This class provides an overview of transportation issues, focusing on the impacts of mobility policies, systems and infrastructure on cities and on Los Angeles in particular. The theme of the course is “Asphalt Alchemy” – that is, the significance of, and transformative potential of, streets. The class will address how modifications the design, regulation, use and perception of streets can trigger changes that extend far beyond traffic patterns.

The City of Los Angeles recently adopted a new Mobility Plan 2035 and a New Complete Streets Design Guide to shape transportation and streets in LA over the next 20 years. We will examine these plans to explore the policy and politics of changing notions of mobility.


The class will be taught through a combination of readings; lectures by prof. Vallianatos and by guest speakers; trips by foot, bike, car, and transit so students can experience, observe and journal about streets; and individual and group projects to study streets in Los Angeles. We will aim to spend one class section per week in the classroom, and the other out ‘on the streets’ doing observations and project work.

As a case study, the class will help research the past, present and future of North Figueroa Street in Highland Park. Students will also help plan and participate in an event on how the future of mobility in Northeast LA can link to community planning.

Each student will individually prepare a plan to redesign a major street in Los Angeles.

The course is divided into five sections:
1. an introduction to class themes and methods;
2. a mobility section on different forms of transportation;
3. a character of streets section on streets as infrastructure, transportation systems, places, culture, history, and political spaces;
4. an impacts section on how transportation and streets shape the built environment, health and sustainability;
5. and an asphalt alchemy section on methods for changing streets and transforming cities.

The class is a 4 credit, graded course. Grades will be calculated as follows:
⇒ 8 1-2 page journal entries and maps: 5% each (40% total)
⇒ Street changing plan 25%
  o initial assessment due Oct 8
  o draft plan due Nov 19
  o final plan due Dec 3
⇒ Figueroa St Research 20%
  o draft block research due Oct 22
  o final block research due Nov 24
⇒ NELA planathon organization 10%
⇒ In class participation: 5%
⇒ Extra credit possible by writing additional journal entries on street events

Attendance Policy. Because participation is central to this class students are expected to attend all classes.
⇒ 2 unexcused absences will result in a grade no higher than a B+
⇒ 3 unexcused absences will result in a grade no higher than a C
⇒ 4 or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.
⇒ Please inform the professor of any upcoming absences (or past absences if an emergency arises). Ask the professor to check what absences count as excused.

Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor no later than the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential.

Part I: Introduction

Thurs Aug 27: Cracks in the pavement
Walk & Lecture: an introduction to class themes and topics
Description of class methods and syllabus

Part II: Mobility

Tues Sept 1: Walking
Assignment: read Jeff Speck, Walkable City, pgs 71-72; Mobility Plan 2035 pgs 31-33, 41-45; Gehl, How to study public spaces pgs 10-35
Assignment: go to http://www.walkscore.com/ and find the walk score for where you live at Oxy/in LA and where you live away from college.
Assignment: go for a walk. create a map of your route annotated with notes on what you saw, experienced, thought, felt.
Thurs Sept 3: sidewalks


ASSIGNMENT: turn in journal entry 1- walking

Each student will be assigned a local street to analyze during the semester

Tues Sept 8: Cycling

ASSIGNMENT: read Pulcher and Buehler, *Cycling for sustainable transport* pgs-99-137

ASSIGNMENT: go for a bike ride, create a map of your route annotated with notes on what you saw, experienced, thought, felt.

Thurs Sept 10: Bike infrastructure


Tues Sept 15: Planathon planning


(final date of planathon TBD, probably weekend of Sept 26-27 or Oct 4-5

ASSIGNMENT: Turn in journal 2- bike ride

**Wed Sep 16 or Sat Sep 19: 2015 LA bike and pedestrian count**
sign up for one location/ time slot at: [http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/199210086079](http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/199210086079)

**Thurs Sept 17: no class**
ASSIGNMENT: visit your assigned street and/or N. Figueroa for initial assessment

**Tues Sept 22: Transit**
ASSIGNMENT: Ride a bus and create a map of your route annotated with notes on what you saw, experienced, thought, felt.

Thurs Sept 24: transit in LA
ASSIGNMENT: Ride a train and create a map of your route annotated with notes on what you saw, experienced, thought, felt.
ASSIGNMENT: read Measure R projects http://www.metro.net/interactives/datatables/project/; LA Mobility Plan 2035 pg 83; Complete Streets Design Guide, pgs 135-143; Move LA draft transportation tax measure http://www.movela.org/move_la_s_sales_tax_measure_strawman_41

Tues September 29: driving
ASSIGNMENT: Go on a car ride. create a map of your route annotated with notes on what you saw, experienced, thought, felt.
ASSIGNMENT: read Vanderbilt, Traffic: why we drive the way we do, 8-18, 153-175; Flink, the Auto Age 1-14; DiMento and Ellis, Changing Lanes: visions and histories of urban freeways, pgs 1-10, 73-80, 107-111;
ASSIGNMENT: Turn in/post journal entry 3 (bus)

Thurs October 1: cars in LA

ASSIGNMENT: Turn in/post journal entry 4 (train)

Part III: the character of streets

Sat October 4: Eagle Rock Music Festival- extra credit for write up of experience

Tues Oct 6: Streets as rules

ASSIGNMENT: Turn in journal 5 (car)

Thurs Oct 8: Streets as mobility (safe and complete streets)

ASSIGNMENT: sign up for [http://tims.berkeley.edu/index.php](http://tims.berkeley.edu/index.php) and look up accidents on your street

turn in/ upload initial assessment of your assigned street

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**Tues Oct 13: Fall break- no class**

**Thurs Oct 15: streets as infrastructure (green and maintained streets)**

*Sunday, October 18: Ciclavia*

ASSIGNMENT: attend Ciclavia, write notes on what you did, saw, felt

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**Tues Oct 20: streets as places**
ASSIGNMENT: choose a site on your assigned street with a potential for placemaking- map it as it currently exists and start planning ideas for improvement

**Thurs Oct 22: streets as culture**
ASSIGNMENT: turn in draft of N. Figueroa research

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**Tues Oct 27: streets as history**
ASSIGNMENT: turn in/post journal entry 6 (ciclavia)

**Thurs Oct 29: streets as struggle**

Part IV: impacts

Tues Nov 3: Shape of the city

Thurs Nov 5: Food & Art
ASSIGNMENT: buy and eat some street food. Make a map with notes on what you bought, what kind of vehicle or stand you bought from, what the experience was like
ASSIGNMENT: find, map, and photograph a piece of street art and write a short reflection on the piece

Tues Nov 10: health & sustainability
ASSIGNMENT: read Walkable City, pgs 37-63;

Part V: asphalt alchemy

Thurs Nov 12: Using existing streets better: Latino urbanism & tactical urbanism
Assignment: turn in/upload journal 7 (street art)

**Tues Nov 17: Better streets**

**Thurs Nov 19: street plan presentations**
ASSIGNMENT: present draft street changing plans for discussion; upload draft plan

**Tues Nov 24: N. Figueroa plan presentation**
ASSIGNMENT: present N. Figueroa research and recommendations for discussion; upload research

**Thurs Nov 26: Thanksgiving, no class**

**Tues Dec 1: final class**
Evaluation, final discussions

**Thurs Dec 3: final street changing plan due**