

PLS 592—Seminar in Housing and Transportation Policy

Summer 2010

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Tuesday and Thursday, 3-5 pm Or by appointment

Course Description: This seminar in housing and transportation policy is designed especially for those MPA students whose concentration is policy analysis and planning. The economics and politics of each of these policy areas are discussed at length and students are asked to complete 2 original field projects, one on housing and one on transportation. The broad goal is to sharpen the skills of students in analyzing and suggesting solutions to community problems in the housing and transportation areas. This is a practice oriented class although there will be some exposure to the theory underlying the dynamics of these policy areas.

Course Goals and Objectives:

To gain understanding of the dynamics of housing and transportation policy in the U.S.
To gain skills in analyzing and developing solutions for housing and transportation policy in the U.S.
To prepare analyses for decision makers and “policy experts”
To further improve quantitative skills in creating indexes and using comparative data

Assignments and Grades:

Weekly assignments45%

Field Projects (2).....45%

Class participation.....10%

Books Ordered:

Anthony Downs (2004). Still Stuck in Traffic, The Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C. ISBN 0-8157-1929-9

Alex Schwartz (2006). Second Edition. Housing Policy in the U.S. Routledge: London. ISBN 10-0425950309.

Field Projects:

1.Housing Policy. Pick one community or region. Develop a demographic, social, and economic profile of the area. Identify at least 3 major housing problems in the region. Use written sources, documents from organizations and at least three interviews with “housing policy experts”. For each problem document the problem and explore its causes. Pick one problem and develop at least three solutions and recommend one (give rationale). This report should be written for the “policy experts” and decision makers. 10 slide limit in your power point presentation. Turn in the slides. No paper is necessary.

2.Transportation Policy. Pick one community or region. Develop a demographic, social, and economic profile of the area. Identify at least 3 major transportation problems in the region. Use written sources, documents from organizations and at least three interviews with “transportation policy experts”. For each problem document the problem and explore its causes. Pick one problem and develop at least three solutions and recommend one (give rationale). This report should be written for the “policy experts” and decision makers. 10 slide limit.

Topics and Weekly Assignments:

May 13 **Introduction**
American Dream
Key Concepts in Housing
Importance of Housing in Economy
Suburbia and Gated communities, what is happening with housing in U.S.
What kinds of things can public policy do to ameliorate some of the current problems ?

Read: Chapters 1,2 Schwartz.

May 18, 20 **Using data to track housing**
Affordable Housing
Key concepts in housing
Housing Markets and filtering
Invasion and Succession of Neighborhoods
Quality of life and housing
New Urbanism
Housing Summit notes (Cape Fear Region)

Read: use the internet and explore definitions and measures of housing affordability.

Assignment: Using power point, display three indicators of affordable housing and then recommend which is the most useful (and why). The second presentation using power point is to develop 10 indicators which measure the quality of housing in American cities and communities. Have a rationale for the inclusion of each indicator in your index. For the last presentation, collect data for ten cities, counties, or metropolitan areas using the index data you created. Make a slide comparing the ten communities using their scores. What did you find out? Check Census (Census of Housing) and The American Community Survey (ACS) <http://www.census.gov/> .. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE MAY 25.

May 25, 27 **National Housing Policy**
Secondary Financial Markets
Subsidized housing
Public Housing
Vouchers

Read: Schwartz, Chapters 3-8.

Assignment: Limit yourself to five slides. Pick one federal housing program and do a program analysis---mission, customers, expenditures, major issues. Focus on the last decade. Finally what changes may be needed in this program during the next five years. Go to HUD web-site to identify program for the presentation. THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE JUNE 1.

June 1, 3

**The Geography of Housing
Discrimination and Segregation
Integrating housing and neighborhoods
Special housing (Housing the Homeless)
Creative community projects (Habitat for Humanity)**

Read: use the internet to explore research on housing segregation and integration. Especially the geography of segregation. This can include gated communities as well as other enclaves.

Assignment: Write a two page memo indicating what the prospects for change are in neighborhood housing. Will it stay the same, become more integrated in terms of race, income, or class. ? or become more segregated? Give reasons for your answer and integrate research findings into your answer. THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE JUNE 8.

June 8, 10

Project 1 Presentation on Housing

Trends and Patterns in Transportation and Transportation Behavior

Read: Downs. Stuck in Traffic Chapters 1-5.

June 15, 17

**Mega Projects and Displacement
Quality of life and congestion in urban areas
What type of transit systems do people want and will they pay for?**

Read: Downs. Chapters 6-18.

Assignment: Develop ten indicators of the quality of transportation in cities. Then compare ten cities using this index. Present in power point. Cities can be in different states but try to make them the same size. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE JUNE 22.

June 22, 24

**Economics of Transportation
Alternative modes of transportation (mass transit, light rail, airports,
car pooling, charity cars)
Transportation Analysis and Policy**

Congestion Pricing and the future
Other policy issues (spatial mismatch, displacement, funding)

Read : review Downs, 6-18.

Assignment: Check page 78 in Downs book but develop a power point presentation that examines the five most feasible solutions to congestion. Look at internet as well for solutions. Give reasons for why your recommendations are feasible. **THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE JULY 6.**

June 29, July 1 **No class, Field work for project**

July 6, 8 **Designing better public policy in transportation and housing**
Project 2 Presentation on Transportation

July 13, 15 **Everyone will bring a mass transit system to class and summarize what they are doing and show slides.**
Cities will be assigned.

July 20, 22 **Key Themes and summary of major elements housing and transportation policy in U.S., some comparative analysis**