

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN POSTCONFLICT URBAN CONTEXTS

COURSE INFORMATION

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| 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 | Citizen participation in post-conflict urban contexts |
| Course code | ECE1.6 |
| Credits/hours | Non-credit micro course - 2 hours total |
| Language of instruction | English |
| Course dates | On demand, flexible access |
| Course schedule | Asynchronous online |
| Course coordinator | Isra Tatlić, Jelena Gaković |
| Course instructor | Isra Tatlić, Jelena Gaković |
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SHORT DESCRIPTION

This micro-course introduces Arnstein's Ladder of Participation and explores the challenges of participatory mediation practice in citizen engagement within post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. Students learn to distinguish manipulation from genuine empowerment, navigate ethical dilemmas in participatory mediation practice, and develop reflexive awareness of their own positionality as mediators. Through case studies, interactive ethical scenarios, and exploration of the facilitator's role, the course builds foundational soft skills in conflict-sensitive community mediation, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility, essential for inclusive participation in divided urban contexts.

This course is intended for undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines who are interested in participatory processes, urban planning, or post-conflict studies. It is also suitable for early-career professionals in urban planning, architecture, sociology, local policy, or community development, as well as civil society practitioners who are starting to work with participatory methods. Anyone interested in understanding citizen participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is welcome to join. No prior knowledge of participation theory is required.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain and distinguish between manipulation, tokenism, and genuine empowerment using Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.
2. Recognize and analyze quasi-participation and power dynamics in selected cases from Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. Identify and evaluate ethical responsibilities when engaging with divided post-conflict communities.
4. Analyze the facilitator's role in managing power dynamics and creating inclusive participatory spaces.
5. Reflect critically on their own positionality, biases, and social positioning as facilitators in community engagement contexts.

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPED

This micro-course develops foundational soft skills for participatory practice in post-conflict contexts:

1. Critical awareness: Recognize quasi-participation and manipulation in participatory processes
 2. Ethical responsibility: Navigate moral dilemmas when engaging with divided communities
 3. Reflexive positionality: Acknowledge how one's own identity and position shape the facilitation approach
 4. Facilitation ethics: Understand the moderator's role in managing power dynamics and creating an in-
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clusive space

COURSE CONTENTS

This course is founded on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that combines urban studies, architecture, participatory design, political science, sociology, and post-conflict studies. It explores citizen participation not only as a democratic ideal but also as a contested practice influenced by social, political, and spatial dynamics in post-conflict contexts. This integrated framework emphasizes design and project-based thinking as essential to participatory practice, motivating students to convert theoretical insights into practical, context-aware, and socially responsive urban interventions that promote reconciliation, inclusion, and sustainable city-making.

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| Unit 1: Introduction (15 min) |
| Micro-video: Course scope & BiH context (5 min) - MATERIAL |
| Why participation matters in post-conflict cities (5 min) - MATERIAL |
| Self-check quiz: Baseline awareness (5 min) - TASK |
| Unit 2: Arnstein's Ladder & Quasi-Participation (40 min) |
| Mini-lecture: Arnstein's Ladder explained (15 min) |
| Concept spotlight: Manipulation, tokenism, citizen control (10 min) |
| Case study analysis: BiH participation example |
| Interactive task: Place this case on the ladder (CASE STUDY + TASK - 15 min) |
| Reflection prompt: Where have I seen this? (5 min) |
| Unit 3: Ethics & Moderation Principles (35 min) |
| Mini-lecture: Ethical responsibility in post-conflict engagement + moderator role (15 min) |
| Mentimeter: Ethical Dilemma (15 min) Interactive Ethical Dilemma Exercise (18 min) |
| Reflection: Your role as moderator (5 min) |
| Unit 4: Positionality & Reflexive Practice (25 min) |
| Mini-lecture: Your role as facilitator matters (10 min) |



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| Reflection exercise: Where do I stand within BiH's civic and stakeholder context (15 min) |
| Unit 5: Integration & Next Steps (10 min) |
| Final quiz: Key learnings check (7 min) |
| Tier 2 preview & resources (3 min) |

TOTAL TIME: 2 hours (120 min)

Student working hours:

Video lectures & mini-inputs: 42 min

Interactive tasks (case study, Reflection exercise quizzes): 50 min

Reflection & self-assessment: 28 min

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Through a combination of **short video lectures, interactive case study analyses, and guided reflection exercises**, students will acquire the analytical tools necessary to recognize, evaluate, and critically assess participatory processes in terms of inclusivity, power dynamics, and ethical practice in post-conflict contexts. Emphasis will be placed on examining the risks of superficial or symbolic involvement and on exploring strategies to advance participation as a practice of negotiation, co-production, and long-term sustainability. By integrating theoretical literature with empirical examples, the course frames citizen participation as an evolving field that requires both methodological reflexivity and ethical responsibility.

The course is delivered fully online and asynchronously. Teaching activities include:

- Short pre-recorded video lectures
- Individual guided reflection prompts
- Short self-assessment questions

All activities are completed individually. No collaborative or synchronous components are included.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING



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| Assessment type | Assessment criteria | Overall weight |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Unit 0: Baseline quiz | Completion, correct responses | 10% |
| Unit 1: Case study analysis | Accurate placement on Arnstein's Ladder with justification (auto-graded + short written response) | 25% |
| Unit 2: Ethical dilemma exercise | Thoughtful engagement with scenario, ethical reasoning (auto-graded questions + reflection) | 20% |
| Unit 3: Positionality reflection | Self-awareness, critical reflection on own position (guided rubric for self-assessment) | 20% |
| Unit 4: Final knowledge check quiz | Comprehension of key concepts (auto-graded) | 25% |

GRADING: Pass/Complete (70%+ required across all units)

Additional notes

The use of AI tools is permitted for support with comprehension and reflection, provided the submitted work remains individual and original. This course is non-graded and assessed on a pass or complete basis.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

| Contact hours | Autonomous work | Overall |
|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| | 2 | 2 |

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225>

Forester, J. (2013). On the theory and practice of critical pragmatism: Deliberative practice and creative negotiations. *Planning Theory*, 12(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095212448750> (excerpts)

Healey, P. (2003). Collaborative planning in perspective. *Planning Theory*, 2(2), 101–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952030022002> (excerpts)

Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: Strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(4), 419–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935042000293170>

