 11.123, or "Big Plans and Mega-Urban Landscapes," which aims at a reflective synthesis of past and present efforts to implement large projects and policies.

### Minor in Public Policy

Public policy is an academic field that looks at the nature of public problems and how we attempt to address those problems through government action. The interdisciplinary HASS Minor in Public Policy is

intended to provide a single framework for students in engineering and sciences who are interested in the role of public policy in the field of their technical expertise. The six-subject minor is organized in three tiers.

All students are required to take two subjects that introduce them to rationales for government action, justifications that form the fundamental basis for making public policy. The second tier explores methods of analyzing and assessing the impacts of policy change. The third tier offers an in-depth program of study in one substantive field of policymaking. All minors select one substantive policy field and take three subjects within that area of specialization. Students may substitute a semester-long internship for one subject in their chosen field, with the approval of their minor advisor. The internship must be at least 9 units and must be for a letter grade.

### **Minor in International Development**

MIT students have enormous interest in tackling problems of global poverty and economic development in the poor regions of the world. The minor in international development increases students' capabilities to understand, analyze, and tackle today's problems in emerging countries, including the challenges of dealing with rapid urbanization, the need for industrial growth and jobs, the shortage of resources and infrastructure, the fragmentation of state capacity and rising violence, the ethical and moral issues raised by development planning, the role of appropriate technology and research, and the challenge of dealing with popular discontent. Our newest minor emphasizes problem solving, multidisciplinary work, and an understanding of institutions at various levels — from the local to the global — as the key to solving today's problems in emerging countries. Two first tier subjects give students a general overview of the history of international development and major theories and debates in the field, and an introduction to the dilemmas of practice. Minors then choose four second tier subjects allow students to develop more specialization and greater depth in specific sectors and international development issues.

### **Research**

Student participation in departmental research and public sector internships is a significant part of the program. Many students in the department take advantage of the Institute's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). In other cases, fieldwork and internships allow students to acquire competence by working with practitioners and bringing that experience back into the academic setting for

reflection and discussion. In addition to research conducted by individual faculty members or teams, there are often opportunities to join international research projects conducted by groups such as the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and the Special Interest Groups in Urban Settlements (SIGUS) workshop.

Each year the department also sponsors the "City to City" class and trip for undergraduate majors, which is intended to highlight important issues of city planning on a comparative basis. In recent years majors have traveled to Montreal, London, Barcelona, Venice, Mexico City, Paris, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Florence.

### **5-year SB/MCP Program**

Course 11 undergraduate majors may apply for admission to the department's Master in City Planning (MCP) program in their junior year. Students accepted into the five-year program receive both the Bachelor of Science and the MCP at the end of five years of study. Admission is limited to those undergraduates who have demonstrated exceptional professional promise, maturity, and commitment.

### **Post-Baccalaureate Opportunities**

The undergraduate major in Urban Studies and Planning is designed to prepare students for careers in both the public and private sectors. The major also provides a foundation for students who are considering graduate work in law, public policy, international development, urban design, management, and planning. About 75 percent of the department's undergraduate students go on to graduate school. Others go directly to careers in planning, public policy, consulting, or public and private management.

### **Contact Information**

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The MIT Course Catalog contains further information on the Institute, including all graduate and undergraduate courses and programs. For details on ordering the course catalogue, please visit the MIT Press Bookstore website at <http://web.mit.edu/bookstore/www/bulletin.html>.