

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: CO-CREATING URBAN FUTURES - CHALLENGE-BASED LEARNING APPROACH

COURSE INFORMATION

Program	Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students and Staff
University	University of Sarajevo
Departments	Architectural design and Sociology (Faculty of Architecture & Faculty of Philosophy)
Course name	Co-creating urban futures: challenge-based learning approach
Course code	ECE2.5
Credits/hours	3 hours
Language of instruction	English
Mode of instruction	On-Campus/In-person
Pre-requisites	ECE1.6 (“Citizen participation in post-conflict urban contexts”)
Course dates	March 2026, TBC
Course schedule	Academic Year 2026/27
Target audience	Students, faculty, staff
Course coordinator	Isra Tatlić, Jelena Gaković
Course instructor	Isra Tatlić, Jelena Gaković

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SHORT DESCRIPTION

This hands-on course develops practical skills in applying participatory tools and designing processes for post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina through challenge-based learning grounded in authentic community engagement. Working in groups on a real urban project with real stakeholder data, students tackle the challenge of designing inclusive processes and centering marginalized community voices in divided contexts. Students experiment with participatory tools (mapping, voting, Charette), critically evaluating which methods genuinely serve community empowerment versus those risking tokenism. Through tool stations, collaborative design work, and cross-group facilitation simulations, the course positions students as change agents who learn to navigate the complexities of inclusive engagement in divided urban contexts.

PREREQUISITES

Students must have completed ONE of the following: "Citizen Participation in Post-conflict Urban Contexts - Tier 1" (recommended); Equivalent coursework in participatory planning or deliberative democracy; or Professional experience in community engagement or participatory processes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply participatory tools (mapping, voting, Charette) to real urban projects in post-conflict BiH
2. Analyse when tools succeed or fail based on stakeholder characteristics and conflict dynamics
3. Evaluate tool appropriateness and trade-offs between competing priorities (inclusion, speed, quality)
4. Develop facilitation approaches in response to real-time conflicts and unexpected disruptions

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPED

This course develops practical soft skills for participatory mediation in post-conflict contexts:

1. Participatory tool expertise: Apply and adapt tools (mapping, voting, Charette) based on context and conflict sensitivity.
 2. Strategic process design: Create multi-phase participatory strategies with justified tool sequencing and stakeholder engagement.
 3. Conflict-sensitive facilitation: Manage real-time conflicts, power imbalances, and disruptions during participatory sessions.
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4. Critical evaluation: Analyse trade-offs between competing priorities and justify design decisions.
5. Adaptive problem-solving: Respond to unexpected stakeholder behaviours and adjust facilitation approaches in real-time.
6. Synthesis under constraints: Integrate diverse stakeholder needs into feasible participatory plans.

COURSE CONTENTS

Building on Tier 1 theoretical foundations, this course applies challenge-based learning methodology to develop practical participatory facilitation skills. Students work collaboratively on a real contested urban project from Bosnia and Herzegovina, using authentic stakeholder data and documented conflicts. The course emphasizes experiential learning through tool experimentation, strategic process design, and cross-group facilitation simulations. By engaging with a complex, real-world problem, students convert theoretical understanding of participation (Arnstein's Ladder, ethics, positionality) into applied skills in tool selection, process design, conflict-sensitive moderation, and adaptive facilitation for divided post-conflict communities.

SESSION 1: Tool Exploration & Application (90 min)

Problem Introduction (10 min)

Presentation of a real BiH urban project with site plans, stakeholder data, documented conflicts, and constraints. Each group receives the same project with a different priority focus (veteran inclusion, marginalized voices, intergenerational dialogue, or time constraints).

Tool Stations - Hands-on Experimentation (60 min) Rotating through three 20-minute stations where students apply tools to their project and evaluate appropriateness: Station 1: Participatory Mapping Station 2: Dot Voting & Priority Setting Station 3: Charette Procedure Each group tests tools through their priority lens, asking: Does this work for our stakeholders? What are the risks? How must we adapt?

Tool Selection & Justification (20 min) Groups complete the Tool Selection Matrix documenting which tools to use, when, why, and potential risks based on conflict sensitivity and stakeholder characteristics.

SESSION 2: Process Design & Simulation (90 min)

Brief & Process Design Challenge (5 min): Design a comprehensive 6-week participatory process for the park project.



Collaborative Process Design (40 min) Groups create process plans that include a timeline, tool sequencing, stakeholder engagement strategies, ethical risk assessment, and solutions addressing their specific priority. Deliverable: Visual timeline poster + 2-page justification document.

Gallery Walk (5 min) Groups review how others solved the same problem with different approaches, identifying trade-offs and alternatives.

Cross-Group Facilitation Simulation (40 min): Live facilitation practice in which each group facilitates one session from their designed process. Students from other groups play the role of stakeholders with realistic role cards based on authentic behaviours. Facilitators must manage conflicts, power dynamics, and disruptions in real-time. Immediate peer feedback follows each simulation.

Final Reflection (5 min) Plenary discussion on lessons learned, trade-offs encountered, and integration of tool knowledge, design thinking, and facilitation practice.

STUDENT WORKING HOURS

Mini lectures & introductions: 10 min
Hands-on tool experimentation: 60 min
Collaborative design work: 65 min
Live facilitation simulations: 40 min
Reflection & feedback: 5 min

Contact hours (synchronous, in-person): 180 min (3 hours)

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

This course uses Challenge-Based Learning, where students acquire knowledge and skills by working collaboratively to tackle a complex, real-world problem: designing a participatory process for a contested urban intervention in divided Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CBL Cycle in this course:

1. **PROBLEM INTRODUCTION:** Students receive an authentic scenario with incomplete information
 2. **IDENTIFY LEARNING NEEDS:** "What do we need to know to solve this?"
 3. **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING:** Mini-lectures and resources provided WHEN needed
 4. **APPLY & TEST:** Students experiment with tools and strategies
 5. **SYNTHESIZE:** Design a comprehensive solution
 6. **EVALUATE:** Test solution through simulation, receive feedback
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Teaching activities: trigger scenarios that reveal problem complexity, just-in-time mini-lectures (10-15 min) responding to learning needs; hands-on tool experimentation stations; role-play simulations with realistic disruptions; collaborative design in small groups; live facilitation practice with immediate reflection.

TARGET GROUPS

This course is intended for students and professionals who have completed Tier 1 or have equivalent foundational knowledge of participatory theory. It is designed for undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines (urban planning, architecture, sociology, and political science) seeking practical facilitation skills, as well as early-career professionals and civil society practitioners who facilitate community workshops, stakeholder consultations, or participatory planning processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The course is also suitable for anyone who works with participatory methods in post-conflict contexts and wants to develop hands-on expertise in tool application, process design, and conflict-sensitive moderation.

Prerequisites: Completion of Tier 1 OR familiarity with Arnstein's Ladder, ethical responsibilities, and positionality in participatory practice.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
Tool selection matrix	Critical evaluation, context adaptation, justification.	25%
Participatory process design	Comprehensiveness, tool sequencing, ethical awareness, and feasibility	50%
Live facilitation simulation	Real-time moderation and adaptability	25%

Additional notes

Active participation in all hands-on activities is required. Group work is assessed both individually and collectively. The use of AI tools is permitted for research support; all process designs and facilitation must be original. Attendance is mandatory due to the collaborative and experiential nature of the course.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Independent learning	Overall
3	2	5



READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Bohman, J. (Ed.). (1996). *Public deliberation: Pluralism, complexity and democracy*. MIT Press.
(excerpts)

Fung, A. (2004). *Empowered participation: Reinventing urban democracy*. Princeton University Press.
(excerpts)

Zhelkina, A. (2013). Learning to use 'public space': Urban space in post-Soviet St. Petersburg. *The Open Urban Studies Journal*, 6, 30–37.

