

## Class Information

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- Planning Studio, 86970, 6055, AU1, Fall 2026
- Planning Studio, 86182, 6055, AU2, Fall 2026

## Instructor Information

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**Instructor:** Aaron Fortner

**Email:** [aaron@canvasplanninggroup.com](mailto:aaron@canvasplanninggroup.com)

## General Course Information

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### Description

The Auburn Avenue Strategic Plan **Studio** is an exciting opportunity to serve multiple City of Atlanta stakeholders and agencies to create a master plan for the historic Sweet Auburn community of Atlanta. Working alongside community development organizations Sweet Auburn Works and **Historic District Development Corporation** in conjunction with the City of Atlanta, this studio will formulate a comprehensive master Strategic Plan focused on senior housing, affordable and mixed income housing, and leverage the resource of the historic buildings and character to guide future development. The studio planning process will leverage public engagement meetings, interviews, and presentations to capture the desires and input of community members and stakeholders.

### Course Learning Outcomes

The studio will progress from data assembly to analysis, to consideration of alternatives, to suggested courses of action, to a final report and presentation. Community stakeholders will review each stage of the work throughout the process. As a planning/urban design framework exercise, the studio will cover issues and opportunities across the full spectrum of our specializations, all relevant to our scope.

Students can expect to strengthen their skills in data management, recordation, analysis, visualization and presentation in a cross-disciplinary and community involved process. The studio will provide the opportunity to test what students have learned, their experience in team settings, their future career options, and preparing themselves for that future.

### **Required Course Materials**

No course materials required.

### **Grading Policy:**

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Active participation in group discussions
- Completion of assignments on time
- Group collaboration and ability to work well together as a team
- Individual contribution to group projects
- Individual contribution to the studio report / final product

### **Description of Graded Components**

- Active participation in group discussions – 10% of final grade
- Completion of assignments on time – 10% of final grade
- Group collaboration and ability to work well together as a team – 10% of final grade
- Individual contribution to group assignments and tasks during the semester – 20% of final grade
- Individual contribution to the studio report / final product – 50% of final grade

### **Course Policies**

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#### **Attendance and/or Participation**

This studio is a group project and as such priority is placed on studio attendance to maximize working time together as a group. If it necessary for students to miss studio class time, students must coordinate with their studio team to obtain all studio lessons

or information that they missed during the class time. The instructor is to be notified of any plans for a studio time absence. Students should not miss any scheduled group presentations or community interactions during the studio.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Core IMPACTS**

[Core IMPACTS](#) is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated [career competencies](#). [This resource](#) developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

### **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations

that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

### **Optional Course Expectations, Policies, and Resources**

This studio is a group project. Students should thrive in team environments and are expected to be available during course hours to work with their studio team. While all city planning skill sets and specialties are appropriate for the studio, the focus of the studio will be in the area of urban design with a focus on developing a plan focused on shaping the built environment.

### **Pre- &/or Co-Requisites**

Pre-requisites are not required however students should have an interest in urban design and shaping the built environment.

### **Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI**

Students will collaborate on a group project and in the creation of a document with contributions from all students. Tools such as Generative AI, various design and mapping programs, and hand-generated graphics are all appropriate for this studio.

### **Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams**

This studio does not utilize any tests or homework assignments. Grades are reflective of participation and a final planning document submitted at the end of the semester. Students who miss any time during the semester must make up that time with their group to ensure that they are contributing to the overall group assignment.

### **Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days**

The studio will schedule digital learning days throughout the semester in coordination with the overall schedule for in-class meetings. Additionally, off-site visits to the study area community will be scheduled in accordance with the availability of each student.

## Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Students may use mobile devices in the classroom during non-lecture times.

## Additional Course Policies

None

## Campus Resources for Students

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### Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- [Student Resources](#) such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- [Professional Development](#) such as *the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events*

### Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))

## Studio Deliverables

### Existing conditions

- Documented summaries of previous plans and studies
- Documented existing conditions
- Documented existing zoning/development patterns, proposed changes

### Community input

- Documented stakeholder interview input
- Documented community feedback throughout the process

### Recommendations

- Conceptual recommendations presented to community stakeholders for feedback
- Renderings, graphics, sections, site plans, sample photos, maps
- Final work and recommendations in the following document deliverables:
  - Existing Conditions Assessment
    - Demographics
    - Zoning/HD District/Development Patterns
    - Documentation of blighted properties
    - Inventory of public parks and open spaces
    - Inventory of sidewalks
    - Inventory of bike infrastructure
    - Inventory of public transportation infrastructure
    - Inventory of public streets
  - Public Engagement
    - Senior engagement toolkit
    - Community leaders/stakeholder engagement
    - Elected leader engagement
  - Housing Strategy
    - Senior housing – design upgrades for existing structures / new development
    - Affordable and mixed income housing strategy
    - Zoning/HD revisions (if needed)
  - Historic preservation

- Recommendations to strengthen the historic and social fabric of the community
- Transportation
  - Identify areas of focus and opportunity in support of a future Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (SAPSAP) – Sidewalks, Biking, Transit, Streets

## Prior Studio Work

- (2019) – Lindbergh Area Plan
- (2020) – Covington Downtown Plan
- (2021) – Chatt Hills – Rico Roads Crossroads
- (2022) – Atlanta Faith Based Housing Plan
- (2022) – Habersham County Sustainability Plan
- (2022) – Home Park Neighborhood Plan
- (2023) – Midtown Public Realm Activation
- (2023) – Thomasville Heights Neighborhood Plan
- (2024) – Allatoona Community Plan
- (2024) – Rome Infill Housing
- (2025) – Douglasville (Arbor Place Mall)
- (2025) – Berkeley Lake (Peachtree Ind Blvd)

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/kerk0kx39quoklg3nmaq/h?rlkey=nmibqlfuo1aqc3nzfcuraa0&dl=0>

## Community Stakeholders

- Sweet Auburn Works
- HDDC
- City of Atlanta, Department of City Planning, Office of Design
- City of Atlanta, Department of Transportation
- Community leaders/stakeholders

## Baseline Studies, Plans, Materials

- GIS files
- Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan
- MLK Jr Historic District / Zoning 2.0 draft
- Previous area plans/studies
- Plans of submitted/approved developments

## Schedule Overview

WEEK 1	OVERVIEW & URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ M, Aug 24 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Class, schedule overview</li><li>○ W, Aug 26 Document outline, team coordination</li><li>○ F, Aug 28 Urban Design principles overview</li></ul>
WEEK 2	BASELINE RESEARCH & SITE VISIT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ M, Aug 31 Baseline research</li><li>○ W, Sep 2 Site Visit</li><li>○ F, Aug 4 Baseline research</li></ul>
WEEK 3	BASELINE RESEARCH & STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ W, Sep 9 Baseline research Stakeholder interviews</li><li>○ F, Sep 11 Baseline research Stakeholder interviews</li></ul>
WEEK 4	BASELINE RESEARCH & STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ M, Sep 14 Baseline research Stakeholder interviews</li><li>○ W, Sep 16 Baseline research Stakeholder interviews</li></ul>

- F, Sep 18      Baseline research  
                          Stakeholder interviews
  
- WEEK 5            SUMMARIZE BASELINE DATA & STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
  - M, Sep 21      Generate initial concepts
  - W, Sep 23      Generate initial concepts
  - F, Sep 25      Site visit
  
- WEEK 6            GENERATE INITIAL CONCEPTS
  - M, Sep 28      Generate initial concepts
  - W, Sep 30      Generate initial concepts
  - F, Oct 2        Generate initial concepts
  
- WEEK 7            GENERATE INITIAL CONCEPTS
  - W, Oct 7        Concept initial concepts
  - F, Oct 9        Concept initial concepts
  
- WEEK 8            CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION
  - M, Oct 12      Concept plan presentation prep
  - W, Oct 14      Concept plan community presentation
  - F, Oct 16      Concept plan revisions
  
- WEEK 9            CONCEPT PLAN REVISIONS
  - M, Oct 19      Concept plan revisions
  - W, Oct 21      Concept plan revisions
  - F, Oct 23      Concept plan revisions
  
- WEEK 10          CONCEPT PLAN REVISIONS
  - M, Oct 26      Updated plan presentation prep
  - W, Oct 28      Updated plan presentation prep
  - F, Oct 30      Updated plan presentation prep

- WEEK 11                    UPDATED PLAN PRESENTATION
- M, Nov 2                Updated plan presentation prep
  - W, Nov 4                Updated plan community presentation
  - F, Nov 6                Updated plan presentation prep
- WEEK 12                    FINAL PLAN REVISIONS
- M, Nov 9                Finalize plan, document production
  - W, Nov 11               Finalize plan, document production
  - F, Nov 13               Finalize plan, document production
- WEEK 13                    FINAL PLAN REVISIONS
- M, Nov 16               Finalize plan, document production
  - W, Nov 18               Finalize plan, document production
  - F, Nov 20               Finalize plan, document production
- WEEK 14                    FINAL PLAN REVISIONS
- M, Nov 23               Draft document due for review/comment
- WEEK 15                    FINAL PLAN REVISIONS
- M, Nov 30               Finalize plan, document production
  - W, Dec 2                Finalize plan, document production
  - M, Dec 4                Finalize plan, document production
- WEEK 16                    FINAL PLAN DELIVERABLE
- M, Dec 7                Final document deliverable