

# 11:573:409 Challenges and Opportunities in Environmental Planning

Are the odds really stacked against a sustainable and resilient future?

Monday 10:20 AM – 11:40  
Thursday 10:20 AM – 11:40  
Blake Hall, Room 245  
Fall Semester 3 Credits  
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New Jersey is a Home Rule State. U.S. Home Rule is born out of mistrust of central government along with skepticism toward established experts. In that mindset, a community knows best how to deal with their local matters. Municipal governments in New Jersey decide if alcohol can be sold or if a new housing development will increase the property tax base. Home rule gives each New Jersey municipality significant power, including land-use decisions that have consequences beyond local boundaries.

But what do we expect from our towns? Is it just low taxes, a hopefully short commute to work, and ample parking? Innovative Environmental Planning raises the bar. Suburbia can be more than a conglomerate of profitable land uses lined up along roadways; it can become a place to be. The relationship of residents with their environment is formed by stories and experiences of individuals or groups that add to the meaning of place. The interaction between people and place forms a cultural landscape that is not limited to critical historic sites or spectacular natural scenes. This class will discuss a landscape approach that includes the strip mall and the parking lot, the retention basin of the warehouse, the industrial waterfront, the charming main street, and the picturesque park. People can expect these diverse locations to become a sequence of places, a suburban story worth telling.



The class will integrate case studies from the Rutgers Center for Urban Environmental Sustainability and analyze existing planning tools to develop real world solutions for the suburban landscape. The outcome of the class will be a possible definition of Environmental Planning in a home rule state.

