

In collaboration with the Sicilian municipalities promoting “the Simeto River Agreement”:



And in collaboration with:



PLAN 7708 Planning Practice
Course Syllabus, Summer 2015

**FACULTY FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS**

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1. Course Description

This program is a 10-day long field experience in the Provinces of Catania and Siracusa (Sicily, Italy), which will study and directly contribute to the efforts of local officials and community organizations working in the Simeto River Valley (eastern Sicily) toward promoting regional development through Urban Regeneration.

Over the past years, towns in the Simeto River Valley have worked to develop the “Simeto River Agreement”, a shared document that identifies a set of rules and regulations to be considered in future planning and design processes that affect local communities. Today, ten municipalities in the Simeto Valley (Paternò, Adrano, Biancavilla, Santa Maria di Licodia, Belpasso, Centuripe, Motta S. Anastasia, Ragalna, Regalbuto and Nicolosi) have already signed this formal document.

The “Agreement” has identified Urban Regeneration as one of the top 4 priorities to promote a model of development for the Simeto bio-region inspired by social solidarity and landscape ecology. Within the broad framework offered by the “Simeto River Agreement,” the workshop offers the opportunity to learn about Urban Regeneration breaking the limits of financial rationality, linking economic sustainability issues with socio-cultural and eco-environmental dimensions

These ten municipalities in collaboration with a network grassroots and non-profit organizations in the Simeto River Valley will sponsor the University of Memphis study abroad trip. Students involved in the study abroad will have the opportunity to work on urban regeneration proposals for each of the ten municipalities sponsoring the event. Students will work in groups and each group will produce a proposal, which is going to be presented at the end of the workshop to public officials, local leaders, and community members.



Saraceni Bridge on the Simeto River, Sicily, Italy

2. Course Objectives:

Following a service-learning methodology, the workshop gives participants the opportunity to:

- ✓ Experience action-research through the constant collaboration with a broad network of local actors (public, private, non-profit) that have been active in conceiving, shaping and implementing “the Simeto River Agreement”, contributing to a real process of development in one of the most disadvantaged European Regions;
- ✓ Enrich your knowledge on theory and practice of urban regeneration, through lectures and study sessions led by internationally acclaimed scholars specialized on this topic; additionally, participants will learn about Ortigia (City of Siracusa), one of the most successful cases of urban regeneration in Southern Europe, through a two-day-long field trip with the participation of public officials and local experts;
- ✓ Be part of an interdisciplinary team that will give the opportunity of learning from colleagues who share your same interests but with different background and experiences. Plenary activities will be paralleled with interdisciplinary small team working sessions, led by experienced scholars and members of the local community.

Learning goals will be met through field experience and participation in the studio, which will bring the students to analyze and plan pre-assigned study areas.

3. Pre/Post Trip Activities:

Pre-Trip: Students will attend lectures and discuss readings and materials on the history of Sicily, the Simeto Rivera Valley Project and the “River Agreement”, past experiences of former students from the University of Memphis who already participated in the workshop. They will also participate in Skype discussions with UniCT students and faculty.

Post-Trip: Students will be asked to keep track of their experience in Sicily on a journal. Upon return they will be asked to use their journals to critically reflect upon their experience through a final exam, which will also include questions on topics presented by faculty and invited speakers during the workshop.



Citizen demonstration in the Simeto valley

3. COURSE SCHEDULE:

Pre-field trip activities (9 contact hours)

First Class (3 hours)	Overview of the class and discussion on general readings about Sicily. The planning tradition in Italy and Sicily. Reading assignments.
Second Class (3 hours)	Planning for social justice and urban regeneration in Italy. Readings discussion.
Third Class (3 hours)	The Simeto Valley Action Research Project. Historic overview and contemporary challenges. Web seminar with the Italian faculty and students.

Field trip (35 contact hours; from June 17th until June 26th 2015)

TUE 06/16 Departure from Memphis international airport

WED 06/17

9:00 am – 4:00 pm Arrival at Catania International Airport and transfer to Agorà, Casale del Simeto and Casa delle Acque (transfers can be pre-arranged with organizers, based on the arrival time)

7:00 pm Workshop Opening Ceremony and Welcome Dinner at Agorà;
THU 06/18 The urban-rural relationship in the Simeto River Valley

8:30 am – 1:30 pm **Simeto Valley guided tour led by local leaders and experts:** Orazio Caruso, Geologist; Pietro Scalisi, historian and writer; Maria Randazzo, Archeologist (5 hours).

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lunch at Agorà.

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm **The story of the Simeto River Agreement;** lecture by Graziella Ligresti, first president of the Vivisimeto Association and Coordinator of the Simeto River Agreement Constituent Committee (1 hour).

4:30 – 5:00 pm **Urban Regeneration in the Simeto River Agreement.** Lecture by Giusy Pappalardo, Research Fellow, University of Catania Simeto River Participatory Action Research Project (1/2 hour).

5:00 – 6:00 pm Q/A session

6:00 – 7:30 pm Organization of the interdisciplinary working teams (1.5 hours)

8:30 pm Dinner at Agorà

FRI 06/19**Exploring the Urban I**

- 8:30 am – 1:30 pm Working teams' guided tours followed by meetings with local mayors. Each working team the hosts a public meeting in one municipality of the valley. Lunch is provided in each different town (5 hours).
- 1:30 pm Transfer to Agorà, Casa delle Acque, Casale del Simeto for break.
- 4:00 pm Transfer to Agorà.

About Urban Regeneration

- 4-4:30pm Urban regeneration and Local Development in the Italian urban planning and design tradition, lecture by prof. Daniela De Leo, La Sapienza University, Rome (1/2 hour).
- 4:30 – 5:00 pm Urban Design to promote the public interest: a comparative reflection between Italy and the US, Lecture by Antonio Raciti, Assistant Professor in City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis, TN, (1/2 hour).
- 5:00 – 6:00 pm Q/A session.
- 6:00 – 7:30 pm Team work: pre-loaded data examination (1.5 hours).
- 8:30 pm Dinner at Agorà

SAT 06/20

- 8.30 am Transfer to Siracusa

Urban Regeneration in Siracusa: a Sicilian Best Practice

- 10:00 am – 10:30 am Welcome address by Francesco Italia, Former Mayor;
- 10:30 am – 11:00 am **Towards an Inclusive Smart Siracusa**, lecture by Valeria Troia, Head of the Education and Common Goods City Department (1/2 hour)
- 11:00 am – 11:30 am **The Ortigia regeneration Case**, lecture by Arch. Giuseppe Di Guardo, City of Siracusa Europe Office Manager (1/2 hours).
- 11:30 am – 12:00 pm Q/A session
- Noon **Regulating the use of common goods in la Mazzarrona Public Housing Neighborhood**, lecture by Caterina Timpanaro, Urbact

	Project Coordinator for the City of Siracusa (1/2 hours).
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm	The Role of Repossessed Mafia Properties in Urban Regeneration , meeting with Renata Giunta, Libera Association Siracusa Coordinator (1/2 hours).
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Q/A session.
1:30pm	Lunch in Ortigia.
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Visit at the Arcadia University and meeting with Susi Kimbell, Adjunt Professor of Art History, (1/2 hours).
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	The Giano Svelato Project , Sergio Cilea, FAI, (1/2 hour).
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Break.
4.30 pm – 7:30 pm	Siracusa d'Amare! Guided tour of Syracuse with electric bus, (3 hours).
8:00 pm	Dinner and overnight in Siracusa (Lol hostel).
SUN 06/21	FREE DAY in Syracuse Participants will be given advice of things to do in the Syracuse area
6:00 pm	Transfer to Agorà.
8:30 pm	Dinner at Agorà.
MON 06/22	Urban Regeneration and Social Justice
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Are we pushing people out? Looking at Urban Regeneration from the Real Estate Capital of the World , lecture by Thomas Angotti, Director of the Hunter College Center for Community Planning and Development and Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College, City University of New York (1/2 hour).
9:30 – 10:00 am	Regeneration Strategies from the Bottom-Up ; lecture by Kenneth M. Reardon, Professor of City and Regional Planning, University of Memphis, TN, (1/2 hour).
10:00 am	Q/A session.
11:00 am – 13:00 pm	Team work: examination of collected data, (2 hours).
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Lunch at Agorà.

3:30 pm – 7:30pm **Exploring the Urban II** – Each team will participate in field trips aimed at collecting data such as photo documentation, archival research, interviews, (4 hours).

8:30 pm Dinner at Agorà.

TUE 06/23 Urban Regeneration and Design

8:30 am – 9:00 am **European Best Practices in Urban Regeneration**, Lecture by Laura Colini, Senior Research, Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (IRS), Erkner, Germany, (1/2 hour).

9:00 am – 9:30 am **The Simeto Landscape and local possibilities for bio-architecture**, lecture by Salvo Ferlito, MacroArchitectureDesign firm, Paternò, (1/2 hour).

9:30 am – 10am Q/A session

10:00 am – 10:30 am Break

10:00 am – 1:00 pm **Urban Regeneration Strategies for small towns in the Simeto Valley (I)** – workshop (3 hours).

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Lunch at Agorà and break.

3:00 – 6:00 pm **Urban Regeneration Strategies for small towns in the Simeto Valley (II)** – workshop (3 hours).

6:00 – 7:00 pm Guided tour at *La Casa del Cantastorie* (1 hour).

8:00 pm Dinner at Agorà.

WED 06/24

9:00 am – 9:30am **EU and Sicilian policy frameworks and funding opportunities for urban regeneration**, lecture by Caterina Timpanaro, Action Research Institute for Sicilian Empowerment and Urban Sustainable and Integrated Projects Expert (1/2 hour).

9:30 am – 10:00 am Q/A session.

10:00 am – 1:00 pm Team work (3 hours).

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Lunch at Agorà.

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Break.

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Plenary workshop in preparation of the final presentation (1 hour)
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Team work (3 hours).
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Break
8:00 pm	Dinner at Agorà.

THU 06/25

9:00 am – 1:00 pm	Team work (4 hours).
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch at Agorà
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Break
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Final presentation trials and feedback (1 hour).
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Team work: preparation of final presentations, (3 hours).
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Break
8:00 pm	Dinner at Agorà.

FRI 06/26

9:00 am – 11:00 am	Final presentation finalization I, (2 hours)
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Why what we have done is called Action-Research? A critical reflection, session led by Laura Saija, Research Fellow at the University of Catania and University coordinator for the Simeto Action Research Project, (2 hours).
1:00 pm	Lunch at Agorà.
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Final presentation finalization II, (2 hours).
4:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Public Meeting at Villa delle Favare, Biancavilla, organized by the Network of cities and associations of the Simeto River Agreement; participants' final presentations and feedback, (4 hours).
9:00 pm	Farewell Dinner with local products at Villa delle Favare, offered by GAL Etna



Points of interest map

4. ACADEMIC EVALUATION OF STUDENTS:

This is intended to be a highly interactive class, and as such, participation in class discussion (pre- and post-trip) and in the fieldwork in Sicily will play a significant role in students' evaluation. Students will be graded on the presentation of their assigned paper, their participation in discussions and questions, the assignment and the course project. Weights are as follows:

Class Participation	10%
Simeto River Valley Project	60%
Final Exam	30%

5. READING LIST

The following readings will be incorporated in the pre and post trip discussion

General readings about Sicily

Mack Smith Denis (1968). Modern Sicily, after 1713; in Finley, M. I. *A history of Sicily*. New York, Viking Press.

Putnam R. (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.

About planning culture in Italy

Faludi A. (2004) Spatial Planning Traditions in Europe: Their Role in the ESDP Process. In *International Planning Studies*, Vol. 9, Nos 2–3, 155–172, May–August.

Campos Venuti G. (1991) *L'Urbanistica Riformista*. Milano: Ed. Etas.

Caniggia G. (1976) *Strutture dello spazio antropico. Studi e note*. Firenze: Uniedit.

ANCSA (1960) La Carta di Gubbio [the Gubbio Chart] published in Gabrielli B. (1993), *Il recupero della città esistente: saggi 1968-1992*. Milano: Etas libri.

Planning in Eastern Sicily

Saija L. & Gravagno F. (2009) Can Participatory Action Research Deal with the Mafia? A Lesson from the Field; in *Planning Theory & Practice*, 10 (4), pp. 499-518.

Saija L. (2011) Proactive conservancy in a contested milieu: from Social Mobilization to Community-led Resource Management in the Simeto Valley (Sicily, Italy) – paper submitted to publication to the *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*

Raciti A. (Forthcoming) Building Collective Knowledge through Design: The Making of the Contrada Nicolò Riparian Garden along the Simeto River (Sicily, Italy, Landscape Research.

General Context Readings

Catholic Institute for International relations. (1978). Sao Paulo: Growth and Poverty. Bowerdean publishing.

Chang, H. (2007). Bad Samaritans: Rich nations, poor policies and the threat to the developing countries. Random house Books.

Cornia, A. (1989). Adjustment with a human face: Protecting the vulnerable and promoting growth. Clarendon Press.

Ghai, D., & Hewitt, C. (1991). The IMF and the south: the social impact of crisis and adjustment. Zed Books.

Polèse, C., & Stren, P. (2000). The social sustainability of cities: Diversity and the management of change. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

UNCHS (2011): Global Report on Human Settlements 2011: Cities and Climate Change
United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN Habitat

Steifel, M., & Wolfe, M. (1994). A voice for the excluded: Popular participation in development. London: Zed Books, in association with UNRISD, Geneva

UNRISD, 2001 Visible Hands (2001): Taking Responsibility for Social Development, An
UNRISD Report United Nations Institute for Social Development, Switzerland 2000

UNRISD Flagship Report 2010: Combating Poverty and Inequality Geneva 2010