

Sustainable Urban Mobility – Summer 2016

Great Britain, The Netherlands, Denmark | URBDP 498/598 | 12-15 Credits

“If you think about it, “difference” of any kind is a somewhat odd thing. So many of us travel abroad to search for “something different”—new cultures, people, ways of life, stories, experiences, foods, sights, and geographies. We go far to stretch ourselves and be elsewhere. We go for “something different” than what we already know. Sometimes though—and this is the part we don’t often speak about—we aren’t really sure what to do with the differences we have found, especially if they make us have to question who we are and what that means in a larger global world.”

– Dr. Anu Taranath, UW

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

How did European cities become less car-dependent than American cities? What are the best practices for sustainable mobility planning in Europe? Which of these lessons from Europe are transferable to an American context? These are just some of the questions we will seek to answer in our Sustainable Urban Mobility Course. We will take students to the world-leading countries in sustainable transportation - Great Britain, Denmark, and The Netherlands.

This course will expose them to the best practices in multi-modal transportation and land use planning. Denmark and The Netherlands are known to be world leaders in sustainable transportation and have much to teach students from North America. Great Britain has a culture and land use pattern which are more similar to the automobile -oriented mobility of the United States, but has recently implemented a series of public policy changes to discourage automobile driving and encourage the use of various modes of public transportation. It is important to note that these countries have developed sustainable transportation systems without compromising their country’s economic development or high standard of living.

We will meet with academics and professionals in all three countries in various locations, both urban and rural, to learn about the history, development, and benefits of sustainable transportation planning. This local expertise will prove highly valuable in this study abroad program, as it will give students a deeper understanding of how and why sustainable mobility patterns developed in Europe. With this understanding, students can better apply what they learn from this study abroad program to solving problems in Seattle and the United States.

Activities will include bike tours, walking tours, lectures, workshops, case studies, and self-exploration. Students will learn from the history and expertise of the local practitioners and academics, as well as from their personal experiences navigating in these three countries. Our accommodations are all within large cities or on public transit routes – demonstrating the ease of traveling without a car in each of these countries.

GOALS

Students will understand and answer the following questions:

- How can American cities transition to more sustainable mobility patterns by reducing car-dependency?
- Which local solutions are good examples of how cities can provide optimal mobility without people relying on access to a car?
- What are the primary motivations for pursuing reduced car-dependency among local stakeholders (politicians, developers, citizens, etc.)?
- What is the role of the planner in this process, i.e. what kind of knowledge, methods and tools does the planner need in order to best support this development?

EXPECTATIONS

Participation

This course is all about experiential learning. You can't learn from an experience unless you are PRESENT. This means physically and mentally. Any students who are determined to be unfit to participate in an outing or site visit will be asked to stay behind. This will negatively impact their grade.

GRADING

50% - Active participation in local assignments, field exercises, and committees

20% - T.I.P.S. weekly reflections (8 total)

30% - Final Group Paper and Presentations

ASSIGNMENTS

Local Assignments

There will be occasional tasks and presentations assigned by affiliate instructors. It is expected that these assignments be completed on time and with great effort. We want our affiliates to hold a high standard for University of Washington students.

Weekly Reflections

Each week, you will be required to write a **T.I.P.S. Letter of Reflection**. You will email this to your faculty lead. They are due each week by 5pm on Sunday. Some of these letters will be published on social media or other sources with the permission of the author.

Each week we will have one small group dinner with your faculty lead. These will be scheduled in the field and are meant to serve as reflective check-ins about both the academic and personal experiences of studying abroad.

Course Readings

There are assigned readings for each country. These readings are required, and we highly

recommend you do them prior to departure. This will give you the background knowledge necessary to engage with the material while you are in country, but will allow you to use your free time while abroad to explore.

Final Paper and Presentations

The final paper is due at the conclusion of the program. Groups of 2-3 students will write a joint paper addressing one of the City of Seattle's problem statements (see attached). There will be student presentations at the end of each country where students will present their progress on the final paper and get feedback from peers and professors.

Peer Review Presentation Dates:

- Monday, July 18 – Peer Review Presentation 1
- Tuesday, August 2 – Peer Review Presentation 2
- Wednesday, August 16 – Peer Review Presentation 3

The final paper should be thorough and include an introduction stating the context and problem, the groups approach to the problem, and the recommendations for how these European ideas can be applied to the City of Seattle. More details on this paper will be discussed at the beginning of the trip.

Each group will have a faculty mentor with whom they will be expected to check in with throughout the course. Faculty scoping check-ins will be held throughout the trip. The final paper and presentation is due on August 21st at the conclusion of the course. Each student will submit a peer review of their group members' contribution to the assignment.

COMMITTEES

Every student will serve on a committee during this course. Each committee will elect a point that will help facilitate communication between the program leads and the students. Each committee will come up with its own goals and organization for the program. These committees are meant to transfer some ownership of this course to the students.

Pedagogy Review

Review and provide feedback on the course to instructors at the conclusion of each country. This committee should facilitate peer feedback on the course to improve upon the remainder of the trip and future SUM trips.

Communications

Out facing to families, faculty and other interested parties. This group will manage social media pages, website stories, and other journalism opportunities.

Documentation

Photo and video archives before, during and after course. Team up with communications group for photos, posts, and stories.

Event Planning Committee

Programmed and leisure time opportunities in recreation, culture, and social activities. This committee helps build community throughout the program.