PPD 231: Transportation and Environmental Health

Description

This course investigates the environmental health implications of urban transportation systems. Travel provides an essential link between people and social, economic, and recreational activities in metropolitan areas and has been central to regional and national growth and prosperity. Despite these benefits, transportation systems are associated with a number of externalities including heightened congestion, increased noise, and diminished air quality. Transportation infrastructure and technology has historically had a profound influence on urban development patterns and has shaped physical, social and cultural aspects of American society including persistent inequalities such as racial segregation and concentrated poverty. Auto-oriented transportation infrastructure has been linked to reduced physical activity, safety concerns, and community health disparities.

Transportation and air quality planning and policy seeks to promote community well-being by providing more affordable, reliable, and adequate public transportation, increasing sub-regional jobs-housing balance, altering travel mode choice and reducing vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) through road pricing and compact and ‘mixed’ land use strategies, mitigating environmental impacts through alternatives analysis of infrastructure projects, implementing alternative fuels/energy, emission controls and vehicle technology, and expanding infrastructure that promotes non-auto travel and biking/walking safety. This course examines whether these and related efforts are sufficient and desirable strategies for improving and promoting community well-being, environmental quality and health, and access to opportunity in the long run.

The course uses a broad definition of environmental health to explore how transportation can be used to promote community well-being in a way that makes cities more sustainable, healthy, and equitable. We will consider the impacts of transportation across social, political, economic, and environmental dimensions and across geographic scales (proximate, local, regional, and global). Readings, lectures, and class discussions will seek to (1) understand the history, causes, and underlying dynamics of impacts across these societal dimensions and geographic scales, (2) identify and discuss disparate impacts, if any, (3) evaluate the extent to which existing/proposed solutions are properly targeted to address current and future impacts, and (4) to identify what further steps in the transportation and/or non-transportation arenas are needed to address impacts.
The course is organized around major areas of debate, inquiry, and policy making in order to investigate the ability of transportation regulatory and institutional strategies to address the harmful impacts of urban transportation. The course is grounded in a historical understanding of the role of transportation in urban development patterns and inequality and in a conceptual understanding of how social, economic, and institutional forces impact regional, individual and community outcomes.

This course uses transportation as a lens to examine strategies to improve environmental health, and is organized to consider three broad areas in which transportation impacts the well-being of urban inhabitants and the viability of communities and regions:

- **Transportation and Air Quality** – The transportation sector is a major source of air pollution with significant environmental, economic and health costs at the local, regional and global scales. What are the dynamics underlying air pollution impacts across these scales and to what extent will technological advances and transportation and land use policy be able to address air pollution problems?

- **Active Transport, Infrastructure and Urban Form** – Auto-oriented transportation infrastructure and culture has encouraged sprawling urban development patterns which have been associated with increasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle-related air pollution, lower levels of physical activity, and higher levels of obesity. To what extent can compact, mixed-use development patterns and expanded walking and biking infrastructure address these concerns?

- **Accessibility and the Distribution of Opportunity** – Mobility and access to economic opportunity, health services, and healthy foods are essential to individual, household and community well-being. What role can planning/policy play in increasing accessibility and promoting greater access to opportunity?

We will conclude the course by drawing themes and knowledge from these areas to critically develop a working a definition of sustainable transportation systems and infrastructure.

**Format and Course Requirements**

There are six parts of the course:

1. lectures and discussion
2. weekly reading assignments
3. critical summaries of readings (or leading class discussion about a reading)
4. a *group* briefing memo and in-class discussion panel
5. a *group* neighborhood transportation needs assessment project
6. a final presentation and paper

These six parts are intended to reinforce, but not duplicate, one another.

The course website will be the master source of information on course requirements and assignments, and students should check it regularly for updated materials and revisions to course schedule or readings. Changes will also be discussed in class to provide students sufficient advance notice of changes.
Grading: Final grades will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Class Participation</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Critical Summaries (8 pts ea.)</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Reading Discussant</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefing Memo and Panel Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Writing/Presentation</td>
<td>5% (Individual Grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Writing/Presentation</td>
<td>5% (Group Grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation Field Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>2% (Group Grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report Executive Summary</td>
<td>5% (Group Grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report Individual Section</td>
<td>13% (Individual Grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Attendance and Class Participation

Lectures are intended to complement, and not duplicate, the required readings. Regular attendance and active, informed participation are essential and a graded component of the course.

Readings Assignments

Course readings will be made available electronically on the course website. They should only be used in course-related activities and assignments and should not be distributed broadly. Depending on the pace of the course and the depth of coverage on each topic, the reading list may be revised during the quarter. Students should complete readings prior to each class session in order to make an informed contribution to class discussion.

Readings are divided into three sections (designated on the topics/reading list below), and students are required to complete one reading assignment for each of the three sections. For one section students must serve as part of a reading group and as a discussant, and for the remaining two reading sections students must complete an individual critical summary:

a. Reading Discussant. For one reading section students must lead class discussion for one reading in that topic area. Students will be surveyed to rank their preferences for a topic area in the first week of class. Based on survey responses, the professor will assign each student a reading topic, and each student should identify to the professor two weeks prior to the assigned class discussion day their desired reading for final approval by the professor. Students may choose a reading from those listed under the relevant topic on the syllabus, or may propose an alternative reading for approval. Each discussant should submit a one-page reading note for the assigned reading (including a ½ page summary of the reading and a list
of 3-5 proposed discussion questions) one week prior to the assigned class discussion day, and will lead discussion in class about this reading for approximately 10-15 minutes on the assigned class discussion day. The professor will review each one-page reading note then will email it to the class for review prior to the class session once approved.

b. Critical Summaries. For the remaining two reading sections students must complete one individual critical summary. Each will cover five of the readings for the dates designated on the course schedule below. These short critical summaries should summarize the substantive content of the readings and offer comments, criticisms, or insights on their collective content. Think of these summaries as equivalent to movie reviews of the readings. The requirements for critical essays will be discussed on the first day of class, and sample critical summaries will be available on the course website for review. An electronic copy of the critical summary should be uploaded to the class EEE dropbox at least 10 minutes before the start of class (no hardcopy required). Each essay should be 4-7 pages and should be double-spaced, have 1-inch margins, and use 12 point type. Each critical summary should clearly indicate include citations with page numbers for direct quotations and should have a complete bibliography (the latter of which does not count as part of the page limit for the review).

Supplemental Readings – In addition to readings on the course website, students should read on a weekly basis online media and blog postings relating to transportation planning and environmental health, particularly with regards to issues in southern California. This exposure and awareness will inform student research projects and will help students actively engage in class discussion about “real-world” planning processes and examples. Some online starting points include:

- The Source by Los Angeles Metro (thesource.metro.net)
- Streets Blog (streetsblog.org) – Note the “Los Angeles” section
- Curbed (la.curbed.com) – Note the “Los Angeles” section
- Planetizen (www.planetizen.com)

Briefing Memo and Panel Discussion (Group project)

Students are required to work as a group to prepare a 3-4 page (double spaced) briefing memo which (1) provides a brief background on a topic/project and (2) outlines a set of positions “for” and “against” a topic/project. On the assigned discussion day, the group will comprise a discussion panel moderated by the professor for which each group member will pretend to represent a group or organization making a brief public statement “for” or “against” the topic/project. Then the panel will answer questions from the professor and the class, and should expand upon and defend (if necessary) their group or organization’s position.

Each topic/project group should collaborate to prepare the briefing memo and provide it to the professor one week prior to the assigned class discussion day. The professor will review each briefing memo then will email it to the class for review prior to the class session. Students will be surveyed to rank their preferences for a topic/project in the first week of class. Based on survey responses, the professor will assign each student to a topic/project. The following are the potential topics/projects students should consider:
Transportation Needs Assessment (Group project)

Students are required to complete a group class project which reviews transportation-related aspects of a neighborhood in southern California by (a) conducting a site visit and field assessment of neighborhood’s transportation-related resources and challenges and (b) reviewing and assessing city plans affecting the neighborhood (land use, circulation and mobility elements of general plans and relevant specific plans). Each group will consist of 3-4 students. Students will receive individual points for his/her individual section and each member of the group will share a group grade based on the executive summary and overall presentation.

Research Paper

Students will be required to complete a substantial research paper which explores a transportation and environmental health topic. Additional guidance on selecting and defining a topic will be provided in class. Students should work throughout the quarter to research and write their final course paper, and are encouraged to seek input and advice from the instructor in office hours. The schedule for the paper is as follows:

a. Paper Proposal: An overview of the proposed research paper consisting of (1) a one-page summary of the policy/planning question to be explored, (2) a proposed outline of the paper, and (3) a preliminary bibliography of the sources of information to be consulted in writing the paper.

b. Research Paper Presentations: Students are required to make a five minute PowerPoint presentation of the major themes and findings of their paper in class during week 9 or 10 of the course. These presentations will encourage students to be proactive and start their research early in the quarter and will allow them to receive constructive feedback on their work, which they should use to improve their final paper due in week 11 of the course.

c. Final Paper: Due electronically in the course dropbox at day/time designated on the course schedule (no hard copy required). The final paper should be no less than 12 pages and no more than 18 pages (double-spaced, 12 point type, 1 inch margins, and not counting the abstract, bibliography, or appendices) and should reflect my comments and suggestions on the prospectus.

Late Assignments: For all written materials, late submissions will be penalized by 1/3 grade (e.g., from A- to B+) without a written proof of emergency.
## Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment*</th>
<th>Reading Topics and Discussants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td><em>Due by 11pm on 5/8 (Sat.): Surveys: (1) Reading Discussant Topic Preference, (2) Field Assessment Project, (3) Briefing/Panel Topic/Project</em></td>
<td>Topic: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Assignment topics/groups announced based on survey responses</td>
<td>Topic: 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td><em>Extra Credit (optional): Site visit with PPD Distinguished Fellows Art Leahy</em></td>
<td>Topic: 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Mon.       | *Due: Critical Summary for Section #1 (if you were not a reading discussant)* | Discussants: Stephanie (T5), Mladen (T6)
Topic: 7, 8, 9
Discussants: Jennifer (T8), Tanner (T9), Katherine (T9) |
| Mon.       | *Due:* 
  - Neighborhood Proposal (Field Assessment Project) 
  - Final Paper Proposal | Topic: 10, 11 |
| Mon.       | *Due: Critical Summary for Section #2 (if you were not a reading discussant)* | Discussants: Alyssa (T10), Katherine (T11)
Class Discussion (9:30-11): Art Leahy, PPD Distinguished Fellow and Chief Executive Office, Metrolink |
| Mon.       | *Due: Panel Discussion: Auto Emission Standards* | Discussants: Jeannette (T12), Risheng (T13)
Panel (710): Monica, Jeannette, Risheng, Stephanie
Panel (Hollywood): Alyssa, Katherine, Jennifer |
| Mon.       | *Due: Field Assessment Project Report* | Topic: 14 |
| Mon.       | *Due:* 
  - Critical Summary for Section #3 (if you were not a reading discussant) 
  - Paper Presentations | Panel: Tanner, Mladen
Class Workshop (11-12:20): John Kain of Urban Crossroads: Traffic, Noise, Pollution Impacts |
| Thurs.     | *11th week (no class)* | Topic: 15 |
| Mon.       | *Due:* 
  - Critical Summary for Section #3 (if you were not a reading discussant) 
  - Paper Presentations | Topic: 16 |

* Turn in all assignments in an electronic MS Word or PDF format in the class EEE dropbox or before class starts on the designated day, or at the date/time indicated.
Extra Credit

You may receive up to 1 point extra credit towards your final grade for attending approved events or presentations outside of class and turning in a corresponding 1-page critical essay about the event within one week of the event. Half of the critical essay should consist of a summary of the main planning-relevant aspects of the event or presentation, and the second half should consist of a critical assessment that engages the topics discussed (like an editorial or movie review which reflects on the strengths and weaknesses). You may receive up to 1 point for each extra credit event, and the maximum total extra credit points you can receive for the quarter is 3.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and could result in course failure and/or having the incident permanently noted in your student records. By turning in assignments, you are certifying that the work is your own and does not plagiarize or otherwise use other works without citing the appropriate reference. If you are unsure what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, it is your responsibility to make sure you understand the issues before you turn in written work. Here are some examples of plagiarism that you should carefully observe:
(a) When using someone else’s sentence, you must enclose it in quote marks and identify the source;
(b) If you paraphrase someone else, you must acknowledge the author;
(c) If you insert in your paper a picture or a table from a web page or from a book, you need to reference your source.

If you have any questions about academic honesty or plagiarism regulations, please contact the instructor. For more information, see the UCI Academic Senate Policy on Academic Honesty (http://www.senate.uci.edu/senateweb/default2.asp?active_page_id=754).

Topics and Readings (see course schedule for the days each topic will be covered in class)

Readings Section 1

Topic 1– Course Introduction & Overview of the Environmental Effects of Transportation


Topic 2– Foundations of Environmental Planning and Sustainable Transportation

Overview: Foundations of sustainable development


*Sustainable transport: an introduction*


**Topic 3– History: Transportation and Urban Form**

*Overview: The Influence of Transport Technology on Urban Form*


*Transit, Autos, and Sprawl*


*Health Implications of Sprawl*


**Topic 4 – Air Pollution Basics & Overview of Activity/Exposure**

Source and dispersion patterns of vehicle-related air pollution; lifetime and fate framework for understanding the horizontal and vertical sphere of influence and temporal scale; frameworks and methods for assessing pollution exposure and health effects; the impacts of criteria pollutants and regulatory strategies; overview of potential remedies including land use restrictions, housing market notifications, public awareness
Overview of Air Pollution Impacts


Near-Roadway Air Pollution


Greenhouse Gas Emissions


Air Pollution Exposure Assessment


Topic 5 – Ecological Effects of Roadways


Topic 6 – Transport Noise Impacts


Readings Section 2

Topic 7 – The Transportation and Air Quality Planning Framework

History of air pollution regulation in US and in California; The Clean Air Act, criteria pollutants and federal regulatory structure, State Implementation Plans, Regional Transportation/Air Quality governance; NEPA/CEQA project review, Framework for AB32 and SB375 to address greenhouse gas emissions through land use and transportation planning.

Potential Starting Points...


**Topic 8 – Travel Behavior Analysis in Transportation Planning**

Methods for collecting travel and activity data for transportation planning and environmental health assessment. Trends in travel behavior and technology.

*Potential Starting Points…*


**Topic 9 – Environmental and Social Justice and Health Disparities**

Social, economic, and institutional forces that influence the distribution of environmental hazards and exposures; Foundations and history of the environmental justice movement; Addressing outcomes (documentation of disparate outcomes) vs. processes (underlying causes of inequalities); Institutionalization of environmental justice and public participation requirements into the planning process

*Potential Starting Points…*


More Potential Starting Points...


**Topic 10 – Active Transportation, the Walkable City, and Bikeability**

Overview of design principles of complete streets and walkable cities; the importance and potential of sidewalks and alleys; social justice implications of active living initiatives

Potential Starting Points...


Pucher, John, Jennifer Dill, and Susan Handy (2009). Infrastructure, programs, and policies to increase bicycling: An international review, Preventive Medicine, in press (20 pages).


**Topic 11 – Street Design and Integrating Multiple Modes**

*Potential Starting Points...*


Model Street Design Manual for Living Streets, Los Angeles County (2011) http://www.modelstreetdesignmanual.com/

**READINGS SECTION 3**

**Topic 12 – Compact Development, Connecting Land Use and Transport**

Guiding principles of smart growth and sustainability; compact development strategies for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and green-house gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles; air pollution implications of dense and infill development and mixed use development

*Potential Starting Points...*


Smart Growth Network (2006). This is Smart Growth. (32 pages).


**Topic 13 – Transit Oriented Development and Affordable Housing**

Public transportation usage patterns; patterns of auto dependency; Public transportation’s ability to promote mobility and implications for community health

**Potential Starting Points...**


**More Potential Starting Points...**


**Topic 14 – Energy, Efficiency, and Alternative Technologies**

Energy and emission impacts of vehicle travel; Alternative vehicle technology and energy/fuels; strategies for low-carbon transportation and energy systems; the limits of technological fixes

**Potential Starting Points...**


**Topic 15 – Impacts of Goods Movement**

The challenges of understanding/addressing the local, regional, and global impacts of the goods movement transportation sector; impacts of ports and strategies to mitigate impacts; Case study of 2007 clean diesel truck regulations and the Clean Truck Programs at Southern California ports

**Potential Starting Points...**


**More Potential Starting Points...**


**Topic 16 – Accessibility, Spatial Mismatch, and Food Security**

Distribution of residential locations of disadvantaged communities, economic opportunities/constraints and transportation resources; the “mismatch” between where poor people live and where jobs are available; racial segregation and health disparities; linkages between segregation, transportation and access to healthy foods and services.

*Potential Starting Points…*


*More Potential Starting Points…*

