URSY 510 Urban Systems and Society

3 Credits
Term 2 – Winter 2016
Monday & Wednesday 10:30-12:00
1933 West Mall

Instructor: Jordi Honey-Rosés, Assistant Professor
Office: Rm 225 1933 West Mall
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00-4:30 pm

Course Description
This course aims to examine the societal context in which urban systems operate. Essential urban systems – energy, water, sanitation, transportation, telecommunications, and information technology – all reflect social values. Furthermore, their design, construction and operation will be constrained by social norms, wealth distribution, political priorities, and power inequities. This course aims to provide students with a strong understanding of the social context in which urban systems are embedded. Accurately diagnosing the social context of urban systems is essential for their successful management.

The course is a required course of the Urban Systems Pillar in the Masters of Engineering Leadership program. Masters students in the School of Community and Regional Planning are also welcome to enroll. The course is organized around four major themes: (i) Infrastructure and the development of cities, (ii) Services and impacts, (iii) The role of government and institutions and, (iii) Urban futures. Each of these topics will be studied within a planning context, and with the goal of preparing you to address these issues in professional practice.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

- Describe the role of urban infrastructure systems in the development of cities
- Describe major ways in which patterns and trends in globalization and international development affect urban systems
- Identify major ways in which urban systems provision and performance affect society, including linkages to environment, health, quality of life, equity, and economy
- Identify ways in which regulation, planning, and public policy affect urban systems
- Compare public, private, and other modes of provision of urban systems services
- Describe emerging trends and technologies in urban systems
- Develop and justify hypotheses about future changes in urban systems and related societal changes

Organization
We will meet twice a week for one hour and a half. We will employ the case method of learning. This means that lectures will be held to a minimum, and the learning will emerge from the scrutiny, analysis and discussion of real cases. In a few instances, we will have guest speakers, or panel discussions.
Course Materials
The readings for the course have been printed by the Course Materials Office and will be available at the UBC bookstore. Students should bring the assigned readings with them to class for use in discussion.

Requirements and Grading
Class Participation 20%
Negotiation Debrief 15%
Written Assignments 15%
Group Project Report 25%
Group Project Presentation 25%

Class Participation & Learning with the Case Method
Engaging in class discussion is an important part of this course and a considerable amount of time is needed to prepare for the case-based discussions. During the case discussions, we will seek to apply our knowledge to a real-world planning problem. Cases are organized around a problem or decision that needs to be made, and students will be expected to present a recommendation and defend their position.

Suggestions and guidance on how to prepare for case based learning will be provided. The aim of the cases is to train you to think like a decision maker. The cases will require you to select a course of action based on sound reasoning. What would you do and why? You should come to class prepared to defend your recommendation. Strong recommendations about choice of action should involve some clarity about objectives, alternatives, and consequences.

The cases will allow us to apply this knowledge to a specific scenario. In most cases, there will be no obvious solution or answer to the planning problem studied. However in most instances, a firm understanding of sustainability principles may suggest alternative courses of action.

Participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared, and to participate actively in class discussions. Assessment will consider attendance, preparedness, depth of understanding, quality of reasoning, contribution to collective learning, and oral communication performance.

Written Assignments
You will be asked to write three responses to a class discussion. These short essays (one-page) are meant to encourage additional reflection on the ideas discussed in class. Select a class that you found particularly thought provoking. Did you strongly agree or disagree with a particular idea raised? Or perhaps an intervention you made in discussion was not adequately appreciated or misunderstood? No additional outside research is expected and the response should be submitted in my mailbox one week after the discussion took place.

Group project
Students will be required to complete a group project that addresses a real problem in an urban system. This project will allow students to incorporate concepts from the course in a case study application. The project will be conducted in small groups and will involve a
written report and oral presentation. Presentations will be scheduled during the last weeks of class. All members of the group will receive the same grade. Assessment will consider quality of research, writing, and oral communication.

**Negotiation Debrief**
We will hold one negotiation exercise near the end of the term, in which city managers negotiate a collaborative agreement related to urban infrastructure management and service provision. You will be asked to submit your negotiation plan and a one page reflection essay that you write upon completing the exercise.

**Office Hours**
My office hours are Tuesday 3:00-4:45. You may schedule an appointment on a sign up sheet posted on my door. Come and tell me how you think the course can be improved.

**Additional Recommended Readings**
For students interested in pursuing this material in greater detail, below you will find a list of additional recommended readings.


Academic Integrity
The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University’s policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at http://calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0.
Week 1.  Course Overview

Course overview and introduction                       January 4


Case: California High Speed Rail                       January 6

Week 2.  Infrastructure and the development of cities

Case: The New York City Transit Authority               January 11

Case: Transforming El Salvador’s Water Company          January 13

Week 3.  Infrastructure and the development of cities

Case: DART’s Suburban Service                           January 18
Harvard Kennedy School. DART’s Suburban Service. Case CR14-03-1696.0

Potable Water Supplies & Wastewater                    January 20

Week 4.  Services and impacts

Case: Bunjagali Dam                                    January 25

Case: Brightsource concentrated solar power             January 27
Week 5. Politics & Public Policy

Aramco in Saudi Arabia


Guest Speaker: Daniel Camós, The World Bank
Topic: Infrastructure Development in Emerging Countries

Week 6. Role of Government and Institutions

Family Day – University Closed

Case: The British Water Industry (A)


-- Midterm Break: February 15 to 19 --

Week 7. Role of Government and Institutions

Guest Speaker: Metro Vancouver

Case: Arsenic in Drinking Water

Harvard Kennedy School Arsenic in drinking water. CR-14-03.1680.

Week 8. Negotiations

Negotiation Exercise: Richland-River City


Negotiations Debrief

Negotiations Reflection Essay Due

Week 9. Urban Futures

Case: The Smart Grid

Guest Speaker: BC Hydro

**Week 10. Urban Futures**

Case: Cybersecurity and Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School. The Vulnerable Economy: Zero-days, Cybersecurity and Public Policy. Case 2029

Group Presentations

**Week 11.**

Group Presentations

**Week 12. Final Exam & Course Wrap Up**

University Closed

Course Wrap Up