

PSC 3192w: Infrastructure, Inaction, & Inequality

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Lecture: T, 12:45-3:15 pm, 1776 G C-101
Office Hours: Th, 1:00-3:00 pm, Monroe Hall 402

Semester Fall 2023

Course Description

How should we decide where to put things society needs, but few people want nearby?

In this writing seminar, we will focus on the political challenge of infrastructure in the United States. Infrastructure is broadly defined, but we will focus primarily on the supply of market-rate and affordable housing, as well as clean energy infrastructure. The political challenge at hand is how to provide infrastructure but also ensuring equity in its distribution of costs and benefits. Having defined normative goals, we will review the political hurdles to its provision, from the behavior of political actors to the institutional designs which create challenges.

As a writing in the discipline (WID) course, you will develop your own research paper on the supply–equity trade-off behind a specific piece of infrastructure. You will develop this paper throughout the course, incorporating peer feedback from an early draft. You will also present your findings in class.

Finally, I would like to thank the following scholars for inspiration behind this course design: Janet Lewis, Robert Betz, David Szakonyi, Danny Hayes, Julian Wamble, and Henry Watson.

Learning Goals

The goal of this course is to improve your ability to:

1. Identify and evaluate competing theories about the role of government in constructing infrastructure;
2. Engage in thoughtful discussions about the various ways to ensure equitable outcomes;
3. Select interesting research questions and put forward designs to answer them;
4. Develop skills of presenting and defending their research;
5. Craft original arguments and write polished papers in political science.

Expected Time Commitment

You will spend 2.5 hours per week in direct instruction or guided interaction. The average minimum amount of out-class learning expected per week is 8 hours (<https://cte.rice.edu/workload>) for a total of 120 hours per semester.

Course Assignments and Grading

Grades will be composed of the following:

- 20% Participation
- 20% Seminar leadership
- 10% Research paper - Proposal
- 20% Research paper - First draft and workshop participation
- 30% Research paper - Final paper

At the end of the semester, your grade will be assigned based on the following scale: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), and F (0-59). Scores within one-half point of the next letter grade will be rounded up. While a curve may be used in determining the final distribution of grades, the curve will only be used to improve your grade. Finally, I do not allow students to submit extra work in an attempt to raise his or her grade, unless I have specified to the entire class that such an opportunity exists.

Participation

Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read and independently analyzed the readings for the week. Be ready to participate in discussions every week as well as give comments during the paper workshops. Absences and tardiness will negatively affect your grade.

Seminar Leadership

On the first day of class, you will sign up to lead a seminar, in collaboration with a partner. You and your partner will be responsible for leading the first 75 minutes of class. In the week before the class, you will meet with your partner and establish an outline of questions. Then, I will meet with you and offer feedback on how to strengthen the inquiry. You will then submit a final outline of your seminar to me by 11:59 pm on the day before the class.

Here are some questions that might guide your thinking:

1. Are the arguments supposed by the evidence? Has the author convinced you that you should care about the finding?
2. Are the findings important for: social science? normative reasons? policymaking?
3. What is an example of an infrastructure conflict in the real world which embodies these challenges? How?
4. What are some further questions for discussion that the article(s) raise?

You will be graded on the quality of your outline and your ability to lead the discussion. You will also need to share in an example of a conflict which embodies lessons from that week. An article about the conflict will be assigned to the class to read and focus on for part of your seminar section.

Research Paper

In this assignment, you will write a research paper on the politics of infrastructure system and the tension between inaction and inequality. You can choose which political factors you will research, and you can research a infrastructure domain of your choosing. The paper should try to develop an explanation for your topic of interest (“why” or “how” questions). These papers should be roughly 20 pages single-spaced (10,000 words, excluding bibliography).

1. Bring three ideas for research questions to class (in-class September 26th)
2. Paper proposal with research design, 5-pages (due October 16th, 11:59 pm)

- You should outline your research question, research design, importance of the question, and evidence to be collected. The proposal should include an annotated bibliography with one or two sentences explaining the argument and utility of at least 10 sources.
3. Paper workshop participation and draft distribution (November 25th or December 2nd, 11:59 pm)
 - Students should distribute a 20-page draft of their paper by their group’s deadline to the class email list.
 - During class, students will act as discussants by preparing a brief (5 minute) overview of one of their classmate’s drafts. We will then review the project as a whole and offer comments to improve it.
 - I cannot grant any extensions for the first draft, since the rest of the class needs time to prepare comments for the workshops. If you do not turn your draft in by the deadline, you will receive a failing grade for the workshop portion of the research paper assignment.
 4. Final paper (due during the final exam period for this seminar)
 - Late papers will be docked 1/3 grade for each day.

Readings

This class does not have a required textbook. All readings will be posted on Blackboard (<http://blackboard/gwu/edu>). “Supplemental Readings” are things I find useful but are not necessary for the week’s class. Readings are subject to change up to one week before their assigned class. Please check the syllabus posted on Blackboard for updates.

Absence Policy

Absences will result in “zero” grades for participation and any activity that day. To be excused from attendance of a given class, a student must notify the professor with an acceptable excuse prior to the start of that day’s class unless, in the professor’s judgment, advance notification was impossible. For religious holidays, as per university policy, students must notify the professor during the first week of the semester about any class session that will be missed.

Course Prerequisites

PSC 1002. Introduction to American Politics and Government.

Office Hours

I will be holding office hours from 1 pm to 3 pm every Tuesday in my office, Monroe Hall 402. While you are welcome to come by at any time, I recommend that you email me in advance so I can reserve a time slot for you. If you arrive without emailing me in advance, you may have to wait for an available time slot to open.

Important Dates

- 9/26 - Research question due
- 10/20 - Paper proposal due
- 11/21 - No class, Thanksgiving Break
- 11/21 - Final paper draft due
- 12/19 - Final paper due

Course Calendar

Readings

1. 8/29 Introduction

- (a) What makes the crises of climate change and housing affordability political challenges?
- (b) How do the structures of government magnify these challenges?
- (c) What are some ways the public thinks about infrastructure's concentrated costs?
 - Stone, Deborah A. 2012. *Policy Paradox*. W.W. Norton & Company. 238-243.
 - McKibben, Bill. 2022. "From Climate Exhortation to Climate Execution." *The New Yorker*. Dec 27.
 - Gross, Samantha. 2020. "Renewable, Land Use, and Local Opposition in the United States." *Foreign Policy - The Brookings Institution*.
 - Been, Vicki, Ingrid Gould Ellen, and O'Regan, Katherine., 2019. "Supply Skepticism: Housing Supply and Affordability." *Housing Policy Debate* 29(1): 25-40.

Supplemental reading

- Altshuler, Alan A. 1999. "The ideo-logics of urban land-use policies." *Dilemmas of Scale in America's Federal Democracy*. pp. 189-226.
- Nall, Clayton, Christopher S. Elmendorf, and Stan Oklobdzija S. 2022. "Folk Economics and the Persistence of Political Opposition to New Housing." Working paper.
- Susskind, Lawrence, Jungwoo Chun, Alexander Grant, Chelsea Hodgkins, Jessica Cohen, and Sara Lohmar., 2022. "Sources of Opposition to Renewable Energy Projects in the United States." *Energy Policy* 165: 112922.
- Sud, Ryan, and Sanjay Patnaik. 2022. "How does permitting for clean energy infrastructure work?" *The Brookings Institution*.

2. 9/5 The Supply–Equity Trade-off

- (a) What is equity? How should we operationalize the term?
- (b) What are descriptive statistics behind the distribution of these goods for housing, energy, and transportation?
 - Le Grand, Julian. 1990. "Equity Versus Efficiency: The Elusive trade-off." *Ethics* 100(3): 554-568.
 - Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. "Environmental Justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34: 405-430.
 - Lens, Michael C. 2022. "Zoning, Land Use, and the Reproduction of Urban Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 48: 421-439.
 - Hyra, Derek. 2015. "The Back-to-the-City Movement: Neighbourhood Redevelopment and Processes of Political and Cultural Displacement." *Urban Studies* 52(10): 1753-1773.
 - Maiwald, Sean. 2018. "White, wealthy areas of DC aren't building their fair share of homes." *Greater Greater Washington*. Jun 29.

Supplemental reading

- Thomas, Jacqueline. "Separated by Design: Why Affordable Housing Is Built in Areas With High Crime, Few Jobs and Struggling Schools." *ProPublica*. Nov 25.
- Levine, Jeremy. 2021. *Constructing Community*. Princeton University Press. pp. 163-191.

- Goetz, Edward G., Rashad A. Williams, and Anthony Damiano. 2020. “Whiteness and Urban Planning.” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 86(2): 142-156.

3. 9/12 In the Defense of Localism

- (a) What do local governments get right? What are their incentives?
 - (b) How do we define competing values, from environmental protection, to historic preservation, to home value growth and sense of place?
- Fischel, William A. 2002. *The Homevoter Hypothesis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1, 4, 8.

Supplemental reading

- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. “A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures.” *Journal of Political Economy* 64(5), pp.416-424.

4. 9/19 Pitfalls of Past Planning

- (a) Why was it easier to build in the past?
 - (b) What were the side effects of centralized planning?
- Altshuler, Alan A., and David E. Luberoff. 2004. *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*. pp. 8-75.
 - Caro, Robert. 1975. *The Power Broker*. “One Mile.”
 - Campanella, Thomas. 2011. “Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning.” *Places*. April.

Supplemental reading

- Arnstein, Sherry R. 1969. “A Ladder of Citizen Participation.” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35(4): 216-224.

5. 9/26 Actors: Voters

- (a) Can voters be persuaded to support more supply?
 - (b) Do voters care about equity or just themselves?
- Marble, William, and Clayton Nall. 2021. “Where Self-Interest Trumps Ideology: Liberal Homeowners and Local Opposition to Housing Development.” *The Journal of Politics* 83(4): 1747-1763.
 - Carley, Sanya. David M. Konisky, Zoya Atiq, and Nick Land. 2020. “Energy Infrastructure, NIMBYism, and Public Opinion: A Systematic Literature Review of Three Decades of Empirical Survey Literature.” *Environmental Research Letters* 15(9): 093007.
 - Berko, Carly. 2023. “Voters Support Building Electric Power Transmission Infrastructure.” *Data For Progress*. March 1.
 - Gelles, David. 2022. “A Fight Over America’s Energy Future Erupts on the Canadian Border.” *The New York Times*. May 6.

Supplemental reading

- Hankinson, Michael. 2018. “When Do Renters Behave Like Homeowners? High Rent, Price Anxiety, and NIMBYism.” *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 473-493.
- Wolsink, Maarten. 2007. “Wind Power Implementation: The Nature of Public Attitudes: Equity and Fairness Instead of ‘Backyard Motives’.” *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 11(6): 1188-1207.

6. 10/3 Actors: Interest Groups

- (a) What organized interests operate in this policy space?
- (b) What are the conflicts among these groups, e.g., labor unions?

- Mildenberger, Matto. 2020. *Carbon Captured*. MIT Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 5.
- Cohen, Rachel M. 2023. “How housing activists and unions found common ground in California.” *Vox*. Aug 21.

Supplemental reading

- West, Debra. 2019. “The Hamptons Love Green Energy. But That Wind Farm?” *The New York Times*. Sept 14.

7. 10/10 Actors: Elected Officials

- (a) How do elected officials react to local opposition?
- (b) Does partisanship matter for housing and energy infrastructure?

- Stokes, Leah C. 2016. “Electoral Backlash Against Climate Policy: A Natural Experiment on Retrospective Voting and Local Resistance to Public Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 958-974.
- Pereira, Miguel M., Nathalie Giger, Maria D. Perez, and Kaya Axelsson. Forthcoming. “Encouraging Politicians to Act on Climate. A Field Experiment with Local Officials in Six Countries.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Sahn, Alexander. Forthcoming. “Public Comment and Public Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

Supplemental reading

- Chou, Winston, and Rafaela Dancygier. 2021. “Why Parties Displace Their Voters: Gentrification, Coalitional Change, and the Demise of Public Housing.” *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 429-449.
- de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, Daniel Jones, and Christopher Warshaw. Forthcoming. “How Partisanship in Cities Influences Housing Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

8. 10/17 Institutions: Local Decisionmaking

- (a) Do local institutions produce preferred outcomes?
- (b) What reforms may be acceptable to local institutions, within them?

- Hankinson, Michael, and Asya Magazinnik. 2023. “The Supply-Equity Trade-off: The Effect of Spatial Representation on the Local Housing Supply.” *The Journal of Politics* 85(3): 1033-1047.
- Larsen, Martin V. and Kettel, Laura. 2023. “When Local Control Leads to More Housing.” Working Paper.
- Mullin, Megan and Hansen, Katy. 2023. “Local news and the electoral incentive to invest in infrastructure.” *American Political Science Review* 117(3): 145-1150.

Supplemental reading

- Mast, Evan. 2022. “Warding Off Development: Local Control, Housing Supply, and Nimbys.” *Review of Economics and Statistics*.
- Einstein, Katherine L., David M. Glick, and Maxwell Palmer. 2020. *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America’s Housing Crisis*. Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6.

9. 10/24 Institutions: State Preemption

- (a) What reforms may be acceptable to at the state level?
- (b) How do state coalitions work?

- Infranca, John. 2019. “The New State Zoning: Land Use Preemption Amid a Housing Crisis.” *Boston College Law Review* 60: 823.
- Girouard, Jennifer. 2023. “Getting Suburbs to Do Their Fair Share: Housing Exclusion and Local Response to State Interventions.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 9(1): 126-144.
- Goodman, Christopher B., and Megan E. Hatch. 2023. “State Preemption and Affordable Housing Policy.” *Urban Studies*.

Supplemental reading

- (a) Briffault, Richard. 2018. “The Challenge of the New Preemption.” *Stanford Law Review*. 70: 1995.
- (b) Gerken, Heather. 2012. “A New Progressive Federalism.” *Democracy Journal*.

10. 10/31 Case Study: California’s Housing Crisis

- (a) Why have some state housing bills passed, while others failed?

- Graber, Henry. 2018. “Why Was California’s Radical Housing Bill so Unpopular?” *Slate*. April 20.
- Gill, Julia and Jenny Schuetz. 2023. “In California, statewide housing reforms brush against local resistance.” The Brookings Institution. June 28.
- 2023. Christopher, Ben. “The Godzilla Next Door.” *Cal Matters*.
- 2023. Elmendorf, Christopher 2. “The Housing Treadmill.” *City Journal*.
- 2023. Owens, Darrell. “YIMBYs & Labor Revolutionize California.”

Supplemental reading

- Britschgi, Christian. 2023. “To Tackle Highest Housing Costs in the Country, Hawaii’s Governor Declares YIMBY Martial Law.” *Reason*. Aug 23.

11. 11/7 Institutions: Federal Policy

- (a) What power does the federal government have?
- (b) Under what conditions has the federal government taken action?

- Miller, Lisa L. 2022. “Up from Federalism.” *Boston Review*. July 18.
- Allen, Danielle. 2022. “In Defense of Federalism.” *Boston Review*. Oct 31.
- Lyons, Daniel A. 2013. “Federalism and the Rise of Renewable Energy: Preserving State and Local Voice in the Green Energy Revolution.” *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 64: 1619.
- Cohen, Rachel M. 2023. “The big, neglected problem that should be Biden’s top priority.” *Vox*. Mar 1.

Supplemental reading

- Benedetti, Tara. 2010. “Running Roughshod-Extending Federal Siting Authority over Interstate Electric Transmission Lines.” *Harvard Journal on Legislation* 47: 253.
- Rossi, Jim. 2009. “The Trojan Horse of Electric Power Transmission Line Siting Authority.” *Environmental Law* 39: 1015.

- Kincaid, John. 1992. “From Cooperation to Coercion in American Federalism: Housing, Fragmentation and Preemption, 1780-1992.” *JL & Pol.*, 9, p.333.

12. 11/14 Case Study: The Inflation Reduction Act

- (a) How did the IRA attempt to boost clean energy production?
- (b) What are the remaining bottlenecks towards fulfilling the IRA’s goals?

- Eisen, Joel B and Shelly Welton. 2019. “Clean Energy Justice: Charting an Emerging Agenda.” *Harvard Environmental Law Review* 43(307).
- Mortimer, Colin. 2022. “Manchin’s permitting reform effort is dead. Biden’s climate agenda could be a casualty.” *Vox*. Dec 16.
- Klein, Ezra. 2022. “All Biden Has to Do Now Is Change the Way We Live.” *The New York Times*. Sep 11.
- Karlsson, Kristina. 2023. “Three Takeaways from the Roosevelt Institute’s Permitting Reform Forum.” *Roosevelt Institute*. Apr 21.

Supplemental reading

- 2023. “Biden-Harris Administration Permitting Action Plan.”
- Li, Zhou. “The Democratic infighting over Joe Manchin’s ‘side deal,’ explained.” *Vox*. Sep 13.

13. 11/21 *No class, Thanksgiving holiday.*

14. 11/28 Group 1 Paper Workshop

15. 12/5 Group 2 Paper Workshop

16. *Final paper due on GWU-assigned date of final exam.*

AI Policy

Special thanks to Prof. Robert Betz for this material.

We are entering a new technological era with the rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT and other large language models, that are driving an ongoing conversation about their academic uses. We are also learning about the potential benefits and misuse of AI and how it can be applied in the classroom. Learning to use generative AI is an emerging skill, however, we must use generative AI tools effectively and responsibly. Below I have outlined the expectations in our classroom of its permitted and prohibited use.

Permitted:

- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and reviews the generated content to help them study for a quiz or exam (i.e., a study guide).
- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them brainstorm ideas for a term paper or research project.
- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them create a citation for a source and/or reference list.
- A student types a prompt into an AI tool and uses the generated content to help them with small group discussion.

Citing GAI and verifying its accuracy:

- By submitting work for evaluation in this course, you represent it as your own intellectual product. If you include content (e.g., ideas, text, code, images) that was generated, in whole or in part, by generative AI tools (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and other large language models) in work submitted for evaluation in this course, you must document and credit your source. Material generated using other tools should be cited accordingly.
- If you include material generated by a generative AI tool and it is substantively incorrect you will lose points as appropriate. You should verify the accuracy of all content you include in your work.

Prohibited:

- Copying and pasting all or part of generated content without proper attribution to the GAI tool. If you copy anything from a generative AI tool, you absolutely must cite it. Otherwise this is in direct violation of the Code of Academic Integrity.
- While taking an out-of-class (“take-home”) or an in-class quiz, a student types a prompt into a generative AI tool and incorporates some or all of the generated content into their submitted answer.

Be aware of the limits of GAI:

- Generative AI is a tool, but you need to cite it when you use it. Always. No exception. And you are prohibited from using it as stated above.
- It may stifle your own independent thinking, creativity, and understanding of class concepts. Minimum effort into both generative AI prompts and your assignments will produce low quality results. Effectively and correctly using AI in academic work takes time and effort.
- Don't trust anything or everything AI says. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check it with another non-AI source. This is an opportunity for you to practice your critical analysis skills. As noted above, you will be responsible for any errors of omissions provided by the tool.
- AI tools are based on data that can include biases and reflect historical or social inequities and thus the AI tool can replicate those biases and inequities. Be aware that it can also produce problematic and potentially offensive answers.

University Policies

Observance of Religious Holidays

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details and policy, see: provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.

Academic Integrity Code

Academic Integrity is an integral part of the educational process, and GW takes these matters very seriously. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and in other ways outlined in the Code of Academic Integrity. Students accused of academic integrity violations should contact the Office of Academic Integrity to learn more about their rights and options in the process. Outcomes can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University, including a transcript notation. The Office of Academic Integrity maintains a permanent record of the violation.

More information is available from the Office of Academic Integrity at studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity. The University’s “Guide of Academic Integrity in Online Learning Environments” is available at studentconduct.gwu.edu/guide-academic-integrity-online-learning-environments. Contact information: rights@gwu.edu or 202-994-6757.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions.

Writing Center

GW's Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online. See gwu.mywconline.

Academic Commons

Academic Commons provides tutoring and other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an appointment, review the tutoring schedule, or access other academic support resources at academiccommons.gwu.edu. For assistance contact academiccommons@gwu.edu.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations: disabilitysupport.gwu.edu or call 202-994-8250.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success: healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services or call 202-994-5300.

Safety and Security

- In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook at safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out. See seego.gwu.edu/shooterprep
- Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed