Traffic lights, elevators, and recycling bins seem rather boring and irrelevant. Yet, while not usually on our minds when thinking about governance and regulation, these seemingly mundane technologies are important features of our lives.

This course takes a closer look at everyday solutions to public problems. Combining hands-on exercises with readings from STS, sociology, and politics, we will explore the role of everyday devices and technologies in establishing, maintaining, and resisting social order: how to think about “small” solutions to “big” problems? What are the tools and tricks for analyzing things we take for granted? How can these insights help us rethink longstanding ideas of rules, accountability, technology?

**Approach**

This is a **laboratory-style class**. We will not only discuss readings and ideas, but also engage in hands-on observation and analysis. This includes:

- playing and manipulating board games;
- designing breaching experiments;
- observing and analyzing recycling behavior at Cornell dining halls;
- navigating campus with sketched maps;
- reverse-engineering an elevator of your choice.

Studying these phenomena first-hand will help us understand, reflect upon, and possibly transform social science concepts where they matter most.

- Particularly useful for students interested in **social theory, design, and public policy**.
- **No specific requirements.**
- 4 credits.

Questions? Email Prof. Malte Ziewitz at [mcz35@cornell.edu](mailto:mcz35@cornell.edu). Inquiries welcome!