

Principles and Practice: Public Transit Planning and Operations
Mondays 1:30 – 3:30
Winter 2015

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Course website: <http://tram.mcgill.ca/Teaching/URBP625/URBP625.html>

Office hours: By appointment (please email or come talk to us before or after class to set up an appointment)

Number of Credits: 2 credits

Course Description:

This course aims to connect academic research to real world problems while focusing specifically on public transit planning and operations. Class time will be devoted to lectures from professionals or academics involved in the public transit industry. Every lecture will be followed by a discussion between students and lecturer on the public transit theme of the week.

Course Objectives:

Through book chapters, academic and news articles, videos, case studies, planning documents, and professional presentations, students will be exposed to and expected to think critically about issues such as the following:

- Current and local examples of public transit planning case studies
- Approaches and techniques that can be used in a collaborative public transit planning processes
- Method used to understand personal perceptions of transit services as well as transportation markets
- Different survey collection and analysis techniques for analyzing public transit problems
- The key influences of planning and operations of transit service

Written Assignments:

This course is designed to link academic research and other public transit-related material (newspaper articles, reports, etc.) with current case studies from industry. Students are expected to be ready to discuss the weekly readings, and class presentations. Weekly questions must be submitted **every Friday at 2:00pm (see below for dates)**. In addition, one individual and one group assignment is also required:

- 1.) **WEEKLY QUESTIONS [15%].** Students will be required to submit a minimum of two weekly questions on the course's WebCT forum based on selected readings (mentioned on the last page). Student questions will be used to guide in-class discussion. **Due dates: Friday February 20th & 27th, and March 13th, 20th, & 27th, 2014 at 2:00pm.**
- 2.) **GROUP ASSIGNMENT (2-3 students per group): A 5 minute video [40%].** The purpose of this assignment is to identify a public transportation problem in Montreal. You must articulate a transportation-related problem, state the cause, make suggestions for improvements, and clearly express why, in your opinion, this problem requires attention. The problem can focus on policy, operations, infrastructure, etc. The video should illustrate the public transportation problem that you have identified, and all of the group members must be present in the video.

Be creative, and have fun expressing yourselves! Students will be evaluated based on the clarity of how the transportation problem is discussed, quality of the arguments, demonstration of a comprehensive knowledge of the issue, and approaches proposed to tackle the problem. The videos must be 5 minutes long, include all of the group members, and clearly assess, critique, and suggest recommendations related to a public transportation problem in Montreal. All videos will be uploaded to the class channel on youtube and we will view them together. Instructors will provide you with username and password in the first class. This channel will be closed after the class so keep your own copies afterwards. Successful videos will appeal to a greater audience, and will be placed on the class website. **Due date: Friday April 10th, 2014 at 2:00pm.** Students are expected to submit a one page to the class instructors outlining the problem they will study on **March 9th** for approval.

- 3.) **INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT: A “letter to the editor” outlining a current transportation problem [30%].** This assignment should accompany the video group project, and focus on the same transportation issue each student addressed with his team. The goal of this letter is articulate a transportation problem in a way that could be published by the Montreal Gazette. As is the case with the video assignment, students’ letters to the editor should articulate a transportation-related problem, state the cause, make suggestions for improvements, and clearly express why, in your opinion, this problem requires attention. Students will be marked on the basis of the clarity of writing, quality of the arguments, and the demonstration of a comprehensive knowledge of the issue. This assignment should be no more than 750 words in length, excluding references. We will encourage the authors of strong letters to submit to the Montreal Gazette. Please note this is an individual assignment that builds on the group video so each student will submit a separate letter. **Due date: Friday April 10th, 2014 at 2:00pm.**

Grading:

- Video 40%
- Letter to the editor 30%
- Weekly questions 15%
- Participation 15%

Late policy:

In fairness to all students, assignments will be marked down 10% for each day late. The *only* exception is for documented family and/or medical emergencies.

Lecture details:

Class	Date	Speaker	Topic
Class 1	February 16 th	Dea van Lierop & Ehab Diab	Introduction
Class 2	February 23 rd	Dea van Lierop	Understanding transit markets
<i>No class</i>	March 2 nd	<i>Spring Break</i>	
Class 3	March 9 th	Ehab Diab	Improving transit: Operations and perception
Class 4	March 16 th	Assumpta Cerda, AMT	Future directions of large-scale household surveys
Class 5	March 23 rd	Julien Surprenant-Legault, STM	Public transit asset maintenance and management
Class 6	March 30 th	Paul Tetreault, WSP Group	Adapting existing suburban neighbourhoods for transit
<i>No class</i>	April 6 th	<i>Easter Break</i>	
Class 7	April 13 th		Student presentations

Required reading

DUE DATE (2:00PM)	2 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING TEXTS:
February 20th	TCRP Report 47: A Handbook for Measuring Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_47-a.pdf Which Mode of Travel Provides the Happiest Commute? Eric Jaffe 2014 http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/08/which-mode-of-travel-provides-the-happiest-commute/378673/
February 27th	Bus Transit Service Reliability and Improvement Strategies: Integrating the Perspectives of Passengers and Transit Agencies in North America. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01441647.2015.1005034#abstract A Basic Shelter Can Make the Wait for the Bus Feel Shorter, Eric Jaffe 2015 http://www.citylab.com/cityfixer/2014/09/a-basic-shelter-can-make-the-wait-for-the-bus-feel-shorter/380297/
March 13th	Dynamic Spatial Analysis of Urban Travel Survey Data using GIS Robert Chapleau & Catherine Morency http://proceedings.esri.com/library/userconf/proc05/papers/pap1232.pdf Surveying hard-to-reach groups: is a cell-phone survey the solution? Assumpta Cerdá, François Valiquette, & Alexandre Beaudin You can find this paper on the course WebCT
March 20th	If So Many People Support Mass Transit, Why Do So Few Ride? Eric Jaffe 2014 http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/09/if-so-many-people-support-mass-transit-why-do-so-few-ride/380570/ Parts 1-6 of Politics and Public Transit transportationist.org/2014/09/02/political-parties-three-axes-and-public-transport/
March 27th	TCRP Report 55: Guidelines for Enhancing Suburban Mobility Using Public Transportation (Chapter 1 only) http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_55-a.pdf

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Disabilities

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 (online at <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd>) before you do this.

Safety

McGill University shall strive to be recognized as an environmentally safe and responsible institution, and as a model of environmentally responsible living. (see www.mcgill.ca/tls/policy/environmental_policy). For all emergencies please contact McGill security Services at 514-398-3000.