

College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries

School of Architecture and Cities

MSc Transport Planning and Management

Module 7TRAN037W

Modifying transport behaviour – theory, practice and politics

Wednesdays 17:30 to 20:30 (UK time), Semester 2

To be delivered on-line

Teaching Staff

Tom Cohen (Module Leader)

Plus external guest speaker input

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Module 7TRAN037W

Modifying transport behaviour – theory, practice and politics

Introduction

2020 has been an astonishing year from the perspective of transport behaviour. It has demonstrated again that people can and do change their travel behaviour in sometimes profound ways. It has also brought into relief the relationship between authority and personal preference and the essential role of habit. The events of 2020 need to be seen against a context of gradually evolving travel preferences and patterns, and against a long and rich history of public bodies attempting in various ways to change transport behaviour.

This module takes this context as its starting point, from which it will then provide a survey of the “state of the art” in promoting transport behaviour change, exploring the underlying theory and current practice. It will, in addition, take a critical look at the political context: who is trying to change whose behaviour and with what justification?

Those undertaking the module will obtain a sound understanding of how transport behaviour change happens and why and how it is promoted, with what effect. They will also acquire a suitably critical perspective on the topic such that they will be both equipped to practise behaviour change and aware of its intrinsically political context.

Teaching and learning methods

Teaching for this course in 2020-21 will be based online and will not therefore require attendance at any of the university’s campuses. The methods used will include lectures, guest talks by professionals with relevant expertise, seminar discussions and exercises where students pursue particular issues, topics and tasks in smaller groups. This is supported by the module Blackboard site where students will be able to obtain lecture notes, key (and some additional) reading, and recordings of sessions. Each week one piece of key reading is set, usually with a copy being available via the on-line reading list associated with the module. Students are expected to read these sources and have access to them when attending classes, for workshop and seminar discussion.

The lectures deliver content as described in the module outline and this handbook. Students develop their skills in orally presenting issues and debating them with peers, as well as taking part in whole-group discussions.

Organisation

Tom Cohen is the module leader and will be co-ordinating the overall learning programme. Most sessions will also involve a guest speaker.

Classes will start promptly at the scheduled time. **All sessions will take place on Wednesdays between 17:30 and 20:30 (UK time) unless otherwise advised. The first session will be on 20th January and the last on 7th April 2021.**

Any changes to the above arrangements will be announced through Blackboard.

Module content

Summary

This module will provide a compelling insight into the state of the art of modifying behaviour in transport, from well-established interventions (such as speed limits) to relatively new ones (such as personal travel planning). It will set this within the context of “organic” behaviour change and the policy and politics of transport more generally.

Topics will include:

- The case for behaviour change in transport
- The policy and politics of modifying transport behaviour
- How behaviour change fits into the governance of transport
- The theoretical basis of transport behaviour change
- Typology of audiences and interventions
- “The four Es”: education, engineering, enforcement and economy
- Evaluation – theory and practicalities

Module aims:

1. Introduce students to the context of transport behaviour change, provide them with understanding of the research and experience to date and the current state of the art
2. Present illustrative case studies and examples of research from the field of transport behaviour change
3. Introduce students to key theories and approaches used to understand transport behaviour and to develop interventions to change behaviour

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will typically be able to:

1. Analyse policy and potential interventions in the context of transport behaviour change, experience to date and the state of the art
2. Evaluate critically the interaction of behaviour change theory and practice in this area
3. Have command of the challenges in developing, implementing and evaluating interventions to change transport behaviour at the individual and population levels
4. Specify in outline a suitable course of action in response to a transport-behaviour issue or challenge
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of a given intervention

Assessment

This module is worth 20 credits at Level 7.

The module will be assessed by two pieces of individual written coursework: **Assignment 1** (35%) and **Assignment 2** (65%).

In order to pass this module a student must achieve an overall mark of 50% or above. Students **must also achieve a minimum mark of 40% in each element of the assessment (Assignment 1 and Assignment 2)**. If you receive an overall mark of less than 40% you will have to retake the whole module – you will have to re-attend in the future and resubmit new assignments. If you receive an overall mark of between 40% and 49% you will be *referred* for the assignment(s) that scored less than 50%. This means you will have the opportunity to resubmit the assignment(s) in the summer of 2021. In this situation, if your work is deemed of a standard to pass, your mark for the referred assignment(s) will be capped at 50%.

Coursework

Provisional arrangements are as follows. They will be confirmed when the assignments are formally set:

Assignment 1 will be a critical review of an existing transport-behaviour-change intervention. Each student will be expected to explain its origins/rationale, its design and delivery, and to provide a balanced view of the intervention's strengths and weaknesses. Length must not exceed 1,500 words including references. Submission deadline is 13:00 (UK time) on Wednesday 17th February.

Assignment 2 will be the design of a suitable and so-far untested behaviour-change intervention in response to an identified transport problem/opportunity. Each student will be expected to provide a thorough analysis of the nature of the problem/opportunity, the desired behaviour, and the target audience. They will also be asked to assess what interventions have been used in such situations in the past and with what impacts. They will finally be asked to specify in outline an evaluated trial. Length must not exceed 3,000 words including references. Submission deadline is 13:00 (UK time) on Friday 9th April.

Assignments will be submitted electronically only via Blackboard. Guidance will be provided on how to do this.

Assessment criteria

See below for guidance on grading of postgraduate-level work.

Late submissions

Please also note that there are penalties for the late submission of coursework unless a claim for mitigating circumstances is accepted. For more information on these penalties and how to claim mitigating circumstances, please consult your course handbook or contact the Registry.

Assessment offences – a reminder

You must familiarise yourself with the regulations regarding assessment offences, plagiarism and cheating. This is very important, as committing an assessment offence can have severe consequences.

The following is an extract from Part 3, Section 10 of the Handbook of Academic Regulations 2020:

Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) is where a student either:

- i. presents work for assessment which contains the unacknowledged published or unpublished words, thoughts, judgements, ideas, structures or images of some other person or persons. This includes material downloaded from electronic sources, and material sourced or contracted from a third party; or
- ii. presents for assessment work which that student has previously submitted for assessment as part of the same or another module or course, or at another institution, without citing that it was used previously This is known as self-plagiarism, and relates to the principle that a student may not receive credit for the same piece of work more than once unless specifically required to resubmit work as a requirement of re-assessment.

Grading and assessment of postgraduate students' work

The following is a guide – in order to attract a particular mark a paper will need to demonstrate most of the criteria listed.

Grade range	Key qualities of the work
80+ Distinction Plus Pass	a. Draws on wide range of source material and is extensively referenced b. Displays considerable originality in treatment and exposition of subject matter c. Displays exceptional rigour, clarity and insight, of a publishable or near publishable standard
70 - 79 Distinction Pass	a. Presents an exceptionally clear argument b. Integrates a range of material and information sources c. Has a depth of insight into theoretical issues and displays analytical rigour d. Displays some degree of originality in treatment and exposition of subject e. Has perceptive conclusions f. A high standard of writing and presentation

Grade range	Key qualities of the work
60 - 69 Merit Pass	a. Accurate and effective use of evidence to support argument b. Addresses the topic well c. Well organised and referenced d. Displays evidence of general reading and/or good literature research e. Displays insight and understanding and presents coherent argument f. Conclusions are well considered and relate to arguments presented g. Fluent prose style, concise and clear; well presented
50 - 59 Satisfactory Pass	a. Addresses topic or question adequately b. Has competent basic knowledge of the material c. Displays reasonable understanding and presents clear arguments d. Has weak/poor selection and use of evidence in support of argument e. Acceptable prose, referencing and presentation
40 - 49 Fail Referred	a. Does not address the question adequately b. Knowledge of material weak or inadequate c. Some issues raised but unselective d. Uncritical treatment of literature/sources e. Lacks clear coherent argument and structure f. Poor prose style – not clearly written g. Inadequate or missing referencing
Less than 40 Fail Retake Module	a. Very little of relevance to the question b. An absence of focus, and largely incoherent arguments c. Little evidence of any real understanding of the subject matter d. Very poorly written and presented e. Not to Master's standard

Please note this is offered as advice & guidance on this module; it is not University of Westminster policy.

Detailed topic guide

Whilst each of the sessions has a “headline title”, we shall cover more than just this topic in the session, as part of a matrix approach to the module that will be explained in the first session. For this reason (and because of guest speakers’ calendars), the guest speaker will not in all cases appear a perfect match with the session title.

Please note that the list below is subject to change, for example if guest-speaker availability changes – please check Blackboard and your Westminster email for announcements.

Readings

For each session there will be a key reading (made available in advance) that you should read in advance of the session and be ready to discuss. You should also be able to refer to the reading as necessary during the session. Slides from the sessions will include a list of references, most of which you should be able to access electronically but which may require your university log-in. Please note this is just a selection of sources (some of which may apply to multiple sessions) and that there will be additional relevant journal articles, books, etc. that you may find via Westminster’s library and information resources.

Please ask if you have any questions regarding readings.

Session 1 (20th January): Introduction to the module; the case for modifying transport behaviour

This session will set the scene for the module, describing how it will be delivered and summarising the arguments in favour of seeking transport behaviour change.

It will feature a guest talk from **Lisa Buchanan** who leads the behaviour-change effort at Heathrow Airport and who, prior to this, spent over twenty years in consultancy, working mainly on promoting behaviour change.

Session 2 (27th January): A potted history of behaviour change in transport

This session will examine the history of transport behaviour change in its various forms, contrasting “organic” change with change that has been encouraged in some way. The survey will encompass the birth of behaviour change promotion in the area of road safety and its subsequent spread.

The session will feature a guest talk by **Tony Duckenfield** who runs a company called Beyond Logic Consulting. Tony will describe work he has done to extract the principal lessons from work done to promote a shift to active travel.

Session 3 (3rd February): Fundamentals of behavioural theory I

This is the first of two sessions that will provide a grounding in theories of behaviour that underpin efforts to influence it. The two sessions will look at the issue from multiple disciplinary perspectives, exploring the implications of the differences. They will also provide a fuller grounding on the Behaviour Change Wheel, a framework that draws together a very large number of theories in the field of psychology.

This session will include an extended talk by **Dr Rachel Carey**, Chief Scientist at Zinc and an associate at UCL’s Centre for Behaviour Change. As part of her introduction to the principal psychological theories, Rachel will refer to her own research on road-safety communication.

Session 4 (10th February): Fundamentals of behavioural theory II

A continuation of the content introduced in Session 3.

This session will include a guest talk by **Sarah Murray** of Cowry Consulting. Sarah will describe her research into the impact of bike buddying, conducted a few years ago as her special study when undertaking an MSc in Behaviour Change.

Session 5 (17th February): Targeting

Reflecting one of the fundamental tenets of behaviour change – that interventions need to be tailored to the characteristics of the target audience, this session will examine the practicalities of targeting, taking into account the value and availability of data.

This week's guest speaker will be **Ariella Kristal**, a researcher based at Harvard University who, when working with the Behavioural Insights Team in the UK, led a project designed to change the commuting behaviour of staff at a major airport.

Session 6 (24th February): Education

Moving now into a more detailed thematic survey of behaviour change, this session will start with education, the first of “the Four Es”. The various forms of “education” in the context of behaviour change will be explored, ranging from its more obvious interpretation – telling people that they need to change their behaviour – to subtler variations.

We'll be joined this week by **Professor Rachel Aldred**, Director of the Active Travel Academy, who will discuss the behaviour change associated with a range of interventions including London's mini-Hollands.

Session 7 (3rd March): Seminar and one-to-one sessions on Assignment 2

This session will be dedicated to students' preparation of their submissions for Assignment 2.

Session 8 (10th March): Engineering

The second “E” is engineering and this session will feature a survey of the many ways in which behaviour change has been attempted through changing the physical environment in which travel takes place.

A professional perspective on the topic will be provided by **Bryn Lockwood**, Programme Manager – Neighbourhoods and Network at Sustrans London. Bryn has presided over a great many interventions aimed at enabling increased walking and cycling and will share his insights.

Session 9 (17th March): Enforcement

The third “E” is enforcement and describes the set of behaviour-change measures involving the threat of sanction. From speeding to drink-driving, the state has for a long time sought to discourage certain behaviours by attaching a penalty to them.

Deirdre O'Reilly is well qualified to contribute to this session given her role as Head of Customer Insights & Behaviour Change at Highways England, prior to which she held a similar role at the Department for Transport.

Session 10 (24th March): Economics

Rounding off our set of “Es” is economics, which describes the range of interventions designed to shape our behaviour through financial incentives, both positive and negative. What are the arguments in favour of and against such measures?

The guest speaker at this session will be **Dr Kate Pangbourne** of the Institute of Transport Studies at University of Leeds, who will describe work she led on the role language plays in the promotion of behaviour change.

Session 11 (31st March): Policy makers

This session takes a critical look at the behaviour- change “industry”, asking whether we should be seeking behaviour change on the part of policy makers rather than the travelling public. More to the point, how is their behaviour being influenced?

A guest talk will be given at this session by **Seth Singh-Jennings**, who did his special study as part of an MSc in Behaviour Change on lobbying within the transport sector.

Session 12 (7th April): Evaluation

The final session fittingly addresses the crucial question of how to evaluate behaviour-change interventions in order to understand what impacts they have had. It will do this against a context of the very inconsistent approach to evaluation in transport more generally.

A critical view of conventional thinking concerning behaviour change will be provided by **Lucy Farrow** of Britain Thinks (and, before that, Traverse) who has many years’ experience of enabling citizens to play an active role in policy design. Might behaviour change work better if done *with* rather than *to* people?