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GPHY 432.01: Human Role in Environmental Change

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In our contemporary world, globalization and sustainability are catch phrases with multiple and complex meanings. Geographers have long been involved in the study of the relationship humans have with the environment. Rather than focus on a broad and generalized study of World processes, however, this course focuses on one of many problems associated with the human/nature relationship, emphasizing the impact of energy systems on our surroundings with a specific focus on transportation. An integral part of our landscape is the automobile and our dependence on this form of transportation has transformed nearly every part of our daily lives including the creation of a massive transportation network, the reconfiguration of our cities, and a profound negative impact on our environment. During this course we begin by understanding the concept of automobility as it developed into an unconscious form of practice. Next, we look at how individuals develop these unconscious practices through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu—a French sociologist/philosopher—who attempts to develop a general theory of practice. And finally, we look at alternative ways to re-design our environment without a total reliance on cars and envisioning a way we can modify our practices in preparing for a world of transportation that lessons the burden on our environment.

This course is based on a lecture/discussion format. There will be a series of lectures, including guest speakers and films, which will supply material for class discussions. Also, there is a fair amount of required readings; material from which you are required to write papers based on your critical examination of the theory and practice of transportation.
Policies and Procedures

The following policies allow me to teach without distractions, and, it will provide each student with a pleasant atmosphere for learning:

Please refrain from talking in class unless engaging in questions with the instructor or actively participating in-group discussion. If you are disturbing the lecture, I may ask that you exit the classroom.

No cell phones on in class! Please make sure your cell phone is off before lecture begins.

Be on time! I expect everyone to be on time for class in order to not disturb the lecture. If for some reason you are late, I ask that you be extremely quiet and not disturb anyone as you enter and sit down.

Please do not leave the class early. If you have a special reason for leaving early please contact me before class begins and sit close to the door in order to exit quietly.

No reading of any material during class is allowed. Please pay attention to each lecture.

Course Assignments and Grading

Writing Assignments (50 points total):
There are a number of writing assignments of varying length and point totals that you are required to complete throughout the semester. Each paper will be graded according to content, creativity, organization and grammar.

I do not accept late papers!

Midterm and Final Examination (100 points total):
Each of the exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. These exams will test your knowledge of the readings and the material covered in the lectures. The midterm and final are worth 50 points each.

Final Paper/Presentation (50 points)
The final paper is based on a project that is assigned towards the beginning/middle of the semester. Although you will work in groups, the paper is an individual assignment while the presentation is collaboration amongst group members.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

THIS IS A PAPERLESS COURSE!
Course Grading

There is a total of 200 points available for the course. All assignments and examinations, as well as the final grade, are based on the following scale:

A = 90 – 100%
B = 80 – 89.99%
C = 70 – 79.99%
D = 60 – 69.99%
F = 59.99% and below

Please note that in order to be fair to all students, I will not round up a grade. For example, if you receive a 79.99%, you will receive a ‘C’ in the course.

Please note, this class is offered for traditional letter grade only, it is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

Required Texts:


(Digital Version on Moodle)

Additional readings will be assigned during the course--available on Moodle.
PART I – THE AUTOMOBILE and THE INDIVIDUAL

Week 3

8 September Monday Automobility and Race
10 September Wednesday Automobility and the Liberal Subject
12 September Friday Discussion

**Reading this week:** *Chapters 4, 5 of Republic of drivers*

**Paper 1:** Due on Wednesday, September 17 on Automobility

PART II – THEORY AND PRACTICE

A classic binary exists between objectivity and subjectivity within critical human geography and sociology. In this section we are introduced to some complex ideas by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in order to develop a deeper understanding of how our behavior becomes an ingrained construct. His theories of practice will help for us to better understand how the automobile, as well as other forms of transport, is a part of our subjective bodies.

Week 4

15 September Monday Pierre Bourdieu and Theory of Practice
17 September Wednesday Objectivity
19 September Friday Discussion

**Reading this week:** *Part I of Outline of a Theory of Practice*
We will discuss the solutions for urban streets that provide a more safe and equitable way to share public space while promoting sustainable transportation.

Reading this week: In the city of bikes – Chapters 1 through 6

Reading this week: In the city of bikes – Chapters 7 through 11
29 October  Wednesday  Bike vs. Car

31 October  Friday  Discussion

Reading this week: *In the city of bikes – Chapters 12 through 21*

**Paper 3 Due on Monday, November 5 on City of Bikes**

**PART IV – SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT DESIGN**

The final installment of this course emphasizes the “practice” of sustainable transportation through thought-provoking and creative design. Reviewing NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) guides in street design and bicycle design, we will identify and develop solutions for problematic intersections and streets in Missoula.

**Week 11**

3 November  Monday  Street Design Principles

5 November  Wednesday  Street Design Elements

7 November  Friday  Discussion

Reading this week: NACTO 2013. *Urban Street Design Guide*

**Week 12**

10 November  Intersections

12 November  Intersection Design Elements

14 November  Discussion

Reading this week: NACTO 2013. *Urban Street Design Guide*

**Week 13**

17 November  Bikes/Ped Design Principles

19 November  Bikes/Ped Design Elements

21 November  Discussion

Paper 4: Due on Monday, November 24 on NACTO

Reading this week: NACTO 2013. *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*
Week 14
24 November  NACTO review
26 November  THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
28 November  THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
Reading this week: NACTO 2013. Urban Bikeway Design Guide

Week 15
1 December  Group Presentation
3 December  Group Presentation
5 December  Group Presentation

Week 16
8 - 12 December  FINAL EXAMINATION WEEK

FINAL EXAMINATION: 8 - 10AM on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2014