

Reading Tips and Study Questions: Transition Session—September 10th

Required reading

1. Pp.2-9 only (From “Who do planning theory”) in Campbell and Fainstein, “Introduction,” *RPT*
2. Pp.3-13 only in **Bishwapriya Sanyal**, “Hybrid Planning Cultures: The Search for the Global Cultural Commons,” In *Comparative Planning Cultures*, edited by B. Sanyal. New York: Routledge, 2005.
3. pp.108-117, 120-121 only in **Robert Beauregard**, “Between Modernity and Postmodernity: The Ambiguous Position of U.S. Planning,” in *RPT*

Tips and questions

In Session One, we used the Rebuild LA case as a window on some core themes and dilemmas facing planning, emphasizing Klosterman’s insight that it is one thing to have defensible *ends* (good things your field can help produce) and another to have legitimate, widely accepted *means*.

We’ll revisit and re-analyze RLA in this session but also move beyond it, considering distinct traditions of planning as a way of understanding the field and its development. This sets up our first case assignment in Unit B (the next few weeks), focused on planning the recovery of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. It wasn’t necessary that our first two cases be about urban disaster recovery, but we *can* take advantage of that sequence in some ways.

Questions for class prep and discussion sections:

1. **Campbell and Fainstein** suggest that it is premature to sound the “death knell” for approaches such as comprehensive planning. Why is that true if modernist planning, for which comprehensiveness was an early and core goal, has lost such legitimacy in the U.S. and other societies? And what’s wrong with the life-cycle model of planning, according to the authors? We will focus in class on the other two readings, but this one previews Units B and C by concisely outlining what’s worth reflecting on in order to become more effective, more ethical planners.
2. **Sanyal’s** concise and comparative planning history parallels Klosterman in many important respects—the fortunes of the rational or “modernist”

planning model, the importance of political shifts that challenge that model, etc.—but it is more comparative, and it includes an additional twenty years of historical developments. How does Sanyal suggest that we think or not think about “planning cultures”? What important influences have shaped planning in most parts of the world, and what kinds of changes seem more specific to particular regions or political systems?

3. **Beauregard’s** chapter directly sets the stage for our next unit of work, in which the complexity of multiple plans and the mistrust of various planning institutions play an important role. What role did the universities play after the Second World War, according to Beauregard, in the effort to establish planning *as a field*? And what are his conclusions, given the many changes that have reduced planning’s “totalizing vision” (meaning a tendency to want to plan for everything) and its “reformist tendencies” (meaning the urge to fix societal problems)? That is, what is his normative vision (pp.120-121) in view of all the changes?