

Transportation Planning & Policy – UP 671/771

Fall 2024

Wednesdays 5:30 – 8:10
SARUP 345

Instructor

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Email is preferred. My UWM email forwards to my Gmail and I will respond from there. I will endeavor to respond within 24 hours. Call/text if something is urgent or last minute.

Overview

This course is intended to provide an understanding of how transportation planning intersects with public policy and politics on the national, state, and local level. It will help develop an understanding of the federally mandated transportation planning process, including federal transportation programs managed by state departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and National Environmental Policy Act requirements. The course will have a particular focus on how those mandates and policies impact real-world decision-making in Wisconsin and Greater Milwaukee. The course also will review the history of urban transportation, transportation finance, land use and transportation interaction, transportation equity, and the impacts of new technology on transportation systems.

The following questions will be addressed:

- Why is transportation important in urban development and quality of life?
- How do federal policies guide and affect the transportation system we have today?
- How is the transportation system financed at the federal, state and local level, and what are the challenges associated with transportation finance?
- What is the relationship between transportation, land use and urban growth patterns?
- How have federal, state and local politics impacted transportation policy in the recent past, and how might political issues continue to impact transportation policy in the near-term future?
- Can we afford both good transit systems and good roads and highways, and what is the nature of the conflict between pro-transit and pro-highway advocates?
- What are Southeastern Wisconsin's biggest transportation challenges and how might those be resolved?

Our discussion of these broad questions will be buttressed by consideration of current transportation policy issues at all levels of government, including the upcoming presidential election, continued impacts of federal and state budget woes, and local transportation debates over streetcar, Bus Rapid Transit

systems, and interstate highways in Milwaukee. We also will have occasional guest speakers who are involved in transportation planning and projects in southeast Wisconsin.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students will understand:

- How federal transportation policy is formed and how it impacts local projects.
- How transportation is funded and issues with current funding.
- How transportation policy intersects with planning.
- The history of major transportation projects in Wisconsin, in particular Southeastern Wisconsin.

Time Investment

On average, students should spend 48 hours per credit per semester on activities in and outside of class (e.g, readings, assignments, research, projects). For this 3-credit course, students are expected to spend approximately 144 hours spread throughout the 16 weeks of the course. Please note that the average time investment presented here is an estimate and students are assessed based on their performance rather than the time put into the course.

Reading Materials

No textbook is required for this course. Readings and other course materials are built upon various resources including academic articles, book chapters, videos, and online resources. Required weekly materials are available via Canvas. Reading assignments will be posted at least three weeks before the class they are required for.

Assignments and Grades

The final grade for UP 671/771 will consist of the following:

Participation	10%
Article discussion	15%
Assignment #1	15%
Assignment #2	25%
Assignment #3 – Final	35%
	100%

The grading scale is as follows:

A	93% and above
A-	89 – 92%
B	83 – 88%
B-	79 – 82%

C	69 – 78%
D	55 – 68%
F	54% and below

This class is a combined undergraduate and graduate course. Undergraduate students will have reduced requirements for assignments as noted in each assignment.

- Participation

Participation is an essential part of this course. Students are expected to read materials ahead of class time and be ready to engage in meaningful and respectful discussions. We will use different forms of participation, including partner, small group, and large group, to ensure that students feel comfortable discussing in various formats.

Please arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. We will take a break in the middle of the class. Please mute cell phones and other devices for the duration of class.

If you are unable to make it to class, **please contact me**. A Zoom link will be available for each class if a student is sick and cannot make it.

- Article discussion

We will begin each class with a student-led discussion. Students will sign up to lead a discussion for one class based on an article, news story, podcast episode, video, etc. of their choosing, and **not** one of the required readings. While the article does not have to be related to that week's discussion, it must relate to transportation planning, policy, funding, or other high-level topics. Please avoid design-specific topics.

Students should be prepared to give an overview of the article and should be prepared with questions to ask the class. Discussion should take 20-30 minutes. For undergraduate students, discussion should take 15 minutes. **I will grade students leading discussions the first two weeks more leniently.**

- Assignments #1, #2, and #3

The remainder of the assignments will be distributed according to the schedule below. The assignments will be completed individually. The assignments will be papers, with some flexibility in the final product for Assignment #1. Assignment #3 will include a presentation in addition to the paper. Late work will not be accepted without an approved excuse.

Schedule

Federal Transportation Policy: Background & Current Issues	
Week 1: September 4	Introduction to course, recent transportation trends, outline of the debates
Week 2: September 11	ISTEA: the origin of recent federal transportation policy
Week 3: September 18	Post-ISTEA federal transportation policy Assignment #1 assigned
Week 4: September 25	Federal transportation policy debate – funding
Week 5: October 2*	Federal transportation policy wrap-up and the presidential election Assignment #1 due
Week 6: October 9*	The intersection of transportation policy and planning, part 1
Week 7: October 16	The intersection of transportation policy and planning, part 2 Assignment #2 assigned
Week 8: October 23	Transportation funding in Wisconsin Mid-semester evaluation
Week 9: October 30	Local transportation planning
Week 10: November 6	Local projects: Interstate highways Assignment #2 due
Week 11: November 13	Local projects: BRT and The Hop Assignment #3 assigned
Week 12: November 20	Rail in Wisconsin
November 27 – No Class	
Week 13: December 4	TBD / AMA: What didn't we talk about?
Week 14: December 11	Presentations

*I will be out of the country for the classes on October 2 and October 9. More information on how class will proceed will be given in the first few weeks of the course.

This schedule is subject to change. We will have guest speakers that will hopefully align with planned class topics, but we may bounce back and forth between subjects.

Other Important Information

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Department of Urban Planning is committed to addressing systemic racism across all of its dimensions in our curriculum. Towards this goal, the Department of Urban Planning acknowledges the historical roles of urban planning in creating and replicating racial inequities in the built environment. We are committed to developing pedagogical approaches and curricular content to train urban planners on anti-racist planning strategies.

We desire to foster and reinforce an inclusive culture in which democratic principles embrace the richness of our diverse society. The Department of Urban Planning facilitates and advances respectful dialogues among participants (students, instructors, class project clients, community members, and so on) of diverse backgrounds and experiences. This course welcomes diverse backgrounds and thoughts and strives to make our community more equitable and inclusive.

Reasonable accommodations

Students with limitations due to a disability may request any reasonable accommodations. You can get more information at the Accessibility Resource Center to better understand the nature of reasonable accommodations.

The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12) requires that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities are a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the Accessibility Resource Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Students will be allowed to complete assignments or other requirements that are missed because of religious observance, illness, family emergencies, or other circumstances. If special accommodations are needed to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Students in Need

Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, or technology, or is struggling with mental, physical, or emotional health, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students (dos@uwm.edu) for support. Please notify the instructor if you are comfortable. Also, please check the following resources that may provide additional support such as UWM's Mental Health website and University Counseling Services.

Academic honesty and integrity

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and the respect for others' academic endeavors.

Appropriate academic conduct is key to your success. Please review the rules relating to student academic misconduct procedures which are specified in Chapter UWS 14 and Faculty Document No. 1686 at the UWM Dean of Students website.

All work in this course should be your own.

Always cite sources. Plagiarism is unacceptable.

In any written work and presentation materials, the student must cite sources for quotes, facts, and opinions (other than yours), both in the body of their work and in the bibliography/references section. Properly cite sources and place word-for-word quotes in quotation marks. Any plagiarism is a serious breach of ethics.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. In this course, you may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for assignments with appropriate citations. Please be aware that despite the many uses of AI language models, it is important to recognize AI's limitations and use this technology both responsibly and ethically. It is your responsibility to critically evaluate all responses generated with the use of AI. Furthermore, you must cite AI when it is used. Taking credit for any work that is not your original work constitutes academic misconduct, see UWS Chapter 14.

Course Policies

This course adheres to campus policies regarding students with disabilities, religious observances, active military service, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaints about the course, and grade appeals. For details about these policies, see UWM's [Syllabus Links](#).