Course Overview

Transportation moves us. Jobs, school, health clinics, grocery stores, recreational facilities, and more would be impossible to get to without adequate service and infrastructure. But history shows that the benefits of transportation have not been distributed equitably, and historically marginalized communities have had to bear disproportionate costs from transportation as well. More recently, planners have taken up the challenge of creating a more equitable transportation system. Achieving this goal, however, can stand in opposition to other important goals like efficiency and effectiveness. It is not an easy task. The purpose of this class is to come away with an understanding of the multiple dimensions of equity so you can ask critical questions of plans and policies that address all modes of transportation.

Objectives

The overall objective of the course is to foster discussion about what a just and equitable transportation system looks like. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Define transportation equity from multiple perspectives
- Comprehend the legal basis for equity in transportation equity in the US
- Apply methods to assess the equity of a transportation plan or service
- Understand how historical and current practice exacerbates disparities in access, health, safety, and economic opportunity
- Understand what affects the travel behavior of diverse population groups
- Discuss and write about equity using the language of practitioners, advocates, and academics
## Course at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>No class, Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Defining transportation equity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Setting the stage: demographics and travel behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Transportation justice (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Transportation justice (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Historical impacts of transportation planning (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Historical impacts of transportation planning (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Legal and policy frameworks: Title VI and Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Final project proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Class activity: Title VI analysis in CUUATS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>Assessing equity in regional plans and public transit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Title VI in practice; Guest speaker: Ashlee McLaughlin, CUUATS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Accessibility and equity: Definitions and theory (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Accessibility and equity: Definitions and theory (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Accessibility and equity: Indicators and empirical research (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 7</td>
<td>Class activity: Accessibility and equity in Champaign County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Finance, cost, and pricing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>MPO governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Active transportation (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>Active transportation (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Apr 2</td>
<td>ADA and planning for disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Transportation safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 9</td>
<td>Class activity: Walking and bicycling audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>Transportation, housing, gentrification, and displacement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 16</td>
<td>Advocacy; Guest speaker: Olantuji Oboi Reed, CEO, Equiticity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>Poverty and employment access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>Women and transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Immigrants and transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Apr 30</td>
<td>Transportation and the environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Course wrap-up and lightning talks</td>
<td>Final project (May 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Requirements

Course structure and assignments

This seminar-style class is organized around active participation and discussion led by students. Most days, I will facilitate discussion based on the readings or other topical events. Some lecture will be necessary when we cover concepts and material that form foundation for the day’s discussion. There will be three in-class practical activities.

Each week, you must submit a reflection on the week’s readings on Compass. Reading reflections should be about 250 words in length. The best submissions will be more than summaries of the readings—they should offer critical commentary, pose questions, or tie into other course or planning curriculum topics. We will often use these reflections as the basis for our class discussion. Reading reflections on the coming week’s readings are due each Sunday night at 11:59 pm.

A final paper or project will be required and due on May 4. The paper or project can be on any topic of your choice related to transportation equity. You may choose to write a literature review paper, write an empirical research paper, or submit a multimedia project with a short write-up. Your topic should be sufficiently narrow to give your analysis some depth (i.e., “transportation equity” itself is too broad of a topic for this assignment). The paper should be between 3,000 and 4,500 words, not including diagrams, charts, tables, or references. If you choose to submit a multimedia project, we will mutually agree on the appropriate length, content, and format. Time permitting, you will briefly present your findings (in 5 minutes or less) on the final day of class.

Before selecting a final topic, I must approve your proposal. Submit a one-page proposal by February 14. I will offer feedback and guidelines for your final submission, and I may ask you to revise your proposal if necessary. Your proposal should include the following:

- Tentative title
- Type of product you will submit (literature review, research paper, multimedia project)
- Description of the topic or research question
- Resources you will draw upon, including literature and data sources
- Relevance for urban planning practice, research, or advocacy

Grades

Grade percentages will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading reflections</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper/project proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper/project</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Numerical grades will be transformed to letter grades using the following scale:

A: 94.0 or higher  C+: 77.0-79.99  D+: 67.0-69.99
A-: 90-93.99      C:  74.0-76.99  D:  64.0-66.99
B+: 87.0-89.99    C-:  70.0-73.99  D-:  60.0-63.99
B:  84.0-86.99    F:  Less than 60.0
B-: 80.0-83.99

Late assignments will lose one letter grade per day they are late. Reading reflections submitted late will not count toward your grade and cannot be made up. If you know you must submit something late because of a valid excuse, please notify me in advance.

Readings

No textbook is required for this course. Readings and links to readings will be available on Compass. I will add additional required readings from time to time. The list of readings is subject to revision throughout the semester.

Participation and attendance

Class participation, and therefore attendance, is mandatory at all sessions. However, I understand that life happens and you’ll occasionally need to miss a class because of emergency, illness, religious observances, or another other need. There is no need to notify me in advance, but **more than three absences will result in a lower participation grade**. But do notify me in advance if you will have a prolonged absence for a legitimate reason. Whatever the reason for your absence, you are responsible for acquiring class materials when you do not attend, and assignments are still due as posted.

Course policies

Respect, civility, and inclusivity

We bring our own life experiences with us to the university, which means that we may have quite different perspectives about the issues we will discuss in this class. Any thoughtful viewpoints as they relate to the course material are welcome. I ask that you be mindful of our differences as you engage with your fellow classmates in a respectful manner. Skills in empathetic dialogue will serve you well as a professional planner.

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is rooted in the goals and responsibilities of professional planners. By enrolling in a class offered by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, students agree to be responsible for maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect in all DURP activities, including lectures, discussions, labs, projects, and extracurricular programs. See Student Code, Article 1-Student Rights and Responsibilities, Part 1. Student Rights, §1-102.
**Academic accommodations**

If you need academic accommodations due to a documented disability, please inform me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 217-333-4603, email disability@illinois.edu, or go to the DRES website.

**Counseling**

Academic settings can be stressful and it’s easy to get overwhelmed. If you feel that you need help, consider making an appointment at the Counseling Center (https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu). The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. The Counseling Center provides individual, couples, and group counseling. These services are paid for through the health services fee.

**Academic integrity**

Don’t cheat and don’t plagiarize. Any work you turn in with your name on it is presumed to be your own. If it is not, and you do not attribute the work to its source, it is grounds for sanctions that range from a written warning to course failure to dismissal or suspension. Refer to the University of Illinois Student Code for more details.

**FAA Writing Services**

Susan Liepert, the FAA Writing Advisor, offers one-on-one writing assistance to undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Classroom workshops and presentations are also available. She is available to assist FAA students (and students in FAA unit classes) with classroom assignments; theses and dissertations; artist statements, short bios and program notes; grant applications; scholarly publications; resumés, portfolios, and cover letters; and many other kinds of documents. Weekly drop-in hours are available Monday to Thursday 2:30 to 4:30 pm or Friday 11:30 am to 1:30 pm in Room 100G ARCH.

**Laptops, tablets, and cell phones**

There is documented scientific evidence that (1) humans are incapable of multitasking, (2) they get distracted easily, and (3) writing notes longhand is better for memory retention than typing. That means that, all else being equal, you are likely to perform better in this class if you stow away your laptop and pull out your paper notebook and pen to take notes. But I recognize that some people have organized their lives entirely digitally and prefer to use a laptop, while others may require one because of a disability. So, feel free to use your laptop or tablet for notetaking purposes or when otherwise instructed. (Some of the class activities will be easier to do with a laptop.) As a matter of respect for the instructors and your classmates, do yourself a favor and disable your wi-fi, install website blocking software, or provide yourself consistent positive reinforcement to avoid using the internet during class. I will ask you to put away your digital devices if we find your technology use to be distracting. Also—please turn off your phone ringers and keep your phones put away.
Course reading list and schedule

Note: This schedule and reading list is subject to revision throughout the semester.

Week 1 (Jan 17): Introduction


Week 2 (Jan 22, 24): Defining and setting the stage for equity


Week 3 (Jan 29, 31): Transportation justice in theory and practice


Week 4 (Feb 5, 7): Historical impacts of transportation planning


Week 5 (Feb 12, 14): Legal and policy frameworks: Title VI and Environmental Justice


Skim through FTA Circular 4702.1B, “Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients,” but read the following pages: I-6 to I-10 (sec 6), II-1 (sec 1-2), Chapter III. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Title_VI_FINAL.pdf


Final paper proposal due February 14.

Week 6 (Feb 19, 21): Assessing equity in regional plans and public transit


**Wednesday, February 21: Guest speaker, Ashlee McLaughlin, CUUATS**

*Week 7 (Feb 26, 28): Accessibility and equity: Definitions and theory*


*Week 8 (Mar 5, 7): Accessibility and equity: Indicators and empirical research*


*Week 9 (Mar 12, 14): Finance, cost, pricing, and governance*


Week of Mar 19: Spring break, no class

Week 10 (Mar 26, 28): Active transportation


**Week 11 (Apr 2, 4): Americans with Disabilities Act and Accessibility; Safety**


**Week 12 (Apr 9, 11): Safety (continued); Transportation, housing, gentrification, and displacement**

Review the “Housing and Transportation Affordability Index” website: [https://htaindex.cnt.org/](https://htaindex.cnt.org/).


Week 13 (Apr 16, 18): Advocacy; Poverty and employment access


Week 14 (Apr 23, 25): Women and immigrants


*Week 15 (Apr 30, May 2): Transportation and the environment*


