



Geography 465 Transportation and Sustainability



Fall 2014
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Instructor: Dr. Julie Cidell
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Class: MW 12:30-1:50
Classroom: DKH 115
Office hours: Th 1:30-3:30 or by app't.

Course description:

This is an upper-division course based on the geography of transportation, including economic development, the built environment, and the natural environment. The course considers historical, social, economic, and cultural approaches to transportation, including the importance of freight and passenger transport at global, national, regional, urban, and personal scales.

Course objectives:

- To understand how the principles of sustainability are achievable within the context of transportation;
- To understand transportation systems as aggregations of individual behaviors set within institutional frameworks;
- To appreciate the social and cultural meanings of transportation in our daily lives as well as its economic and political importance; and
- To meet university requirements in Advanced Composition through writing and revising throughout the course.

Required texts:

There are two required textbooks available at the campus bookstores. [An Introduction to Sustainable Transportation](#) by Schiller, Bruun, and Kenworthy has some good international comparisons and a broad take on sustainability. [Uncommon Carriers](#) by John McPhee is not a textbook, but a non-fiction account of various transportation modes and carriers in the United States. There will also be required readings available on Compass; the schedule below specifies the sources.

Grading:

There are five main assignments for this class, plus several smaller daily assignments. All of these are designed to reflect the course objectives and integrate the material from different parts of the course, with additional material required for graduate students. The course also includes an all-day field trip; students who cannot make the date once it is announced need to let me know as soon as possible.

First, the small assignments. Rather than standard midterms or final exams, there will instead be a **Question of the Week** assigned each Wednesday (not counting Week 1) at the end of class. The Question will be based on the readings, lectures, and assignments up to that point in the class and will be due by e-mail by 9 AM on the following Monday. (Sample: How might the experience of Boston's Big Dig influence mega-project planning in other cities, using the three "E"s of the planning process in your answer?) You are allowed to use books, notes, the Internet, other classmates, etc., in your answer, as long as you cite them properly. However, all answers *must* be your own; if you turn in writing that is identical to another source, be that a classmate, web page, class notes, class reading, etc., the question will receive **zero** credit. Answers should be about a page long (500 words), and the lowest grade of the fourteen will be dropped.

Second, each class period has one reading assigned to it, generally a textbook chapter on Monday and another kind of reading on Wednesday. Each Wednesday (not counting Week 1), we will be discussing the reading for that day in class. You will come to class with a **reaction paper** of approximately one page/500 words based on the day's reading. Include a question about the reading or its relation to other course material that you would like to have the class discuss. Each week, someone will be chosen to briefly lead a discussion based on their question; afterwards, everyone else will exchange their questions and write an answer to each other's. Again, the lowest grade will be dropped. This writing is part of the Advanced Composition credit for the course, along with the following assignments.

Now, the longer assignments. First, you will write a **two-page paper** explaining how the original location of a city or town along our field trip route was related to transportation and how that shapes its economic activity and spatial structure today. Working with a partner, you will produce a two-page summary of your findings to be included in the official field trip guide. (Graduate students will produce two pages on their own.)

Second, you will carry out a **Gini coefficient calculation** to see how airport or port traffic has become more or less concentrated in a specific country or region. The class as a whole will compare and analyze their coefficients to draw comparisons across regions and between modes; everyone will submit a brief write-up of the results. (Graduate students will be expected to incorporate academic literature on Gini coefficients and transportation.)

Third, you will conduct a short **field study** by analyzing movement through a particular corridor based on your own experience and official data for two different modes of transportation (e.g., bike vs. bus, car passenger vs. walking, car driver vs. skateboard). (Graduate students will be expected to incorporate academic literature on mobilities.) Alternatively, you can work on a research project to assist the Engineering & Transportation Division on campus; more information will be forthcoming later in the semester.

Finally, there is a **term paper** requirement. The first draft will be due about halfway through the semester, with a minimum of three scholarly articles as sources on a topic of your choice related to transportation and sustainability (suggested topics to follow). The final draft (around 15 pages or 5000 words; 20 pages or 7500 words for graduate students) will incorporate additional sources as well as responses to comments from peer and instructor edits. There will be two options for both due dates to help both you and I spread out our workloads. More information will follow on each of these assignments over the course of the quarter.

Points will be awarded as follows:

Assignment	Points
Question of the Week	130 (14-1 assignments, 10 points each)
Reading responses	130 (14-1 assignments, 10 points each)
Field guide	50
Gini coefficients	50
Field study	50
Term paper draft	50
Final term paper	100
Total	560

Expectations:

I expect you to be to class on time, ready to listen, with your cell phones muted. I expect you to ask questions if you have them, and especially to offer your comments and ideas. On a less pleasant but necessary note: cheating or plagiarism will result in a 0 for the assignment and possibly for the entire course. As defined by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." This includes cut-and-pasting paragraphs from Wikipedia, turning in near-identical work as a classmate, or anything else that entails passing off someone else's work as if it were your own creation.

Seriously, if you turn in something that's not your own writing, you'll get a zero on it. End of story. See me if you are unsure about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, or check out <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>.

Any student who may need extra assistance with regards to meeting the requirements of this course (e.g., learning or physical disability) is requested to speak to me as soon as possible so we can discuss how to ensure you get the most out of the class. Thanks!

Schedule:

"IST" refers to An Introduction to Sustainable Transportation, "UC" refers to Uncommon Carriers, and "Compass" refers to material on Compass.

Part 1: Thinking globally

Class 1A (8/25): **Introduction**

Read: IST Chapter 1

Class 1B (8/27): **The difference a box can make**

Read: Compass (Levinson: The Box)

9/1: NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

Class 2B (9/3): **That's logistics**

Read: UC ("Out in the Sort")

Class 3A (9/8): **From China to Champaign**

Read: IST Chapter 5

Class 3B (9/10): **An inconvenient truth**

Read: UC ("Coal Train")

Class 4A (9/15): **Hubs and spokes**

Read: Compass (Graham and Goetz: Global Air Transport)

Part 2: The National Road (and rails and airports and ports and...)

Class 4B (9/17): **The Eisenhower Highway System**

Read: UC ("A Fleet of One")

Due: Field guide

Class 5A (9/22): **"Low bridge, everybody down..."**

Read: IST Chapter 3

Class 5B (9/24): **Railroad time**

Read: Compass (Cronon: Nature's Metropolis)

Class 6A (9/29): **Money, money, money**

Read: IST Chapter 6

Due: Gini assignment, part 1

Class 6B (10/1): ***Staggers and semis and Southwest***

Read: Compass (Shaw, Knowles, and Docherty: Transport governance and ownership)

Class 7A (10/6): ***"Now everyone can fly"***

Read: Compass (Bowen: "Space makers and pace setters")

Class 7B (10/8): ***The Illinois River***

Read: UC ("Tight-Ass River")

Part 3: Region by region

Class 8A (10/13): ***Urban form and the one-hour commute***

Read: ITS Chapter 2

Class 8B (10/15): ***UTMS and LOS***

Read: Compass (Henderson: "Level of Service")

Due: Gini assignment

Class 9A (10/20): ***Public participation***

Read: IST Chapter 7

Class 9B (10/22): ***MPOs and AQMDs and COGs***

Read: ER (CMAP: CMAP 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, Chapter 1 (pp. 5-30))

Due: Term paper drafts, Group 1

Class 10A (10/27): ***The return of the streetcar***

Read: IST Chapter 4

Class 10B (10/29): ***Evacuations and mobilities***

Read: Compass (3 articles on Hurricane Katrina)

Class 11A (11/3): ***Smog and such***

Read: TG (Chapter 3, Potter and Bailey)

Due: Term paper comments, Group 1

Class 11B (11/5): NO CLASS (Cosmobilities conference)

Class 12A (11/10): ***The Big Dig***

Read: IST Chapter 9

Due: Term paper drafts, Group 2

Class 12B: (11/12): ***Anyport***

Read: Compass (Hoyle: "The port-city interface" and Oakley: "Working port or lifestyle port?")

Part 4: Bodily experiences of travel

Class 13A (11/17): ***Harder than rocket science***

Read: IST Chapter 8

Due: Term paper comments, Group 2

Class 13B (11/19): ***What it means to move***

Read: Compass (Jirón, "Immobile Mobility in Daily Travelling Experiences in Santiago de Chile")

Due: Final term paper, Group 1

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Class 14A (12/1): ***"Separate but equal" and the back of the bus***

Read: Compass (Hine: Transport and social justice)

Class 14B (12/3): ***Out in the field***

Read: UC ("Five Days on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers")

Due: Field study

Class 15A (12/8): ***The neuter commuter***

Read: Compass (McLafferty and Preston, "Gender, Race, and Commuting Among Service Sector Workers"; Rapino and Cooke, "Commuting, Gender Roles, and Entrapment")

Class 15B: (12/10) ***Sustainable transportation and the future***

Read: IST Chapter 10

Due: Final term paper, Group 2; All QOWs

NO FINAL EXAM