URPL-GP.4631
TRANSPORTATION, LAND USE, AND URBAN FORM

When?

Where?
Goddard B02

Who?
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This is an introductory course in urban transportation planning that examines the evolution of urban transportation systems and the complex relationships between transportation, land use, and urban form. The content of the course is divided into four parts. The first is a historical look at the planning and development of transportation systems and urban form in the U.S. The second part looks more conceptually and theoretically at the relationships between land use and transportation. The third part examines a number of land use and transportation policy questions facing planners today, and the fourth part explores the normative perspectives and values shaping our views of cities and their transportation systems.

Part One
• The tandem evolution of transportation systems and urban form in the U.S.
• The history and planning of public transit in New York and other U.S. cities.
• The introduction of the automobile and its implications for urban form.

Part Two
• Intra-metropolitan location theory and urban form.
• The links between transportation and land use.
• The land use impacts of transportation investments.
• The transportation impacts of land use policies.

Part Three
• International comparisons of transportation and urban form.
• The spatial mismatch hypothesis.
• Equity considerations in transportation and land use.
• Transportation, urban form, and public health.
Part Four

- Theories of good and bad urban form.
- The sprawl debate.
- Neotradtional development, transit oriented development, smart growth...
- The road ahead.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites: Urban Economics, Urban Design (recommended, or by permission of instructor)

There are three components to the course: (1) lectures and class discussion, (2) reading assignments and posted reactions, and (3) written assignments.

Lecture and Discussion.
Each class will have a lecture component, but discussion is encouraged (and required!).

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<th>Attendance/Participation (10% of grade)</th>
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<td>Part of your grade is based on attending class and participating in the discussion. There are only seven classes, so attendance at each is essential. Everyone should feel comfortable contributing their thoughts and questions to the discussion. If you have any questions about this requirement, please let me know.</td>
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Readings.
The lectures will not cover all of the material in the reading, so it is essential that you keep up with the required reading. A complete list of course topics and readings is attached. Students are required to complete all required readings prior to the corresponding class session. Readings will be made available from the Course Documents section of the Blackboard website.

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<th>Reading Reactions (10% of grade)</th>
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<td>Each week, you will be required to post your reaction to one or more of the assigned readings for the week to that week’s forum in the Blackboard Discussion Board, at least one hour prior to classtime. These reading reactions can be short, just a couple of sentences, and will not be graded for content or style, outside of the requirement that they contain critical thinking about the reading(s).</td>
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Written Assignments.
The written assignments for this course are described below. Two written assignments are required: (1) a place-specific analytical memorandum and (2) a critical essay on a topic relevant to the course. All written assignments should be submitted to the course’s Blackboard website by the stated date and time. Late papers will be accepted, but a late grade penalty of 1/3 grade per day will be applied to any papers turned in after the due date. The late penalty for assignments can be waived only with a written note from a medical professional.
**Analytical Memorandum (40% of grade)**

Pick a place and write about how its transportation and land use features work (or don’t work) together to shape the way individuals live and behave. Make an argument about how the place can be improved, or how its success can be replicated in other places. Remember to tie your analysis into the class discussion and readings wherever appropriate. Frame your analysis as a memo to an organization (real or imagined) that is seeking to improve or learn from your chosen place.

*Length:* Precise length is not important, but seven to eight double spaced pages of writing, not including graphical documentation, should be sufficient.

*Due Dates:*

- **February 6 (Monday), 5pm** – One page proposals due to Blackboard. Tell me what place you are proposing, your expected approach and findings, and relevance. I will return approval and comments by class on February 10.
- **February 27 (Monday), 5pm** – Memos due to Blackboard.

*Elements to consider:*

- **Place** – What scale of place are you documenting? It can be a street corner, a road, a neighborhood, a city, or even larger. Is this an existing place, a historic place, or a planned place?
- **Documentation** – Make sure you can obtain documentation to back up the assertions you make. Photos, videos, maps, drawings, articles, and policy documents are all valid.
- **Characterization** – Apply the concepts and theories in this course, as relevant to your analysis. How does the transportation infrastructure drive the land use, vice versa, or both? Is there an important historical dimension? Is this an example of a specific transportation-land use phenomenon (e.g. sprawl, smart growth)? Who uses this place?
- **Analysis** – Make an argument about the place. Does it work, is it flawed? Why? Are there arguments to be made about equity or sustainability? Think in terms of real urban policy goals, which you can “assign” to the organization to which the memo is addressed.
- **Recommendations** – Develop recommendations based on the course, whether as policy or design, either for how to improve the place or what elements of the place should be replicated elsewhere.
Critical Essay (40% of grade)
A great deal of mental energy has been expended in the past twenty years or so on the relationships between transportation, land use, and urban form. Concepts such as accessibility, sprawl, historic patterns of transportation and land use, jobs-housing balance, spatial mismatch, smart growth, transit-oriented development, pedestrian-oriented development, New Urbanism, and others have all been conceptualized and debated. This assignment asks you to jump into the debate on topic of your choosing. You should select a particular topic, a particular thinker, or a specific book, and create an argument as to why one side of the debate, or the thinker or book thesis, is flawed or spot on. You can draw on the literature to critically assess your topic, and you can advance your own argument or ideas as a counterpoint.

The potential topics and thinkers can certainly be drawn from this course and readings. Topics you are welcome, but not required, to explore are:

- What killed transit in most American cities, and what will bring it back?
- Does transit contribute to sustainable cities?
- Can new transportation systems re-shape urban form?
- Is there a spatial mismatch in cities?
- Can neo-traditional or transit-oriented developments attract resident and reduce auto use?

If you choose to write about a particular thinker, then your first critical step will be to distill their primary arguments across multiple publications. If you choose to frame your essay as a book review, you can select from the list at the end of the syllabus or propose a different title. The key is to not just summarize, but to critically assess the validity of arguments, bringing in other research and your own thinking.

Length: Precise length is not important, but 8 double-spaced pages should suffice.

Due Dates:
- **March 2 (Friday), 5pm** – One page proposals due to Blackboard. Tell me what topic, thinker, or book you’ve chosen, and your rough thesis. What type of argument will you make? I will return approval and comments by the next class (March 9).
- **March 19 (Monday), 5pm** – Essays due to Blackboard
Grading.
Course grades will be based on the following:

- Analytical Memo 40 percent
- Critical Essay 40 percent
- Attendance/participation 10 percent
- Reading reactions 10 percent

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

Lecture 1 (27 January)
Overview of Course / The Tandem Evolution of Transportation Systems and Urban Form


Lecture 2 (3 February). The Introduction of the Automobile / Transportation, Intra-Metropolitan Location Theory, and Urban Form


Lecture 3 (10 February). The Transportation-Land Use Connection: Theories and Evidence


Lecture 4 (17 February): Equity / Spatial Mismatch / Public Health


Lecture 5 (24 February): Cities and Travel, International


Lecture 7 (9 March): Sprawl’s Solutions, cont’d? New Urbanism, Smart Growth, Transit-Oriented Development, Etc. / The Future of Cities and Travel


Critical Essay Book List


