Transportation Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)
PROJ_MGT 481
Course Syllabus

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Course Materials: Readings Posted on Canvas or E-mailed

Course Overview and Objectives:
This course covers the objectives, parameters, approaches and tools needed for CSS from project planning to final design to delivery for individual travel modes and multi-modal corridors. Since CSS and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are commonly linked, an introduction, overview, and study of the NEPA process will also be included. Students will view CSS through the lens of multiple stakeholder viewpoints, perspectives and contexts as well as within the framework of public policy and decision-making. Terms, concepts, challenges of sustainable growth, along with the principles of flexible design that promote sustainable alternatives will also be studied. NEPA and CSS case studies will be included.

Throughout the Fall Quarter students will learn useful approached and tools for analysis, problem solving, and identifying design solutions to fit a project urban and natural contexts. There will be learning and professional development opportunities including:

- Understanding the core principles of NEPA from a multi-modal perspective and identifying how CSS fits into the environmental process;
- Recognizing the basic principles of CSS and how this process affects transportation projects;
- Identifying projects that would benefit from CSS;
- Applying CSS principles to case studies;
- Critically evaluating a Region or City’s CSS approach to transportation projects;
- And learning effective communication and presentation.

The learning objectives will be met through a combination of lectures, class dialogues, case studies, project exercises/presentations, reading/homework, and a final project.
Grading:

Participation/Discussions – 25%
Assigned NEPA Review – 20%
Short Position Papers on Readings – 15%
Final Case Study/Project Presentation – 25%
Final Case Study/Project Report – 15%,

Weekly Readings and Canvas Discussion Board:
Readings will be posted on Canvas or E-Mailed. Each student will be assigned a discussion group, there will be 3 students in each group. When a reading (via Canvas or E-Mail) is assigned you will be responsible for posting a reflective-type question on Canvas about the reading to your discussion group 4 days after the reading is assigned (i.e., by Monday evening). You are also responsible for answering the questions that are posted by the rest of your group members and the question that the instructor posted before the next class session. The groups may be re-assigned half way through the course. Your weekly grade will be based on if your question suggests you have an understanding of the reading(s) and if your answers include thoughtful rationale.

NEPA Agency Review:
Select a US Department of Transportation (USDOT) agency from the list provided during class. Also select the date of your presentation (sign-ups will be at the beginning of a break). Find a FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT which was prepared with your agency as the lead federal agency and prepare a class presentation (20-25 minutes) that accomplishes the following objectives: (1) provides an introduction and the background of the project; (2) outlines the major sections of the document and gives examples of what is included in each section; (3) discusses the public involvement and CSS activities; and (4) concludes with the Final Action/Record of Decision that was determined in the environmental document and identifies what the next steps are in the process for the project. You will also be required to upload a PDF format of your presentation to Canvas. You will be graded on the above four points as well as the quality of your presentation.

Final Case Study/Project:
The objectives for the Final Case Study/Project are as follows: (a) to engage students in deeper study of important planning and CSS issues; (b) to build critical thinking skills and evaluation knowledge/understanding; and (c) to improve student’s effectiveness in oral briefings and written reports. Each student will be assigned a region or major city in the United States. The students will be required to give a 15-25 minute presentation on the last day of class and submit a written report during finals week. The general guidelines are:

- How does the region or major city approach CSS?
- What are some example(s) of CSS in practice in the region/city?
- What are your thoughts on the good and/or innovative components of the CSS approach they use?
- Provide your improvement recommendations for the region/city’s approach to their CSS process.
Participation and Communication:
As your instructor, I encourage students to participate in class to the fullest extent. I also encourage students to communicate with me early and often throughout the course. If you ever are confused about an assignment, frustrated over a particular week’s topic, or overwhelmed in general and would like to talk about the class or your educational and career path, please get in touch by phone or e-mail. I will respond to email questions or concerns within 24-48 hours, or by sometime on Monday if you contact me over the weekend. And, of course, you are encouraged to set an appointment with me if you would like to meet in person.