URBPLAN-772: Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

Syllabus (1/20/14)

Spring 2014—3.0 Credits
Monday, 5:30 p.m. to 8:10 p.m., AUP Room 183

Course Instructor: Dr. Robert Schneider (rjschnei@uwm.edu, 414-229-3849)
Office Hours: Monday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. & Tuesday, 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., AUP Room 334

Course Overview
Walking and bicycling are essential components of a sustainable transportation system. In response to growing concerns about personal mobility and safety, access to transit, equity between socioeconomic groups, air quality, public health, and other issues of community sustainability, many government agencies are developing plans to improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation are influenced by micro-scale elements of the built environment, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, traffic speeds, and roadway crossings, as well as by macro-scale characteristics, such as community-wide pathway systems and regional land use patterns. As a result, walking and bicycling issues bridge the disciplines of urban planning, urban design, and civil engineering.

This graduate-level course is structured to provide students with information about current practices in the pedestrian and bicycle transportation field. It will cover historical and institutional frameworks, benefits and obstacles to pedestrian and bicycle planning, policy development, perceived and actual safety, facility design, network development, and practical methods of estimating demand and evaluating walking and bicycling conditions. Students will be challenged to evaluate the existing methods critically and develop ideas for improving pedestrian and bicycle planning practices. The course will focus mainly on practices in the United States, though it will include examples of innovative international strategies.

The course will include lectures, guest speakers, field visits, and several assignments. Most classes will include a presentation by the course instructor. References from the reading list will also be discussed in class. To facilitate discussions, students will be selected to the “Expert” for specific readings in the next class period. The “Expert” should be prepared to provide a brief overview and two discussion questions for the readings. As the “Expert,” the student may also field questions on the class topic from the rest of the students. Guest speakers (and panels of speakers) will be professionals working in local, regional, and state agencies, advocacy organizations, and academic settings who will provide a practical perspective on the issues discussed in class. When guest speakers are scheduled, the last portion of the class period will be reserved for their presentation and discussion.

I am looking forward to a great term with all of you!

Bob
**Course Objectives**

By completing this course, students should be able to:

- Explain historical and institutional frameworks, including the development of roadway facilities for specific user groups, Complete Streets policies, and current state and federal policies related to multimodal transportation.
- List specific benefits of pedestrian and bicycle transportation and understand obstacles to promoting pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- Provide at least one possible explanation of the thought process that people follow when choosing a specific mode (e.g., walking or bicycling) for routine travel.
- Understand roadway design, user characteristics, and vehicle characteristics associated with perceived and actual pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Understand the rationale behind standard pedestrian and bicycle facility design practices as well as the debates surrounding new, innovative pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Apply spreadsheet formulas to evaluate pedestrian and bicycle conditions based on objective roadway measurements.
- Identify the most common factors used in pedestrian and bicycle demand (volume) models.
- Evaluate the existing pedestrian and bicycle planning and engineering methods critically and develop ideas for improving professional practice.
- Explain general differences in pedestrian and bicycle travel behavior and facility design in the United States, Europe, and Asia.
- Work with group members to propose feasible pedestrian and bicycle improvements to a local intersection.

**Readings and Class Participation**

A different topic from the pedestrian and bicycle planning field will be covered each class session. The readings listed under each session below are required readings. Readings will be available under “Content” on the class D2L website (http://d2l.uwm.edu/). All students are expected to read all the assigned readings BEFORE class and to actively participate in the discussion. A separate list of references titled, “Supplemental References,” will also be posted online.

Active participation in class is an important component of this course. Being able to express concepts and opinions clearly and ask good questions are critical skills in the professional world. Class attendance will be recorded on a sign-in sheet. However, class participation grades are based on the quality of active participation in class discussion, not simply on attendance. In the interest of promoting a productive learning environment for all, please:

- Arrive on time and stay for the duration of class.
- Turn off or mute audible cell phones, pagers, and watch alarms for the duration of class.
- Turn off laptops unless instructed otherwise and refrain from accessing the internet on any other device during class.

Behaviors that detract from class learning will be penalized in the class participation grade.

**Class Assignments**

The three assignments are designed to give practical experience with elements of the active transportation realm, including policy development, research, and design. All work should have a practical focus. For example, work should be done with the intention of presenting findings to planners and engineers at a municipal agency or distributing the results to members of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals. Writing and producing graphics to communicate ideas are important skills in the pedestrian and bicycle field, and the clarity and organization of all assignments
will be evaluated as a part of the grading process. Sources should be referenced in all assignments. Any reference style is acceptable; the keys are to give credit to your sources and to provide support for your arguments. All assignments should be uploaded to the course D2L site by 5:00 p.m. on the due dates listed. The assignments are described below.

**Assignment #1: Attend a local transportation meeting and turn in a 2-page summary memo (Due Monday, February 17th)**

This assignment is designed as an introduction to the political realm of decision-making. The final product should be a two-page, single-spaced memorandum in a standard memo form with a meeting summary and analysis. You should address the memo to the executive director of an advocacy organization (real or fictitious) of your choice. The final memo should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document so that comments can be provided in Track Changes. Your memo should contain the following **three sections**:

- A very brief description of the role and function of the organization whose meeting you attended (about 1 paragraph)
- A short summary of the purpose of the meeting and the specific topics discussed. If the agenda included a large number of items you may choose to focus on one or two key topics. (1 to 2 paragraphs)
- Your **detailed** comments on the following question: What did this experience teach you about citizen participation and public decision-making with regard to bicycle and pedestrian planning? (1 to 1.5 pages)

Before attending the meeting, skim a few background materials about the group sponsoring the meeting and any reports and analyses prepared specifically for the meeting. Also obtain and review any materials that are handed out or presented at the meeting. Examples of appropriate meetings include:

- City of Milwaukee Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force Meeting (Fri., Feb. 7, 2014, 9 a.m., Milwaukee Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway, Seventh Floor)
- Village of Shorewood Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Committee Meeting (Tue, Feb. 11, 2014, Village Committee Room, 3930 North Murray Avenue, Shorewood, Third Floor)
- Community Conversation on Transportation: A Vision for metro Milwaukee (Thu., Feb. 6, 2014, 5 p.m., Manpower World Headquarters, 100 Manpower Place, Milwaukee). This event is sponsored by the Regional Transit Initiative and is not a typical public meeting, but it will have similarities. If interested, please register at [http://urbanmilwaukee.com/metrogo-community-conversation/](http://urbanmilwaukee.com/metrogo-community-conversation/) by Monday, Feb. 3.
- Any other meeting of local municipalities, the Milwaukee County Trails Council, or the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission that has a bicycle or pedestrian issue on the agenda (*ask instructor first to check*)

**Assignment #2: Individual Paper or Group Project on Topic of Choice (Proposal Due Tuesday, February 11th; Final Paper Due Wednesday, March 26th)**

This assignment will involve researching and synthesizing a pedestrian and/or bicycle topic of your choice. It provides an opportunity to showcase prior experience or a chance to pursue a subject of particular interest. There are two options:

1) Write an individual paper. This paper should be 8 to 10 pages (double-spaced text). Figures and graphics are strongly encouraged and do not count against the word limit. Appendices also do not count against the word limit. Individual paper topics include, but are not limited to:

- Detailed description of past experience working with non-motorized transportation, and lessons learned
- Evaluation of a local, small-area pedestrian and bicycle plan (roadway corridor or neighborhood)
• Profile of innovative city and its work to increase pedestrian and bicycle mode share and safety
• Summary of existing research on a category of factors related to pedestrian or bicycle activity (e.g., land use, transportation facilities, socioeconomic characteristics, weather, topography, individual attitudes, social norms, or perceptions of safety and security)
• Analysis of an existing source of pedestrian or bicycle use, safety, user characteristics, or facility data (American Community Survey Commuting Data, National Household Travel Survey, Statewide/Regional Crash Databases, International Databases, etc.)
• Photographic essay and summary of a specific pedestrian or bicycle facility design issue (e.g., median islands, bicycle lane design approaching intersections, “road diets”, etc.) (Note: if this option is chosen, there should be 6 to 8 pages of text, excluding pictures, and the total length of the document should be longer than 10 pages after the pictures are included)

2) Work with a small group (2 to 4 students) on one of the specific, local project options described in the first few weeks of class. This option involves working with a local client. The instructor will answer questions and provide guidance to the group, but students will handle all communications with the client. For this option, each student must contribute an effort equivalent to an 8- to 10-page paper to the project. Longer documents require more organization and editing, so rough page guidelines for projects are 14 to 18 pages for 2 students, 18 to 24 pages for 3 students, and 20 to 28 pages for 4 students. Figures and graphics are strongly encouraged and do not count against the word limit. Appendices do not count against the word limit. Please note that the scope of the final document deliverable will be negotiated with the client and approved by the instructor.

For individuals and groups pursuing either option, a brief (half-page) project proposal or outline will be due on Tuesday, February 11th. The instructor may provide guidance on how to refine or narrow the topic based on this proposal. The paper or final document will be due Wednesday, March 26th. Both the proposal and final paper should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents so that comments can be provided in Track Changes.

**Final Project (Final Examination): Intersection Analysis**
*(Proposal Due Tuesday, April 1st; Final PowerPoint & Documentation Due Wednesday, May 14th)*

The intersection analysis should be conducted in groups of 3 to 4 students, and it will involve planning, design, and engineering skills. The goal of the assignment is to recommend, illustrate, and justify a set of pedestrian and bicycle improvements at and near an intersection in the Milwaukee area. This location should be identified as an intersection of interest by the City of Milwaukee or a neighboring municipality (intersection options will be provided by the instructor). Project limits will include the intersection plus the street segments approaching the intersection (e.g., a four-way intersection includes four approach legs—design of the intersection approaches may be even more important for pedestrian and bicyclist safety and convenience than the intersection itself). Groups should choose an intersection where improvements are needed, not one that already accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists fairly well. The project will involve several field visits, so an accessible location is very important.

The final product will be a 15-minute professional presentation (with 10 additional minutes for questions) that is delivered during the last week of class. Time limits on presentations will be strictly enforced. The presentation should be given from a carefully-constructed PowerPoint file. This PowerPoint file will be the main product of this assignment, but it should be accompanied by necessary supporting documentation. Required components of the project to be included in the final presentation include:
● A brief discussion of why the intersection should be improved for pedestrians and bicyclists.
● An illustration of the current design of the intersection and approaching street segments in plan view, including key roadway and sidewalk measurements.
● An illustration of the cross-section existing conditions on at least one of the approaches, including key roadway and sidewalk measurements.
● Two-hour traffic counts for autos, pedestrians, and bicyclists during a morning or afternoon “peak” travel period.
● An illustration of the proposed redesign of the intersection and approaching street segments in plan view, including key roadway and sidewalk measurements.
● An illustration of the cross-section of the proposed redesign of at least one of the approaches, including key roadway and sidewalk measurements.
● Multimodal level of service analysis of pedestrian level of service and bicycle level of service on one of the intersection approach streets under 1) existing conditions and 2) redesigned conditions. Also provide some qualitative or quantitative assessment of how the redesigned conditions could affect automobile travel.
● Rough, order-of-magnitude cost estimates for the improvements.
● Other education or enforcement strategies that may complement the physical changes.
● Justification of the design changes: 1) appropriate for surrounding roadway and land use context (e.g., does the improvement improve route network connectivity, access to transit, a connection between activity centers?), 2) improves suitability for all roadway users without significant deterioration of conditions for a certain user group, 3) reduces crash risk, 4) is not excessively costly, 5) recommendations from previous pedestrian or bicycle plans, etc.
● Challenges to implementing the recommendations: 1) citizens or other groups who may oppose changes, 2) physical design constraints, 3) cost constraints, etc.
● Future phases of the project that could be completed with more public support and funding.
● Source information for graphics and images that are not your own.

One member from each group should email the instructor with the group members’ names and the proposed intersection before Friday, March 28th. The final group presentations will be given in class during the final exam period. These presentations will be delivered professionally, as they would be given to public agency staff and elected officials. The final PowerPoint presentation plus supporting documentation for cost estimates, level of service analysis, and other conclusions should be submitted by Wednesday, May 14th.

Grading will be done based half on the formal presentation and half on the final materials submitted. Note that each group member will evaluate the other members’ contributions to the group. This assessment will be anonymous. If particular group members are evaluated as contributing to substantially more or less than their share of the work, their overall grade will be adjusted up or down from the rest of the group members.

Note that accuracy will be more important than precision in this exercise; i.e., it is more important to demonstrate knowledge of the difference in magnitude of costs between various infrastructure types, rather than know exactly how much each type costs. In addition, Illustrations should include key dimensions, such as street and lane widths, to communicate the existing conditions and proposed changes accurately, but they do not need to be developed using special software. Base aerial photos from Google Earth plus PowerPoint illustrations are sufficient for this project. AutoCAD and other design software is optional.
Conduct and Ethics
Cite your sources. If you get information from a printed, online, video or other source, cite it. If you cite a reference word for word, put those words in quotes. Don’t using someone else’s work as if it was your own without citing it. Citing sources, even if it takes extra time, enhances your professional credibility.

“As a general working definition, the Graduate School considers plagiarism to include both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another’s work.”

Additional University policies are available from: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf.

Grading
Grades will be given on an A to F scale based on the following components of the class:

- Overall class attendance and participation (10%)
- Assignment #1: Memo summarizing agency pedestrian or bicycle meeting (10%)
- Assignment #2: Paper on topic of your choice (40%)
- Final Project (Final Examination): Group intersection analysis project (40%)

Assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on the dates listed above. Each calendar day late will result in loss of one grade (i.e., an “A” assignment will be given a “B”). A paper received at 5:01 p.m. on the due date is considered one day late.

The grading scale will be based on points earned out of 100 possible points in each component area. This scale is:

98 and above = A+
93 to 97.9 = A
91 to 92.9 = A-
88 to 90.9 = B+
83 to 87.9 = B
81 to 82.9 = B-
78 to 80.9 = C+
73 to 77.9 = C
(and so on)

In general, it is expected that students will spend approximately three hours in class per week plus an additional six hours per week on readings, assignments, and other preparation.
Class Topics and Reading List

Class 1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Institutions and Trends (1/27/14)


Class 2: Benefits of Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation & Advocacy Movements (2/3/14)


**Class 3: Travel Behavior: Shifting Automobile Travel to Walking and Bicycling (2/10/14)**


>>>Paper Topic for Assignment #2 due on Tuesday, 2/11/14.

>>>Memo for Assignment #1 due on Monday, 2/17/14.

**Class 4: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: Crash Data and Risk Perceptions (2/17/14)**


**Class 5: Pedestrian Design Fundamentals (2/24/14)**


Class 6: Bicycle Design Fundamentals (3/3/14)


Class 7: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Design Innovations and Cost Considerations (3/10/14)


Class 8: Pedestrian and Bicycle Programs & Anatomy of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (3/24/14)


Groups will be assigned one of the following plans to read and review:


Small group discussion questions will include:
- Why did the agency develop the plan? (What motivated them to develop the plan?)
- What was your favorite part of the plan? What was the “strongest” part of the plan?
- What was your least favorite part of the plan? What was the “weakest” part of the plan?

Full class discussion will address:
- Common strengths & weaknesses (2-3 from each group)
- Differences between local and regional plans

>>>Paper for Assignment #2 due on Wednesday, 3/26/14.\[1\]
Class 9: Field Trip—Walking Field Trip in area south of UWM (3/31/14)


>>>Proposed intersection and group members for Assignment #3 due on Tuesday, 4/1/14.

Class 10: Pedestrian and Bicycle Data Collection and Performance Measures (4/7/14)


Class 11: Pedestrian and Bicycle Suitability Assessment Methods (4/14/14)


Class 12: Pedestrian and Bicycle Demand Estimation Methods (4/21/14)


Class 13: Pedestrian and Bicycle Prioritization Methods (4/28/14)


Class 14: International Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation & Work Session (5/5/14)


Class 15: In-Class Presentations of Class Projects/Course Wrap-Up (5/12/14 or Final exam period)

>>>Presentation file and supporting documentation for Assignment #3 due on Wednesday, 5/14/14.