

MASTER IN URBAN PLANNING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS 2009-2010 HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

I. OVERVIEW

Urban planners play a central role in fostering a productive, sustainable, and equitable built environment. Encompassing private and public buildings, physical infrastructure, and public spaces arrayed spatially in various land-use and form-based patterns, the built environment deeply affects the quality of human experience at work, home, and play.

Harvard's Master in Urban Planning (MUP) degree program teaches students how to plan for the development, preservation, and enhancement of a productive, sustainable, and equitable built environment. Students are taught to understand, analyze, and influence the variety of forces – social, economic, political, legal, historical, ecological, cultural, and aesthetic, among others – shaping the built environment. Students learn to *understand* these forces through deep immersion in the histories and theories of urban planning and urbanism as profession and phenomenon; to *analyze* these forces through intelligent application of qualitative, quantitative, and visual techniques; and to *influence* these forces through technical facility and creative interventions involving laws, institutions, the economy, politics, and design.

Core studio and lecture courses, along with methods requirement courses, provide students with fundamental knowledge and technical skills used by urban planners to generate, evaluate, and implement ideas, plans, and projects. Areas of concentration, supervised by faculty members, are explored by assembling elective courses within four pre-approved topical areas or a fifth area of concentration crafted specially for an individual student in consultation with a faculty member. Studios address domestic and international projects and allow students, individually or as members of collaborative teams, to think creatively and apply interdisciplinary problem-solving methods to planning questions. Some students choose to write a thesis in their fourth and final term. Elective courses at the GSD and elsewhere present a wide range of knowledge and skills for students to sample and master.

II. CURRICULUM

A candidate will be recommended for the MUP degree upon satisfactory completion of 80 units of courses. Four terms of full-time residence are normally required, and students typically take 20 units each term. Lecture and seminar courses are usually 4 units, studios are usually 8 units, and modules are usually 2 units. Under special circumstances, students may receive permission to reduce their course loads and extend their studies over a period longer than four terms.

At the beginning of each year, the program assigns to each student a faculty advisor who assists the student in thinking through curricular choices. Concurrent and joint degree program candidates must consult special rules governing concurrent and joint degrees for information on residency, curriculum, and other program requirements.

During their two years, students are required to take 28 units for the Core Requirement, 12 units for the Methods Requirement (Analytic Methods, Economic Methods, and Implementation Methods), 12 units for the Area of Concentration Requirement, and an 8-unit studio option. For the remaining 20 units, students may take all electives, or combine electives with an 8-unit studio option or an 8-unit independent thesis.

The curriculum for the MUP degree may be understood as having six possible components:

1. Core Requirement (28 units)

Students must without exception take the following courses during their first year:

- GSD 1121: First Semester Core Urban Planning Studio (8 units)
- GSD 1122: Second Semester Core Urban Planning Studio (8 units)
- GSD 3329: Core Urban Planning Workshop (4 units)
- GSD 5101: Histories and Theories of Urban Interventions (4 units)
- GSD 5103: Public and Private Development (4 units)

2. Methods Requirement (12 units)

Students must take four units of courses within *each* of the three Methods Requirements, for a total of 12 units:

- Analytic Methods
 - GSD 5214A and B: Analytic Methods of Urban Planning (quantitative and qualitative modules totaling 4 units)
 - Alternate course approved by faculty advisor and program director
- Economic Methods
 - GSD 5203: Markets and Market Failure (4 units)
 - Alternate course approved by faculty advisor and program director

- Implementation Methods
 - Course:
 - GSD 5201: Urban Politics, Planning, and Development (4 units)
 - GSD 5206: Planning and Environmental Law (4 units)
 - Alternate course approved by faculty advisor and program director

Students seeking to take an alternate course to satisfy a Methods Requirement must complete a form entitled *Petition to Substitute Alternate Course Satisfying Methods Requirement*. Students seeking to exempt themselves from a Methods Requirement must pass an exemption exam administered by the MUP program during orientation week of the fall term and submit the form entitled *Petition to Exempt from Methods Requirement*. It is the student's responsibility to pursue an exemption in a timely manner.

3. Area of Concentration Requirement (12 units)

Students must declare an Area of Concentration, satisfied by 12 units of elective courses, no later than the beginning of their third term. The purpose of the Area of Concentration requirement is to encourage students to delve more deeply into a specific subject area of urban planning through a grouping of courses that together provide such depth. Note that core studios and courses, methods requirements courses, option studios, and independent thesis may not be used to satisfy the Area of Concentration Requirement.

The 2009-2010 five pre-approved Areas of Concentration have faculty concentration advisors who prepare approved course lists and otherwise guide students in selecting appropriate courses and acquiring knowledge within the Area of Concentration. The five pre-approved Areas of Concentration are:

- History and Theory
 - Concentration Advisor: Fainstein
- Housing and Neighborhood Development
 - Concentration Advisors: Retsinas, Stockard
- Real Estate and Urban Development
 - Concentration Advisors: Kayden, Peiser
- Transportation and Infrastructure
 - Concentration Advisor: Gomez-Ibanez, Long
- Urban Design
 - Concentration Advisors: Krieger

Students who wish to pursue a Special Area of Concentration instead of selecting one of the five pre-approved Areas of Concentration must prepare a description of their special area, secure the agreement of a faculty member to serve as the student's special concentration advisor, and obtain the approval of the MUP program director. In the past, special areas of concentration have covered environmental planning, regulations and the built environment, and planning in developing countries.

Students must submit a *Declaration of Area of Concentration* form to the UPD office at the beginning of their third term, not later than the date study cards are due their study card is due.

4. Studio Options (8 to 16 units)

In addition to the two first-year core urban planning studios, MUP students must take at least one studio option offered by any department of the school in either their third or fourth term. For the other term, a student may take another studio option, elective courses, or the independent thesis (in the fourth term). To take elective courses instead of a studio option, the student must have obtained a grade of pass in a previous studio. All students must complete a form entitled *Petition to Select Studio Option or Elective Courses* no later than the first Monday in May of their second term.

5. Independent Thesis (8 units, plus 4 units for course on preparation of thesis proposal)

Students may undertake an Independent Thesis (8 units) during their fourth and final term. A prerequisite to the independent thesis is successful completion of GSD 9204: Preparation for Independent Thesis Proposal (4 units), as well as agreement by a faculty member to serve as thesis advisor and approval of the student's faculty advisor. Students must complete the form entitled *Petition to Complete Independent Thesis* no later than the first Monday in May of their second term. A final *Petition to Complete Independent Thesis* form must be submitted at the end of the student's third term after successful completion of GSD 9204: Preparation for Independent Thesis Proposal, signed again by the thesis advisor and the student's faculty advisor.

6. Elective Courses (12 to 20 units)

Students take elective courses offered by the GSD, other Harvard schools, and MIT to advance their specific intellectual interests as well as to satisfy their Area of Concentration. Core courses, methods requirement courses, studios, and independent thesis are never considered elective courses. Elective courses complete the 80 units of total credit required for the MUP degree. Students should note that at least 50% of their courses in any one semester must be GSD courses.

III. SCHEDULE

The following schedule must be followed over the two-year program:

First Term

GSD 1121: First Semester Core Urban Planning Studio (8 units)

GSD 3329: Core Urban Planning Workshop (4 units)

GSD 5101: Histories and Theories of Urban Interventions (4 units)

Courses satisfying Methods Requirement, Area of Concentration Requirement, and/or Electives (4 units)

Second Term

GSD 1122: Second Semester Core Urban Planning Studio (8 units)

GSD 5103: Public and Private Development (4 units)

Courses satisfying Methods Requirement, Area of Concentration Requirement, and/or Electives (8 units)

Third Term

Studio Option or Elective Courses (8 units)

Courses satisfying Methods Requirement, Area of Concentration Requirement, and/or Electives (12 units)

Fourth Term

Studio Option or Independent Thesis or Elective Courses (8 units)

Courses satisfying Methods Requirement, Area of Concentration Requirement, and/or Electives (12 units)

Note that only students who have obtained a grade of pass or above in a studio may take elective courses in lieu of a second studio option in either their third or fourth term. Students in their fourth and final term may complete an independent thesis only if they successfully completed during their third term GSD 9204: Preparation for Independent Thesis Proposal and have received all necessary approvals.

IV. FORMS

In order to make administration of the MUP degree program requirements easier and more transparent for students, faculty, and staff, students must use the following five

forms, appended below, to avail themselves of various options and to document fulfillment of degree requirements:

- Petition to Substitute Alternate Course Satisfying Methods Requirement
- Petition to Exempt from Methods Requirement
- Petition to Select Studio Option or Elective Courses
- Petition to Complete Independent Thesis
- Declaration of Area of Concentration

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**PETITION TO SUBSTITUTE ALTERNATE
COURSE SATISFYING METHODS REQUIREMENT**

Name _____

Email Address _____

Expected Month/Year of Graduation _____

Your Faculty Advisor _____

To satisfy the requirement for (please circle one):

Analytic Methods Economic Methods Implementation Methods

I propose to substitute the following alternate course/ courses (please attach syllabus): _____

Student _____

Signature

Date

Faculty Advisor _____

Signature

Date

Program Director _____

Signature

Date

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**PETITION TO EXEMPT FROM METHODS
REQUIREMENT**

Name _____

Email Address _____

Expected Month/Year of Graduation _____

Your Faculty Advisor _____

To satisfy the requirement for (please circle one):

Analytic Methods Economic Methods Implementation Methods

I have passed the exemption examination administered on _____.

Student _____
Signature Date

Examiner _____
Signature Date

Faculty Advisor _____
Signature Date

Program Director _____
Signature Date

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PETITION TO TAKE INDEPENDENT THESIS

Name _____

Email Address _____

Expected Month/Year of Graduation _____

I propose to complete an independent thesis during my spring term, 20__.

The proposed title of my independent thesis is:

My proposed thesis advisor is:

Student _____	Signature _____	Date _____
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Proposed Thesis Advisor _____	Signature _____	Date _____
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Faculty Advisor _____	Signature _____	Date _____
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I received a grade of pass or above in *GSD 9204: Preparation of Thesis Proposal* in my fall term, 200__.

Note: This form must be initially submitted not later than the first Monday in May of the student's second term to the MUP program office. The May submission date allows the MUP program to schedule planning studios that match the expected student demand in their second year. The ability to pursue an independent thesis depends on successful completion of GSD 9204: Preparation of Thesis Proposal in the third term, approval of a proposed thesis advisor, and approval of the student's faculty advisor. Students must update this form at the end of their third term showing any additional information in order to complete an independent thesis.

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DECLARATION OF AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Name _____

Email Address _____

Expected Month/Year of Graduation _____

___ I declare the following *Area of Concentration* from the existing list: _____

OR

___ I propose the following *Special Area of Concentration* (please attach a one-page statement explaining your *Special Area of Concentration* and the syllabi for proposed courses):

Title: _____

Proposed courses (must total 12 units): for either an existing concentration **OR** proposed Special Area of Concentration. Changes to this set of proposed courses should be filed with the program office.

Course # and Name	Units
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Student _____

Signature

Date

Individual Faculty Advisor _____

Signature

Date

Program Director* _____

Signature

Date

*only required for Special Area of Concentration