PUBP 722 – Practicum in Transportation Policy, Operations & Logistics

SYLLABUS – Spring 2018 (Last update: January 22, 2018)

Basic Course Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/Place:</th>
<th>Monday, 7:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. (Eastern time), 322 Founders Hall or via videoconference.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Jonathan L. Gifford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>703-993-2275</td>
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<td>Office location</td>
<td>527 Founders Hall</td>
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<td>Office hours</td>
<td>Mondays, 4 – 5 p.m. An appointment is strongly recommended if you’re making a special trip to campus. I will be available in the office, by phone, or via Skype.</td>
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Course Summary

This course is the capstone of the Schar School of Policy and Government’s Master’s in Transportation Policy, Operations and Logistics (TPOL). The objective of the course is to engage students in an in-depth field study of ongoing transportation policy, operations, and/or logistics situations, and the design and delivery of actions to manage or resolve problems and opportunities. Copies of the reports of previous semesters are available at https://schar.gmu.edu/prospective-students/programs/masters-programs/tpol/practicum-reports.

The project for the spring 2018 offering of this course is “Deferred Maintenance on Government-Owned Infrastructure.” The client for the project is the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

The project will investigate the issue of government infrastructure deferred maintenance and how governmental bodies track and report it. The issue of infrastructure deferred maintenance is a significant transportation policy problem. Government budgets frequently shortchange the maintenance of infrastructure assets in ways that degrade the performance of the infrastructure for users and
increase long-term costs to the government. Our own Washington Metro is exhibit A.

GASB took an important step toward addressing this issue in 1999 when it adopted a requirement for states to report the value of their assets on their annual financial reports. Almost 20 years later, deferred maintenance continues to be a problem.

The goal of this year’s practicum is to investigate government practices in reporting their infrastructure data and examining how such data has factored into decision making about infrastructure budgeting and management.

Textbooks

Class Requirements and Grading
The primary requirement of the course is to produce a report and recommendations to the external client. The student’s grade will be based 50% on the overall quality of the formal reports and presentations for which he or she is responsible (that is, on the performance of group products), and 50% on the instructor’s assessment of the individual student’s contribution to the overall effort. To inform that assessment, each student should submit a self-assessment, peer review and program review to the instructor not later than the date of the scheduled final exam for the course. The self-assessment should provide a description of the student’s contribution to the overall project, as well as what he or she learned. The peer review should provide an assessment of your peers on the project, particularly those who made exemplary contributions to the project, and those who could have contributed more. Finally, the program review should contain an assessment of the course PUBP 722 and of the TPOL program, and suggestions for improving them.

Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Course Organization and Logistics
A project course is different from a normal course in that there is not a set schedule of lectures and discussions. Rather, much of the work of the course takes place outside the classroom, working individually or in teams. Organizing this work and maintaining project control and quality is itself a major task, and requires effort. The following are possible project roles:

- Project leader/coordinator
- Project webmaster
• Project librarian (documents, e-documents, data)
• Project report coordinator
• Project presentation coordinator
• Project communications coordinator (liaison with outside parties to avoid multiple repeated requests to the same sources).
• Task leaders

In addition, the project itself will involve a number of tasks. The initial work of the course will be to define tasks and assign responsibilities.

Schedule
Classroom and video teleconference (VTC) time have been reserved according to a normal weekly schedule, and the instructor is available to meet with the class at this time. Subgroups of the class may wish to use the VTC facilities for a portion of the meeting time on weeks where status meetings are scheduled, or at other times as available.

Instructor

Dr. Jonathan L. Gifford is a Professor in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, and the director of the Center for Transportation Public-Private Partnership Policy. The Center promotes the objective consideration of public-private partnerships in transportation system renewal and development through research, education and public service.

Professor Gifford’s primary area of expertise is transportation and public policy, with a particular focus on transportation and infrastructure finance. His recent research investigates transportation finance and the role of public-private partnerships (P3s). Topics include the development of Virginia’s P3 policy, P3 renegotiations and bankruptcies and protecting government and public interest, and developing evidence for the impacts of P3s.

His book Flexible Urban Transportation (Pergamon 2003) examines policies to improve the flexibility of urban transportation systems. He has also studied the role of standards in the development and adoption of technological systems, and the development of the Interstate highway system. Professor Gifford teaches in the Master’s in Transportation Policy, Operations and Logistics program and the Ph.D. in Public Policy program.

He received a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, and an M.S. and Ph.D. (1983) in Civil Engineering (Transportation) at the University of California, Berkeley.