



Instructor: Laura Smith (she/her)

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Office : Carnegie 104b

Open office hours: Monday 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Tuesday 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Thursday 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Or at any other time you propose (in-person or virtual)

Drop-ins welcome too!

Meets: Wed 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Carnegie 105



COURSE CONTENT AND GOALS

Transportation Geography is a capstone research seminar in which students conduct individual inquiries into issues of transportation geography, from the effects of transportation on urban form and land use to the environmental and human dimensions of transport. Students also lead comprehensive discussions on current transportation research themes.

The first half of the semester will be devoted primarily to *exploration and discussion* of current transportation research and issues, and different approaches to a range of transportation problems. Through readings and discussions, you will be introduced to a variety of research areas and applications, data sources, and both quantitative and qualitative research methods. You will also gain exposure to a more professional view of the field through an alumni visitor currently working in transportation.

During the second half of the semester, we will focus primarily on the *writing and presenting* of your research projects, culminating in a comprehensive written paper and a conference-style presentation.

As a geography capstone course that also fills the Argumentative Writing general education requirement, **the primary learning objectives for this course are to advance your ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and arguments, to independently formulate and answer an original research question, and to express yourself orally and in writing.** My hope is that you will also achieve a sense of community, fulfillment, and accomplishment through your capstone experience!



EXPECTATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Class format

As a seminar, class attendance and engagement matters significantly – both in terms of learning and in building a community of inquiry with each other. However, I fully recognize that there will be times when you are not able to or do not feel comfortable attending class, whether because of public health concerns or any other reason. If religious observances create conflicts, please reach out early in the semester so we can plan ahead. If you are unable to attend a class, please let me know ahead of time if possible and we will work together to find alternate ways for you to participate for that session.

We continue to face challenges in all aspects of life – including teaching and learning – and we will need to demonstrate grace and flexibility in order to be successful. I am committed to being flexible and open to changing our course approach and expectations as we go, and I hope that you will be willing to do the same for me.

Technology guidelines

We will rely heavily on our Moodle page to manage materials for the course. This is where you will find details for each week, including readings and articles for discussion. Project assignments, discussion schedules, and other information and resources can also be found on Moodle. Please plan to log into the site regularly and pay attention to any “Announcements and News” forum posts.

Assessment

Besides your independent research project, each of you will partner with a classmate to facilitate one discussion session during the term. You and your partner will choose the discussion topic and select readings with my approval; this allows us to tailor the content of the course to your specific interests in transportation geography. Fellow classmates are expected to have done all assigned readings before coming to class and be prepared to discuss them. A productive discussion is one in which students listen and learn from one another, that focuses on understanding an issue and making connections (to other readings, to real-life observations, etc.), and that advances our collective knowledge of a topic. Further details are presented in the *Student Discussion Sessions* handout.

To keep you on track with your individual research project, you will complete a series of updates and written assignments, building to the final research project and presentation. Details are presented in the *Student Research Project* handout.

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

Seminar participation	= 10%
Discussion leadership	= 15%
Expanded research proposal and bibliography	= 5%
Argument draft	= 5%
Project draft	= 15%
Peer review of project draft	= 5%
Research presentation	= 15%
Final research project	= 30%

Grade cut-off percentages are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92.9%; B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%; C+ = 77-79.9%; C = 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%; D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%; NC = <60%.

Academic honesty

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work; violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. If you have questions about Macalester's academic integrity policy, please refer to the *Student Handbook* (<https://www.macalester.edu/student-affairs/>) or Academic Programs at <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>).

All sources used in preparing your final project must be cited; this includes maps and data sources. APA is the preferred citation style of the Geography Department; see the library's citation guides and resources under the Research Guides menu at <https://libguides.macalester.edu/citation>.



RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Open office hours

Many class periods will include time for individual research consultations with me and collaborative work time with peers. Please come visit me during open office hours with any other questions, issues, or concerns about the course or the Geography department more broadly. If you are not able to attend regularly scheduled office hours, please let me know and we can find an alternative time to meet (in-person or virtually).

Email is the most efficient way to contact me; I strive to answer all course-related messages as soon as possible (and at most within 24 hours during the week).

Academic accommodations

I recognize that course design may pose barriers to a student's ability to access or demonstrate mastery of course content. I honor academic accommodations as outlined via the Center for Disability Resources and in discussion regarding what is reasonable for this course. Students with long- or short-term disabilities should schedule an appointment through the Disability Resources website at <https://www.macalester.edu/disability-resources/>.

Academic resources

The Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center (<http://www.macalester.edu/max/>), located on the first floor of Kagin Commons, provides numerous academic resources from time management and study strategy workshops to writing assistance.

Health and well-being

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please reach out to one of the resources here: <https://www.macalester.edu/current-students/>.

Please follow Macalester's guidance for respiratory illnesses (<https://www.macalester.edu/covid-19/>). If you do not feel well or are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, please do not come to class.

Title IX

Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. Any community member experiencing sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence, or stalking, is encouraged to seek help and support.

*Please be aware that as a faculty member, it is my responsibility to report disclosure about sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking to the Title IX Office. The purpose of this report is to ensure that anyone experiencing harm receives the resources and support they need. I will keep this information *private* and it will not be shared beyond this required report.*

You may also contact Macalester's Title IX Coordinator directly (phone: 651-696-6258; e-mail: titleixordinator@macalester.edu); she will provide you with supportive measures, resources, and referrals. Additional information about how to file a report (including anonymously) is available on the [Title IX website](#).



GENERAL SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Schedule subject to revision

Date	Topic	Reading/ Assignment Due
1. Sept 4	Introductions: to each other, to capstone, and to assignments	
2. Sept 11	Evolution of transportation geography; Discussion of research topics	DUE : Research topic Cidell 2021; Black 2001; van Wee 2016; Hanson 2015
3. Sept 18	Library research session; Core concepts in transportation research; Quantitative research in transportation	DUE : Preliminary sources Smith et al. 2004
4. Sept 25	Discussion #1; Discussion #2	Readings TBD
	DUE (Fri, Sept 27): Expanded proposal/bibliography	
5. Oct 2	Discussion #3; Research proposal consultations	Readings TBD
6. Oct 9	Discussion #4; Discussion #5	Readings TBD
	DUE (Fri, Oct 11): Argument draft	
7. Oct 16	Argument draft consultations (<i>Fall break – October 17-20</i>)	
8. Oct 23	Discussion #6; Research partner conversations	Readings TBD
9. Oct 30	Working in transportation: Mike Samuelson '09	
10. Nov 6	<i>No official class (post-Election Day);</i> consultations available for preparing drafts (“capstone therapy”)	
11. Nov 13	In-class peer review of project drafts	DUE : Project draft
12. Nov 20	Project editing workshop	
	(<i>Thanksgiving break – November 27-December 1</i>)	
13. Dec 4	Research presentations	
14. Dec 11	Research presentations	
	DUE (Mon, Dec 16): Final research project	

 READINGS

- Black, William R. 2001. An Unpopular Essay on Transportation. *Journal of Transport Geography* 9: 1-11.
- Cidell, Julie. 2021. "Introducing Transportation Geography" from *An Introduction to Transportation Geography: Transport, Mobility, and Place*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Hanson, Susan. 2015. "Transportation Geographies and Mobilities Studies: Toward Collaboration." In Julie Cidell and David Prytherch, eds., *Transport, Mobility, and the Production of Urban Space*. New York: Routledge.
- Muller, Peter O. 2017. Transportation and Urban Form: Stages in the Spatial Evolution of the American Metropolis. In Susan Hanson and Genevieve Giuliano, eds., *The Geography of Urban Transportation*, 4th ed. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Smith, Laura J., John S. Adams, Julie L. Cidell, and Barbara J. VanDrasek. 2004. Highway Improvements and Land Development in the Greater Twin Cities Area, 1970-1997. *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* 1885: 48-55.
- van Wee, Bert. 2016. Accessible Accessibility Research Challenges. *Journal of Transport Geography* 51: 9-16.

 RESOURCES

- University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies: www.cts.umn.edu
- Transportation education and internships: www.cts.umn.edu/education/internships
- Current transportation job listings: www.cts.umn.edu/about/employment
- Advancing Women in Transportation: www.wtsinternational.org
 - www.wtsinternational.org/wts-foundation/scholarships
- MnDOT Career Track Program: www.dot.state.mn.us/careers/student-grad.html
- Young Professionals in Transportation: yptransportation.org
- Transportation-related events: www.cts.umn.edu/events/calendar
- Move Minnesota: <https://www.movemn.org/>
- Minnesota Transportation Alliance: www.transportationalliance.com/
- Personal Rapid Transit (Skyweb Express): www.prtconsulting.com
- Transportation Geography Specialty Group (American Association of Geographers): aag-tgsg.org/
- "Gridlock Buster" Traffic Control Game: www.cts.umn.edu/education/k-12/gridlockbuster
- Let There Be Light Rail blog (Christina Morrison '04): lettherebelightrail.blogspot.com/