**Urban Transportation Revolutions**
Spring 2018


Instructor: Eric Goldwyn
Course Meeting: 5:15PM-7:45PM
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00PM-5:00PM OR by appointment
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**Course Description**
This course examines the role of transportation technologies on the changing shape of cities. With each new mode, from streetcars to private automobiles, the city has undergone a dramatic reordering by enabling people to access new swaths of undeveloped land on the periphery and fill in vacant sites in existing cities. By tracing these transportation revolutions, we can see new settlement patterns and behaviors emerge. We will draw on classical urban texts from a diverse group of historians, architects, economists, urban planners, geographers, anthropologists and others to understand how transportation networks shape urban form and everyday life.

**Summary of Course Requirements**
**1) Course Reading:** On average we will read 3-4 separate readings per week. This usually works out to about 50-100 pages of reading. Students are expected to complete readings before class

**2) Paper #1:** This paper is a traditional 5-paragraph essay. You will draw on the readings from class to answer a specific question. You must provide a thesis, draw on evidence from 3 different readings, provide a logical structure, and proofread your assignment. This paper is designed to let me see how well you manage the basics of paper writing. With this baseline understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, I will help you improve the areas that need it.

**3) Paper #2:** This paper is intended to allow students to reflect on the readings and our discussions. I will provide a list of questions for this paper (6 to 8 pages). Instructions will be discussed in class.

**3) Paper #3:** This paper is based on student observation. You will go out, observe, and comment. This assignment will give you an opportunity to put your learning into action. Perhaps you'll visit a newly developing suburb, cluster of dockless bikeshare bicycles, or a favorite park bench. The paper should be no more than two pages of written text.

**4) Final Paper:** In consultation with the instructor, students will select a paper topic that relates back to the course. I want you to identify something specific that interests you, such as the rise of Didi, the eternal promise of a Second Avenue Subway, or container shipping's impact on urban form, and explain how that

contains the seed of a transportation revolution (8 to 10 pages). Remember, a transportation revolution implies that the mode or project you've identified is indicative of some larger change in the built environment and behavior.

**Grading Rubric**
I expect all students to do the reading, come to class, and participate.

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|---|---|
| **1) Class participation** | **- 15%** |
| **2) Paper #1** | **- 10%** |
| **3) Paper #2** | **- 25%** |
| **3) Paper #3** | **- 10%** |
| **4) Final paper** | **- 40%** |

**Late Policy**: If you decide to hand something in late without getting an extension first, I will deduct .333 of a point (assuming a 4.0 scale) for each day it is late: an A- becomes a B+ after one day and A- becomes a B after two days.

**Extensions**: Extensions will not be given out willy-nilly. Under almost no circumstances will an extension be granted 24-hours before something is due. I am both reasonable and fair and unreasonable and unfair.

**Office Hours:** I am available during scheduled office hours and via email.

**Required Books**
Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*: *The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century (*University of California Press; First Edition, With a New Preface edition, 2014)

K.H. Schaeffer and Elliott Sclar, *Access for All: Transportation and Urban Growth* (Columbia University Press, 1980)

**Required Readings**
All readings will be available electronically through the NYU Libraries or NYU Classes.

**Academic Integrity:**
Students are expected to follow the standards of academic integrity published in the NYU Shanghai *Undergraduate Bulletin.* Thus, you must write your own papers and cite authors who inform your writing. If you are unsure of anything please contact me so I can clear up any confusion.

**Course Schedule**
**Weeks 1 & 2**
**Introductions and general theories about travel and cities**
We'll discuss the syllabus and get to know one another. Before diving into all of the neat technologies that have come to define transportation in recent years, let's think a bit about how people travel, why people travel, and what it means to be urban.

Readings:
Colin Clark, Transport: Maker and Breaker of Cities
Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life"
Piper Gaubatz, *"Processes of Morphological Change in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou"*

**Week 3. Paper #1 due.**
**A simpler time; a simpler mode of transportation**
As I type this someone is perfecting the self-driving car, someone else is figuring out how to commercialize space travel, and another person is working on a new app that will blow all of our minds. Before we fetishize these advances, let's take a moment to look back at what came before.

Readings:
Douglas Rae, *City* (pp. 1-31).
Joan DeJean, *How Paris became Paris* (pp. 96-121).
Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust* (pp. 196-213)

**Week 4**
**Faster travel brings larger, denser cities and suburbs**
Transportation technology enabled cities to expand and people to flee urban pathologies like disease and crowding.

Readings**:**
K.H. Schaeffer and Elliott Sclar, *Access for All*

**Week 5**
**How rail changed the world**
Travel by rail changes our relationship to travel in important ways. Travel becomes more predictable, distance becomes less of a barrier, time takes on a new meaning, and our central cities develop more rapidly.

Readings:
Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*

**Week 6**
**Rail continued. Paper #2 due.**
Richard White, *Railroaded* (pp. 140-178)
John Friedmann, *China's Urban Transition* (pp. 57-76)
Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs* (pp. 46-66)

**Week 7**
**The automobile and the changing landscape**
Just as the train, streetcar, and horse altered the shape of the city, so too did the automobile.

Readings:
Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path* (pp. 173-228)
Mimi Sheller and John Urry, "The City and the Car"
Shivani Radhakrishnan, "How jaywalking became a crime"

**Week 8**
**Sprawl, suburbs, and a new urban form**
I know I'm laying it on thick, but the automobile changed the way we think about space, life, and built communities.

Readings:
Weiping Wu, "City profile: Shanghai"
Owen Gutfreund, *20th-Century Sprawl* by (pp. 89-121)
Thomas Campanella, *The Concrete Dragon* (pp. 217-239)

**Week 9**
**Wait, have we made a grave mistake?**
Building highways and turning over our cities to the automobile exacted a huge cost: from bulldozing neighborhoods to make room for roads to sapping downtowns of their pedestrian vitality.

Readings:
Robert Caro, *The Power Broker* (pp. 895- 919)
Rui Wang, "Shaping urban transport policies in China: Will copying foreign policies work?"
Jakle and Sculle, *Lots of Parking* (pp. 93-156)

**Week 10**
**Transit. Paper #2 due.**
For those who don't drive but still need to get around, transit is the best option. During this week we'll trace the rise and fall of transit and see how transit has adapted to the post-automobile world.

Paul Mees, *Transport for Suburbia* (pp.165-182).
Brian Taylor et al. "Nature and/or Nurture? Analyzing the determinants of transit ridership across US urbanized areas."
Martha Bianco, "Technological Innovation and the Rise and Fall of Urban Mass Transit."

**Week 11**
***Class Trip***

**Week 12**
**Alternatives**

In addition to the renewed interest in transit, cycling and alternative transportation planning methods seek to counter the dominance of the auto by reclaiming space from cars and re-imagining streets and roadways.

Readings:
Jason Henderson, "Level of Service: The Politics of Reconfiguring Urban Streets in San Francisco, CA."
Martin Schiefelbusch, " Rational planning for emotional mobility?"
Jason Patton, "A Pedestrian World"

**Week 13**
**When formal systems fail**
Throughout the semester we have focused on transportation projects and modes that have been nurtured directly by states and technocrats. What happens, however, when states and technocrats are unable to keep up with the changing pace of development, don't have the resources to build and maintain adequate networks, or cannot meet the demands of different users? What happens when people take matters into their own hands?

Douglas Uzzell, "A Homegrown Mass Transit System in Lima, Peru: A Case of Generative Planning."
Shaolu Yu, "'I am like a deaf, dumb and blind person': Mobility and immobility of Chinese (im)migrants in Flushing, Queens, New York City."
Eric Goldwyn "The Anatomy of a New Dollar Van Route: Informal Transport and Planning in New York City."

**Week 14**
**Reflecting on the semester and looking forward. Final paper due.**
As we wrap up the semester, I wanted to discuss e-hail taxis, autonomous cars, dockless bike share, and other topics. Journalists, executives from these companies, and regulators who are trying to make sense of all of this change will join us in class to discuss the next transportation revolution.

We are in the midst of a potential transport revolution. How does the smartphone change travel? Are Uber, Didi, and Via the future of transportation or is this a temporary state of being? And then there's the autonomous car!

Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor* (pp.3-39)
Josh Lipton, "Bike-sharing boom in China pedals to new heights"
Sarah Clemence, "Dubai Stages First Public Test of Drone Taxis"

## Grading Rubric

There's no neat mathematical model for grading a paper. There will be no percentages reported or anything like that in this write-up on grading. I'm not a robot and don't grade like one.

-An A paper must have a **clear thesis** (not an implied thesis OR no thesis at all), it must **use evidence**, such as quotes or data, to support each of the substantive claims made in the paper (this is why quotes should follow topic sentences rather than start off paragraphs), and finally the paper must be **organized and proof-read** for typos and grammatical errors.

-A B paper will do some of these things well and some of them poorly. This often means that a B paper neglected to articulate a clear thesis, or the organization was confusing and unclear, or typos, missing words, and grammatical errors confused the paper's meaning.

-A C paper will not do any of these things well. Hopefully, no one will write a D paper. A strong thesis and clear organization are more important than grammar and typos. If you don't have a clearly articulated thesis, it is impossible to get an A.

A little more about all of these things:

**Thesis**: This is a sentence or two that outlines your argument and the structure of your paper. Think of it as the paper's blueprint. If there are three main claims, all three better be in your thesis. Thesis-driven essays are not thrillers. I don't want to be surprised when I get to the end. If making a provocative claim, which is perfectly reasonable, you want to painstakingly walk your reader through your thinking and the evidence. This means, you want to tell your reader right away that you're about to blow his or her socks off. Even if you aren't making a provocative claim, you want your reader to understand how you came to your conclusions and to be convinced that you're argument is reasonable.

**Paragraphs**: These building blocks of papers give you the opportunity to make a claim and defend it. So you're topic sentence should be the claim. What follows should be the evidence and analytical thinking that defends the claim and connects to your other claims and broader thesis statement. Your reader is not in your head so if you lard up your paragraphs with multiple claims and ideas, rather than working your way through each claim one at a time, your reader will be confused.

**Evidence**: Inserting quotes or data shouldn't be perfunctory. Each piece of evidence should be well considered and connected to its paragraph. All paragraphs should have clear topic sentences that serve as the framework for your paragraph. These sentences advance a claim, probably one of the claims you outlined in your thesis.

**Organization**: This relates to the paper's thesis and evidence. One wants to present one's paper in a logical fashion that follows the blueprint established in the introduction (don't be afraid to label sections Introduction, Conclusion, Something related to a claim you're

making, etc.). When reading papers, the hardest thing for a reader is to make sure he or she has tracked the student's thinking. This means, the reader often re-reads over and over again to make sure he or she really understands exactly what the student means. Good organization helps your reader follow your thinking.