Course Description

This is an introductory course, suitable for undergraduates and graduate students who have little or no prior exposure to transportation planning and policy.

This course provides an overview of travel trends, problems, alternative solutions, and government policies in urban transport, focusing mainly on the United States. We survey the characteristics of the present urban transport system and examine historical developments in both transport and land use. We analyze several specific problems of the present car-dominated system: energy use, equity, congestion, air pollution, safety, and urban sprawl. We also examine problems of public transportation, particularly the fiscal crisis of transit and the need to improve service quality.

We evaluate the relative effectiveness and cost of various proposed solutions. The political/institutional context of urban transportation (legislation, subsidies, regulations, and planning guidelines) has changed dramatically in recent years; we will investigate these changes.

This course will focus largely on the United States, but we will make comparisons to other contexts throughout the course. Many of you have international experience, and I encourage you to share those experiences with us in class discussions!

Requirements

There are four main requirements for this course:

1. **DISCUSSION MODERATOR:** Each student will guide us through one of the required readings in class discussion. This is a very low-pressure assignment. The only thing you will need to turn in is one page of notes about the reading. Please (a) give a very brief summary of the paper or report and (b) have at least five things you would like the class to discuss. Keep in mind that you want to engage your classmates, so have questions ready that you think will lead to
lively discussion! You should plan on spending one or two minutes telling us what the reading was about and five or more minutes leading a discussion.

2. **PRESENTATION:** A 15-minute (graduate) or 10-minute (undergraduate) PowerPoint presentation on a sub-topic related to the week’s overall topic. For instance, for the week on transportation and the environment, you might talk about alternative fuels. For the week on parking policy, you might talk about parking “cash-out” programs in California. For the week on safety, you might talk about Safe Routes to Schools.

3. **PAPER:** A 15-page (graduate) or 10-page (undergraduate) research paper on a very specific transportation topic. Make sure your topic is laser-sharp, not broad. I advise you to talk to me about your paper topics, and start working on them as early as possible. You can also “double-dip” by writing your paper on a topic similar to (but not identical to) your PowerPoint presentation.

Graduate students will also be required to:

4. **GRAD STUDENT DEBATE:** You will participate in “The Great Debate” on whether sprawl is desirable or if we should move toward more compact development. I have assigned you two “starter” articles from a debate that happened several years ago in a prominent planning journal. You will need to move beyond these articles and find other sources! And you will need to anticipate what the “other side” says, and be ready to tear apart their arguments. This should be a fun exercise! Grading as follows: grad students will evaluate each other’s participation in the preparations for the debate. Undergrads will receive participation points for being active during the question and answer session.

In addition to these assignments, attendance and active participation are required.

**Grading**

Grades will be calculated using the following weights:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Moderator</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grad student debate</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction and course overview**

Required reading:


**Week 2: History of urban development and transportation**

Required reading:


**Week 3: Recent trends in travel**

Required reading:


**Week 4: Transportation, energy, and the environment**

Required reading:

Greene, David. "Transportation and Energy" (Hanson and Giuliano, *Geography of Urban Transportation*, pp. 274-293)

Christine Bae, "Transportation and the Environment," (Hanson and Giuliano, *Geography of Urban Transportation*, pp. 356-381)


**Week 5: Traffic congestion and road pricing**

Required reading:


**Week 6: Transportation safety**

Required reading:


**Week 7: Transit**

Required reading:


**Week 8: Biking and walking**

**Required reading:**


**Week 9: Land use and transportation**

**Please bring a roughly half-page to full-page hard-copy document explaining your plans and progress for your final paper.**

**Required reading:**


*(Read summary and literature review)*

**Also, please skim/familiarize yourself with:**

Smart Growth America. Read items in the “Issues” section, located at http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/what-is-smart-growth
Week 10: The great debate

This week, you will come to class prepared to debate whether sprawl is a good thing, or a bad thing.

Required reading:


For the second half of the course period, I will meet one-on-one with you to discuss your papers.

Week 11: Equity

Required reading:

Blumenberg, Evelyn. [book chapter without title yet, to be published before week 11]

Smart, Michael and Nicholas Klein. [paper to be published before week 11]

Week 12: Finance

Required reading:


Week 13: Transportation and health

Required reading:


Week 14: Disruptions!

Readings for this week will be light, and will be assigned closer to the end of the semester. The nature of disruptions (Uber, the Hyperloop, and so forth) means it’s more sensible to wait and see what’s most topical in December!