

## FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or** any **other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b>	FSEM 100		
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	CARS, ROADS, AND CITIES		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Cristina Turdean	<b>DATE:</b>	09/29/2012
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			

**NOTE:** Please view the attached Call for Proposals or visit the First-Year Seminar blog at <http://firstyearsem.umwblogs.org/> to see the criteria used to evaluate courses proposed to meet the first year seminar requirement. See the report entitled "General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate" for additional details.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION.** In the space below, provide a **1-2 sentence** description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the "Eagle Essentials" booklet).

The course explores the biography of the automobile as a technological artifact that has left a deep imprint on the modern built landscape. While breakthrough inventions and historical events in the history of the automobile will be reviewed, the course will place emphasis on how cars, roads and cities have shaped each other in an intricate series of causes and effects.

**RATIONALE.** Using only the space provided in the box below, **briefly** state why this course should be approved as a first year seminar course.

The format of this seminar facilitates the learning of basic skills of academic life including reading, writing, discussion, library and research skills. The course relies on the participatory discussion of secondary and primary sources as well as a handful of films. To prepare for these discussions, students will be guided by focus questions and a series of class activities that will introduce them to the basics of academic studies reading and critical thinking. Short written assignments (journal entries) for which the students will receive a thorough feedback will help them assess and improve their writing competencies in preparation for a couple of more complex assignments. The first of these involves the search, retrieval and interpretation (2-3 page essay) of a primary source on a topic assigned by the instructor while the second requires the writing of a 3-4 page essay on how students perceived a museum exhibition that the entire class visits during a field trip. For the semester project, students will create and present a poster on a given topic, based on their interpretation of information from multiple sources.

**SYLLABUS.** Attach a course syllabus.

**SUBMIT** this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to Jason Matzke ([jmatzke@umw.edu](mailto:jmatzke@umw.edu)). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

**University of Mary Washington – Department of Historic Preservation**  
**CARS, ROADS, AND CITIES (FSEM 100D7)**  
Spring 2013

**Instructor:** Cristina Turdean

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**Office hours:**

**Location:** 129 Combs Hall

**Course**

**Description:** There are no prerequisites for this course other than a genuine curiosity for why our material world looks the way it does. The subject matter addresses the biography of the automobile as a technological artifact that has left a deep imprint on the modern built landscape. The readings explore topics covering the entire twentieth century and ranging from urban travel in the pre-automobile era and the production and commercialization of the car to the highway system, the transformation of the domestic and roadside architecture, and the most recent disenchantment with automobility. While breakthrough inventions and historical events will be reviewed, the emphasis of the course will be on analyzing how cars, roads and cities shaped each other in an intricate series of causes and effects.

The course will focus predominantly on the analysis of secondary and primary sources, complemented by a handful of documentaries, films, museum visits and meetings with car collectors.

**Learning**

**Outcomes:** Successful completion of this course involves the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will show familiarity with the role of the automobile in shaping the American landscape, cities in particular
2. Students will engage in several writings assignments and become better writers
3. Students will engage in numerous discussions, speaking assignments, and become better verbal communicators (public speakers)
4. Students will make use of primary sources of information and have the opportunity to draw conclusions from the materials
5. Students will utilize research techniques and conduct research relevant to the subject matter

**Texts:** The following books are required :

Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998)

James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990)

**Class blog:** All the materials (syllabus, readings, assignments, etc.) and announcements will be posted on the class blog

## Course Assignments:

**Class participation (20%):** the seminar format of this course implies that class discussions are at the center of the learning experience, which is designed to help students become better public speakers. Class discussions will critically evaluate the content, argument, and main themes of each reading and formulate conclusions that will be further applied in other class assignments. Focus questions will guide the reading and start the class discussions.

**Assignment #1 “Word Journal” (15%):** This assignment is meant to strengthen students’ reading, critical thinking, and writing skills. Several times during the semester, students will choose a word that summarizes the reading for the day and write a 250-300 word paragraph that explains why they chose the word. They will also propose a question for the class discussion and post their assignment on the class blog.

**Assignment #2 “Image Analysis” (20%):** This assignment helps students’ skills in searching and analyzing primary sources of information. Class activities will prepare them for both tasks. This assignment requires that they: (1) find a primary source on an assigned topic and (2) write a short essay that analyzes this source and connects it to ideas in class readings and discussions.

**Assignment # 3 “Exhibit Review” (20%):** This assignment supports students’ growth as writers and critical thinkers, this time in conjunction with the ideas expressed by a more complex medium of communication - a museum exhibition, which brings together artifacts as well as written and oral information. The class will visit the *America on the Move* exhibition at the National Museum of American History in Washington DC. Following this visit, students will write an essay that analyzes their favorite section of the exhibition.

**Assignment # 3 “Poster Presentation” (25%):** This final project brings together most of the knowledge and skills that students built throughout the semester: research, critical thinking, writing, and speaking. For this assignment, they have to create a poster on a given research topic. To produce the poster they will use historic photographs, documents, maps, drawings, etc. as well as graphics, design and their own words. They will give a 5 minute formal presentation on the project and turn in a bibliography with all the sources they used.

## Grading Criteria:

**Written assignments:** argument - clearly stated thesis, well-constructed argument, solid evidence, and persuasive conclusions; analysis – correctly interpreted sources, valid and creative insights, consistent preoccupation with going beyond simple description or narrative; prose - clear, grammatically correct, error-free, pleasing formal English

**Oral presentations:** content - preparation, organization, amount and quality of research, coherence, clarity, thorough coverage of the topic, ability to answer audience questions, appealing design of the presented material; delivery - volume, pace, eye contact, enthusiasm, effective use of visuals, vocal variety, posture, appearance, use of distracting mannerism or vocal fillers.

**Grading:** The final grade will be based on the following components:

- Class participation (20%)
- Assignment #1 "Word Journal" (15%)
- Assignment #2 "Image Analysis" (20%)
- Assignment # 3 "Exhibit Review" (20%)
- Assignment # 4 "Poster Presentation" (25%)

Grading scale:	A	4.00	93-100%
	A-	3.70	90-92%
	B+	3.30	87-89%
	B	3.00	83-86%
	B-	2.70	80-82%
	C+	2.30	77-79%
	C	2.00	73-76%
	C-	1.70	70-72%
	D+	1.30	67-69%
	D	1.00	60-66%
	F	0.00	<60%

If a student has a C- or below in the course by the middle of the semester, a report of unsatisfactory (U) will be submitted.

**Academic**

**Honesty:**

Students in this class are expected to comply with the University of Mary Washington Honor System. Check the following websites to find out more about (1) the university policy on academic integrity -- including the disciplinary sanctions against offenders

<http://www.umw.edu/honor/documents/UMWHonorConstitution.pdf>

and (2) plagiarism and cheating <http://www.umw.edu/honor/fredericksburg/default.php>

Students who fail to cite their sources and plagiarize any part of their assignments will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

**Office of**

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who need special accommodations in this class should contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (540- 654-1266) or online at <http://www.umw.edu/disability/> and turn in the official letter to the instructor, no later than the end of the first week of the semester.

**Tentative Topics:**

**THE BEGINNINGS**

Urban travel before the automobile

Trolleys, parks and parkways

Animal power, 1870-1900

The uses and abuses of streets

The emergence of the internal combustion automobile

Early adoption in the U.S.

The rise of giant manufacturers

Fordization

The marketing of automobiles

## **THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICA**

Gender and the automobile

The automobile and the reorganization of the rural space

Traffic lights and the regularization of traffic

The automobile and the transformation of the American house

Roads, services and mechanical expertise

The “motor boys” rebuild cities

The origins of the roadside strip

Driving through the Depression

Field trip: “America on the Move” exhibition, National Museum of American History

## **EXPANSION AND DISENCHANTMENT**

The expansion of highways

The three-car culture

Zoning of cities

Putting transit on track

The centering and de-paving of America