

Holly Haff – Teaching Statement for Outstanding Teaching Award

My teaching philosophy is to engage the students to encourage them to take on how infrastructure works and influences urban design and to feel comfortable with future infrastructure challenges in any profession that they choose. I use the following structure:

- Yearly Updates Focusing on Current Events/Concerns: It could be a 2020 election year with state and federal voting/cyber infrastructure, or a 2021 COVID year of purifying school/hospital HVAC systems, or 2022 sea level rise flood walls/gates. Through the efforts of NYU's Cecil Scheib, Office of Sustainability, the class set off on a new academic adventure of addressing infrastructure sustainability.
- Collaboration and Working as a Team: I hand the role of producing a compendium of individual work to the class, including agreed upon themes, collaborating on graphics, an introduction, title, citation formats, acknowledgements, etc. To encourage collaboration, I use the archived *U.S. State Department's 7 Norms of Collaboration* from 2017. This collective experience gives students the opportunity to develop their own area of interest and opens them up to grad school expectations and the needed collaboration in preparation of the work world environment.
- Using Technology: For both current trends and sustainability, students built a website using Google Sites rather than writing/printing traditional "final reports" and thereby enhanced the content by making it more accessible. This website was a result a discussion led by the Sustainability Office, inspiring the students with NYU's sustainable progress, and their reminder that a printed report was not sustainable. One student popped up with the website idea and the others all chimed in positively. The class had such fun floundering around trying to figure out how to even start developing a website, but soon came up with the "Hot and Dangerous" title and were off and running learning how with Google Sites, building new website skills.
<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/infrastructure/home>
- Field Trips: Experiencing infrastructure on-the-ground and in-person brings infrastructure to life. Technical aspects become far more understandable on site. A good example of a popular field trip is a "transit" tour to ride heavy rail, light rail, bus, and ferry. We hop on the PATH train at 9th St, explore Hoboken's landmark terminal, transfer to the Hudson Bergen Light Rail to Weehawken, then cross the Hudson River to midtown ferry terminal wrapped around the Lincoln Tunnel exhaust stacks. During the transfers we take in the wayfinding signs, fare technologies, security, accessibility, safety, materials, and architecture. The ferry boasts a free bus ticket into midtown where we jump off at the 42nd Street Bus Terminal and, after winding our way through dozens of bus gates, we hop on the A train back to NYU. We have also toured the dramatic new East River flood walls/gates, the SIMS recycling center, Grand Central Madison's LIRR terminal, the beautiful Egg Digesters at Brooklyn's sewage treatment plant, and the elegant crystal-shaped Sanitation Department salt shed.
- Providing Weekly Update "Terms-to-Know": I provide the most basic vocabulary, current infrastructure policies and regulations, and projects in a glossary style study guide.