

## **USP 583: Transportation Finance - Winter Quarter 2023**

Tuesdays 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. - Room: URBN 270

**Professor: Aaron Golub**; Office: URBN 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor USP suite; Email: [agolub@pdx.edu](mailto:agolub@pdx.edu)

Office Hours: *Various days and times during the week arranged directly through my appointment scheduler – just click and reserve a spot – no need to email me.* <https://tinyurl.com/Golub-Appts>

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Transportation infrastructure and services are provided by a combination of actors in both the private and public sectors. USP583 "Transportation Finance" will introduce students to the manner in which these systems are financed and how that shapes these systems' planning and operation. The course explores how the mixture of costs, pricing and subsidies affect the provision of roads, highways, freight facilities and public transit as well as how they affect user and firm behavior and outcomes of efficiency and equity. The course covers basic public finance (principles of taxation, bonding, user fees, etc.), and how transportation infrastructure is funded through local, regional, state and federal financing systems (grants, formula-funds, etc.). The course assumes previous study or practice in transportation.

The course will include one meeting per week, required and optional readings, and smaller assignments related to the readings. The small seminar-style class size will make it imperative that everyone prepares the readings and the assignments, as we will include a lot of detailed discussion and debate during class. Several mini-projects will allow students to tailor the course to their own interests and share ideas with the rest of the class through short in-class presentations. It is essential to come to every meeting in this course.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

After completing this course, students will understand the following concepts:

- The fundamentals of public sector finance
- Core debates around tradeoffs in different finance options for public services
- The history of urban transportation finance, especially stemming from the highway trust fund
- The different roles and applications of local, state and federal funding sources
- The way funding sources are stacked to fully fund a particular transportation capital project
- The restrictions on funding for operations and maintenance
- The financing process for private transportation providers
- The equity implications of funding options
- Emerging and innovative funding options

### **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

Assignments will be judged for their coherence, clarity in writing, and the clarity of documentation (citing the sources you used). Make sure you cite all references and sources of data; include a list of references at the end of your assignments if necessary. Each assignment will have a more specific grading rubric. All assignments should be uploaded as a Word or PDF file into the dropbox on the CANVAS website for the class. Please also bring the assignments with you to class as they will likely be discussed.

The final grade will be calculated from weighting the assignments and in-class performance in the following manner:

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| 1. Short assignments based on the readings                    | 30% |
| 2. In-class participation                                     | 10% |
| 3. Mini research report #1 – Transportation financing profile | 20% |
| 4. Mini research report #2 – Transportation project profile   | 20% |
| 5. Mini research report #3 – Innovative financing profile     | 20% |

**Short Assignments:** There will short assignments posted to accompany the sets of required readings and most will be due for the class in which they will be discussed. Assignment due dates are non-negotiable except for very extenuating circumstances (medical, family emergency). Late assignments with no excuse will be marked down 5% per day late.

**Mini research Assignments:** The three mini research assignments will be posted in the middle of January.

**Final Exam:** There is no final exam in this course.

**Final Grading Scale:**

A 94.0 % and above ; A- 90.0 % ; B+ 87.0 % ; B 84.0 % ; B- 80.0 % , etc.

**COURSE RESOURCES:**

**Readings:** There is a *no* textbook for the course. A **Canvas website** is set up for the class. The site contains all assignments, required and optional readings outside of the textbook, and is where your completed assignments should be uploaded.

**Note on submitting work online**

Proficiency in the use of Canvas, PSU email, and other computer tools such as ZOOM or parts of Google suite is required for this course. This course requires consistent access to functioning computer equipment and Internet access throughout the length of the course. Reliance on a cellular connection may not provide reliable and fast access to online learning resources. Here are some broadband programs that are free or low-cost:

<https://www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/how-can-i-get-free-internet>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to be ethical not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom. It is in all students' interest to avoid committing acts of academic dishonesty and to discourage others from committing such acts. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: engages in any form of academic deceit; refers to materials or sources or uses devices not authorized by the instructor for use during any quiz or assignment; provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any quiz or assignment; engages in Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments – just cite anything you use from someone else (it actually makes your work stronger!). Plagiarism is a serious issue and is a violation of the PSU Student Conduct Code [http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa\\_b.htm](http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa_b.htm). University policy requires instructors to report all instances of plagiarism and penalize the perpetrator(s) according to guidelines set. Please see me if you ever have any questions about how to cite your work.

**CAMPUS SUPPORT FOR RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION**

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672 or schedule Online at <https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me> . You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to:

- PSU's Title IX Coordinator: Julie Caron by calling 503-725-4410, via email at [titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu) or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830

- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling 503-725-4413, via email at [yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu](mailto:yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu) or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Dana Walton-Macaulay by calling 503-725-5651, via email at [dana26@pdx.edu](mailto:dana26@pdx.edu) or in person at Smith Memorial Union, Suite, 1825 SW Broadway, Suite 433.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the Title IX Coordinators will keep the information confidential and refer you to a confidential advocate. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module *Creating a Safe Campus* in your CANVAS.

### **ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

The USP Belonging, Justice and Dignity Committee identifies [a variety of ways for students to give feedback, seek assistance, and report a problem](#) (focused on issues related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion).

[Portland State University Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) - addresses the definition of discrimination and harassment and provides appropriate contacts for reporting cases.

The Office of the Dean of Student Life hosts the Academic Appeals process. Students who feel they have received a prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation may submit an [Academic Appeal Request](#). Before students submit this request, students must have appealed to the instructor (Aaron Golub), department chair (Greg Schrock) and appropriate dean (Sy Adler). Students should then read the [Academic Appeals Guidelines](#) to see if their grade dispute fits the purview of the Academic Appeal. For more information please visit the [Academic Appeals website](#), email [askdos@pdx.edu](mailto:askdos@pdx.edu), or call 503-725-4422.

## **SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER**

All syllabi are subject to minor changes to meet the needs of the instructor, school, or class. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus or schedule changes in class, and through the CANVAS announcements and class email. Please remember to check your PSU email and the CANVAS messages often.

## **COURSE CALENDAR**

<b>#</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1	1/10/2023	Introduction to transportation finance
2	1/17/2023	Key debates
3	1/24/2023	Road and highway finance 1
4	1/31/2023	Road and highway finance 2
5	2/7/2023	Public transit finance 1
6	2/14/2023	Public transit finance 2
7	2/21/2023	The economics of individuals, households and firms
8	2/28/2023	Freight transportation - private and public sectors
9	3/7/2023	Private sector: regulation, contracting, concessions and partnerships
10	3/14/2023	Innovative financing