

Transportation and Place

Autopia Reconsidered: Los Angeles and Its Freeways

UEP 295 Spring 2022

WEINGART PATIO TENT / UEPI F 1:30 - 4:25 PM

Occidental College

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PROF. AXELROD'S OFFICE HOURS: SWAN 307 WEDNESDAYS 1:30 - 3:30 PM (and by appointment)

PROF. SCACCO IS AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

SYLLABUS VERSION 1

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Los Angeles emerged as a modern metropolis, anchored by a thriving compact downtown district ringed by a constellation of far-flung suburban residential areas, all tied together and structured by a vast transportation infrastructure. In many ways, that transportation network — the Pacific Electric Big Red Cars — would become a symbol of the sprawling metropolitan region.

Yet, a half-century later, the Southern California metropolis reconstructed itself entirely, decommissioning and abandoning that iconic transit network altogether and, over the space of a few decades, planning and constructing a whole new modern infrastructure for the post-World War II era. These freeways would soon themselves come to stand as emblematic of the growing city, achieving world-wide fame as iconic marvels of civic engineering and what Historian David Nye terms an urban “technological sublime.”

Now, yet another half-century after that “modern marvel” of a freeway system was substantially complete, we can ask ourselves if the substantially transformed community of the 21st century is well-served by this same network of automotive roadways. As we look back with increasing concern on the costs that this mid-20th-century vision imposed — in terms of pollution, neighborhood displacement, traffic, and urban sprawl — it is time to evaluate with fresh eyes this historical legacy, reexamining along the way the vital relationships between transportation and place within the vibrant and ever-changing megalopolis.

REQUIREMENTS

This course combines extensive discussion, some lecture, and a substantial amount of reading and writing. You will be required to write two 5-6 page argumentative essays as well as a substantial final project (which may be an 10-12 page essay or a creative project). In addition to these essays, you will submit brief analyses of a pertinent quotation from each reading ahead of each class.

All essays must all be submitted **via Moodle** on their due date. Note that papers turned in late without explicit permission will be penalized as much as 10% per day, so please talk to me in advance if an emergency begins to arise that might jeopardize your ability to complete any assignment on time.

Attendance & Participation	20%
Reading Analyses .. (due the night before each class session).....	20%
Two Shorter Essays	(due during weeks 5 & 9)..... 30%
Final Project	(due during Finals)..... 30%

In order to develop an environment where constructive thinking and collegial interaction can develop, **attendance and participation in our class sessions will be mandatory**. More than two class absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade, as will failure to come to class adequately prepared.

As a four unit course, you should expect to spend at least twelve hours a week (including in-class time) on this course. Be aware as well that this course contains a strong Historical component in its methodology, so be prepared for a substantial amount of primary/secondary source reading. It would be greatly to your advantage to develop strategies to help you read and process these texts efficiently. If you need advice on this, or anything else arising from the course requirements and assignments, please talk with me — I will be happy to help.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

- ① Come to each class having read and marked up all assigned texts. Be ready to discuss these readings within the context of the course.
- ② Writing assignments will be distributed during the semester, but all papers should reflect careful thought, revision, and proofreading and must conform to ethical standards in citation, quotation, and other use of all sources.
- ③ Be prepared to synthesize a range of scholarly texts within a variety of different humanistic academic disciplines and with a careful attention to change over time.
- ④ During this exceptional period, all participants in our class must abide by the College's health and safety directives pertaining to vaccination, physical distancing, and masking throughout the semester.

COURSE GOALS & OUTCOMES

- ① Students will gain a nuanced awareness of the history of urban Southern California over the past century, with particular emphasis on the impacts and ideologies surrounding networks of transportation in greater Los Angeles.
- ② Students will become familiar with social transformations in twentieth century American cities more broadly — including the reconfiguration of systems of prejudice, segregation, and displacement — which informed, shaped, and gave meaning to the built environment.
- ③ Students will develop an appreciation for oral history methodologies and ethics. They will then engage with community partners in a collaborative story-gathering program to capture the voices and experiences of those affected by urban transformations and policies.
- ④ Students will hone their skills at synthesizing academic interdisciplinary secondary source scholarship with techniques of cultural analysis gleaned from contemporary Critical Theory to produce their own original argumentative interpretations of American urban history.

A NOTE ON THE STUDY OF THE PAST

This course focuses on periods of time rife with systemic racism — often extremely overt and pervasively expressed. **Many of the texts, images, and recorded materials we will encounter this semester will be disturbing**, depicting a historical period filled with violence, suffering, and naked prejudice, as well as the defiant struggle to make our society a more tolerant and humane place. Some of the language deployed in source materials we will examine was intended quite explicitly to intimidate as well as communicate and that rhetoric still carries oppressive force. Indeed, some students may well find that events and expressions of the past resonate with them today in powerful ways. No one in this class bears any individual responsibility for the choices other people made long ago, yet we all inherit the consequences of that history and an obligation to open our own eyes to the prejudices, ideas, and struggles that continue to shape us.

In this class, each of us will be expected to express respect, support, and explicit kindness toward our peers at all times, especially when disagreeing on a point of fact or interpretation, and to be particularly sensitive to our peers' intellectual and emotional reactions as they encounter and grapple with the effects of our shared historical legacy. If you have an idea how to improve the way we treat the powerful and charged historical material in this course, or perceive a way to make our shared discussions and investigations more inclusive and compassionate, please share those insights and concerns with me right away.

IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The last day to add this course is **4 February 2022** and the last day to drop is **4 March 2022**.

Students with **documented disabilities and learning differences** who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Academic dishonesty will result in the most severe repercussions. Using someone else's words — or even ideas — without attribution is plagiarism. For Oxy students, plagiarism constitutes a violation of the Occidental College codes of academic integrity (see <http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics>), which will result in disciplinary proceedings and almost certainly failure of the course. **Fortunately, plagiarism is easily avoided merely by clearly citing all your sources.** Use quotation marks and footnotes or in-text references to fully identify any ideas, sentences, or even phrases that are not your own invention. If you are ever unsure about the ethical use of sources or ideas, simply ask me — I am here to help.

The Writing Center (located on the Ground Floor of the Academic Commons) offers opportunities to work on all forms of writing for any class or other writing tasks such as personal statements, proposals, senior comprehensives, etc. We offer peer-to-peer consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers and sessions with Faculty Writing Specialists. For Fall 2021, most of our appointments will be synchronous in-person sessions, with some availability for Zoom virtual meetings and asynchronous feedback. See the Writing Center website for more information about our hours and how to sign up for appointments: <https://www.oxy.edu/writing-center>. Please contact the Writing Center Director, Prof. Prebel (jprebel@oxy.edu; x1307) for more information on how the Writing Center can work with you.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience: Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: <https://www.oxy.edu/office-religious-spiritual-life>.

Title IX: It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of sexual misconduct. That means that I cannot keep information about sexual misconduct confidential if you share that information with me. In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual and/or gender-based harassment, as a designated Responsible Employee, I must notify the Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at Oxy and reporting options both on and off-campus. You have no obligation to respond to the Title IX Office or to meet with them to discuss support services and reporting options. If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus: Oxy's Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu); Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657); Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (young@oxy.edu). The sexual misconduct policy, along with additional resources, can be found at: <http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-respect-title-ix/policies-procedures>. If you would like to contact the Title IX Office directly, you can email Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

REQUIRED READING PACKET

The readings listed below are all in PDF format and will be available on **Moodle**. Please bring a well-read copy with you to class each day.

BROADSLY 1981. Scott Broadslly. *LA Freeway: An Appreciative Essay* (UC Press, 1981).

BANHAM 1971 : Reyner Banham. "Autopia." 213-222 in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Penguin (London) 1971.

GIEDION 1941: Siegfried Giedion. 822-833 in *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Harvard, 1941).

FOUCAULT 1967: Michel Foucault. "Of Other Spaces." 22-27 in *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986) [original: 1967].

CA ARTS 1941: Anonymous. "And Now We Plan." 17, 21-23 in *California Arts & Architecture* 57:11 (1941).

AXELROD 2009: Jeremiah B.C. Axelrod. "Gardens and Cities" [Chapter 6] & "A City That Moves" [Epilogue] in *Inventing Autopia: Dreams and Visions of the Modern Metropolis in Jazz Age Los Angeles* (UC Press, 2009).

LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS 2005: Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris & Robert Gottlieb. "A Road as a Route and Place: The Evolution and Transformation of the Arroyo Seco Parkway." 28-40 in *California History* 83:1 (2005).

FOWLER 1956: Dan Fowler. "Los Angeles: The World's Worst Growing Pains." 21-25 in *Look* 20:5 (6 March 1956).

GUMPRECHT 1997: Blake Gumprecht. "51 Miles of Concrete: The Exploitation and Transformation of the Los Angeles River." 431-486 in *Southern California Quarterly* 79:4 (Winter 1997).

ARNOLD 1976: Vivien Arnold. "The Image of the Freeway." 28-30 in *JAE* 30:1 (September 1976).

[RECOMMENDED TEXT:] **LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE 1960-1965**:

Anonymous. "The Big Decision: Part and Parcel of Los Angeles' Fabulous Future is a Satisfactory Rapid Transit System." 16-19 in *Los Angeles* 1.4 (October 1960).

Anonymous. "The Face of L.A. - 1970." 16-19 in *Los Angeles* 1.3 (September 1960).

Anonymous. "The Negro Community: 'A Better Chance.'" 38-41 in *Los Angeles* 3.3 (March 1962).

Anonymous. "The Westside Story." 16-22 in *Los Angeles* 3.2 (February 1962).

Charles Davenport. "The Look of the City: Is Beauty within Reach?" 18-23 in *Los Angeles* 3.4 (April 1962).

Gilbert Thomas. "Los Angeles: Doomed to Ugliness?" 24-31+ in *Los Angeles* 10.1 (July 1965).

Ray Duncan. "The Painful Rejuvenation of Downtown." 28-33+ in *Los Angeles* 6.5 (November 1963).

BRILLIANT 1965: Ashleigh E. Brilliant. "Some Aspects of Mass Motorization in Southern California, 1919-1929." 191-208 in *Southern California Quarterly* 47:2 (June 1965).

[RECOMMENDED TEXT:] **JACKSON 1985**: Kenneth T. Jackson. "The Transportation Revolution and the Erosion of the Walking City." 20-44 in *Crabgrass Frontier* (Oxford University Press, 1985).

SÁNCHEZ 2004: George J. Sánchez. "'What's Good for Boyle Heights Is Good for the Jews': Creating Multiracialism on the Eastside during the 1950s." 633-661 in *American Quarterly* 56:3 (September 2004).

VILLA 2000: Raúl Villa. "From Military-Industrial Complex to Urban-Industrial Complex." 66-110 in *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* (University of TX Press, 2000).

ESTRADA 2005: Gilbert Estrada. "If You Build It, They Will Move: The Los Angeles Freeway System and the Displacement of Mexican East Los Angeles, 1944-1972." 287-315 in *Southern California Quarterly* 87:3 (Fall 2005).

LA CPC 1947: Los Angeles City Planning Commission [Charles B. Bennett & Milton Breivogel]. *Conditions of Blight: Central Area, City of Los Angeles* (LA City Planning Commission, 1947).

JACOBS 1961: Jane Jacobs. 65-96 in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (The Modern Library, 1993 [1961]).

LEFEBVRE 1967: Henri Lefebvre. Selections from *Le droit à la ville* [*The Right to the City*] (written in 1967). 100-103, 109-110, 126-132, 156-159, 168-174, & 177-181 in *Writings on Cities* (Blackwell, 1996).

HILL-HOLTZMAN 1994. Nancy Hill-Holtzman. "Neighbors Unite What Freeway Divided." *LA Times* (10 April 1994) B:16.

JEFFERSON 2009: Allison Rose Jefferson. "African American Leisure Space in Santa Monica: The Beach Sometimes Known As the 'Inkwell,' 1900s-1960s." 155-189 in *Southern California Quarterly* 91:2 (Summer 2009).

LYNCH 1960: Kevin Lynch. "The City Image and Its Elements." 46-90 [Chapter Three] in *The Image of the City* (MIT, 1960).

[RECOMMENDED TEXT:] **DE CERTEAU 1984**: Michel De Certeau; "Spatial Practices." 91-130 [Part III] in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of CA Press, 1984).

MCCLENAHAN 1929: Bessie Averte McClenahan. "Residence in Relation to Social Values" & "Social Changes." 32-53 & 97-115 in *The Changing Urban Neighborhood: From Neighbor to Nigh-Dweller: A Sociological Study* (PhD Thesis, University of Southern California, 1929).

MEARES 2018: Hadley Meares. "The Thrill of Sugar Hill." From *Curbed LA* (22 Feb. 2018). [<https://1a.curbed.com/2018/2/22/16979700/west-adams-history-segregation-housing-covenants>]

HUTCHINSON 2000: Sikivu Hutchinson. "Waiting for the Bus." 107- 120 in *Social Text* 18:2 (Summer 2000).

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & ASSIGNMENTS

All reading should be completed in time for the class meeting indicated (all are required unless indicated otherwise) — our discussion will depend upon comprehension of the reading material. Please also note that specific topics shown here are provisional and may change as the class develops.

<i>Week 1</i>		THE BIG PICTURE	The Freeway Era in Perspective
F		INTRODUCTIONS	
	28 JAN	The Road to Autopia	

<i>Week 2</i>		ON RAMP	Roads Taken and Not Taken
F		The Romance of the Roads:	
	4 FEB	Recapturing Autopia	
		BROADSLY 1981 <i>LA FREEWAY (PARTS I & II (PAGES 1-59))</i>	60
		BANHAM 1971 "AUTOPIA" FROM <i>LOS ANGELES: ARCHITECTURE OF FOUR ECOLOGIES</i>	10
		GIEDION 1941 FROM <i>SPACE, TIME, AND ARCHITECTURE</i>	10

<i>Week 3</i>		ROADS & RIVERS	Case Study I : The Arroyo Seco Parkway
F		Parks, Parkways, and Freeways	
	11 FEB		Field Trip: The Charles Lummis Home
		FOUCAULT 1967 "OF OTHER SPACES"	5
		CA ARTS 1941 "...AND NOW WE PLAN"	5
		AXELROD 2009 CHAPTER 6 & EPILOGUE FROM <i>INVENTING AUTOPIA</i>	70
		LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS 2005 "A ROAD AS A ROUTE AND A PLACE"	15

<i>Week 4</i>		ROADS & RIVERS	Rivers of Concrete
F		The Los Angeles River	
	18 FEB	and Other Architectures of Mid-Century Modernism	
		FOWLER 1956 "LOS ANGELES"	5
		GUMPRECHT 1997 "51 MILES OF CONCRETE"	55
		ARNOLD 1976 "THE IMAGE OF THE FREEWAY"	5
		RECOMMENDED READING LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE 1960-1965	40

Week 5		RAILROAD CROSSINGS	Echoes of the Big Red Cars
F 25 FEB	FIRST ESSAY DUE ON SUNDAY FEB 27		
	Who Framed Rapid Transit in LA?		
	How We Invented Autopia in Southern California		
	BRILLIANT 1965	"SOME ASPECTS OF MASS-MOTORIZATION..."	25
	BROADSLY 1981	LA FREEWAY (PARTS III & IV [PAGES 60-160])	100
	THIS WAS PACIFIC ELECTRIC (2003) REQUIRED FILM	96 min.	
	RECOMMENDED READING JACKSON 1985		
	"THE TRANSPORT REVOLUTION..." FROM CRABGRASS FRONTIER	25	

Week 6		I-110, CA-60, I-5, & US-101	Case Study II : Boyle Heights	
F 4 MAR	The Freeway and "Slum Clearance":		Field Trip: Boyle Heights	
	Ethnic Cleansing in Postwar Los Angeles			
	SÁNCHEZ 2004	"WHAT'S GOOD FOR BOYLE HEIGHTS IS GOOD FOR THE JEWS"		30
	VILLA 2000	"FROM MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX TO URBAN-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX"		45
	ESTRADA 2005	"IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL MOVE"		25
	RECOMMENDED FILM EAST LA INTERCHANGE (2015)	57 min.		

Week 7		ROAD TRIP	Spring Break
F 11 MAR	SPRING BREAK		
	NO CLASS MEETING TODAY & NO OFFICE HOURS THIS WEEK		

Week 8		I-710, CA-134, & I-210	Case Study III : Pasadena	
F 18 MAR	Community Displacement and Public Policy		Field Trip: The Arroyo Seco in Pasadena	
	LA CPC 1947	CONDITIONS OF BLIGHT		35
	JACOBS 1961	FROM THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES		30
	LEFEBVRE 1967	SELECTIONS FROM THE RIGHT TO THE CITY		30

Week 9		I-10, CA-1, & I-405	Case Study IV : Santa Monica
F 25 MAR	SECOND ESSAY DUE ON SUNDAY MAR 27		
	The Ghosts of Belmar		
	HILL-HOLTZMAN 1994	"NEIGHBORS UNITE WHAT FREEWAY DIVIDED"	1
	JEFFERSON 2009	"AFRICAN AMERICAN LEISURE SPACE IN SANTA MONICA"	30

<i>Week 10</i>		SURFACE STREETS	The Word on the Streets	
F		(NE)LA STORIES INTERVIEWS THIS WEEK		
	1 APR	NO CLASS MEETING TODAY		

<i>Week 11</i>		CA-134 & COLORADO BLVD.	Case Study V : Eagle Rock	
F		Streets & Neighborhoods		Field Trip: Colorado Blvd. in Eagle Rock
	8 APR	LYNCH 1960 FROM <i>THE IMAGE OF THE CITY</i>	45	
		RECOMMENDED READING DE CERTEAU 1984 <i>"SPATIAL PRACTICES"</i>	40	

<i>Week 12</i>		I-10 & I-110	Case Study VI : West Adams & South LA	
F		Legacies of the "White Spot":		
	15 APR	Reckoning with Infrastructures of Invisibility		
		McCLENAHAN 1929 <i>"THE CHANGING URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD"</i>	40	
	MEARES 2018 <i>"THE THRILL OF SUGAR HILL"</i>	10		

<i>Week 13</i>		OTHER ROADS	Envisioning Transportation for LA's Next Century	
F		(NE)LA STORIES TRANSCRIPTS DUE TODAY		
	22 APR	Autopia, Reconsidered?		
		HUTCHINSON 2000 <i>"WAITING FOR THE BUS"</i>	10	

<i>Week 14</i>		OFF RAMP	Where We are Headed	
F		CONCLUSIONS		
	29 APR	Class Presentations & Final Thoughts		

<i>Final Exam</i>		MOVING FORWARD	Wrapping Up	
F		FINAL PROJECT DUE		
6 MAY				