URB 8020 – Global Urban Trajectories
Meeting Day & Time: Thursdays, 9:30 A.M – 12:00 P.M.
Location: TBD
Spring 2019
The Urban Studies Institute
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
Georgia State University

Instructor Information

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Introduction

This course introduces common trajectories or pathways of cities and surrounding areas, historically and contemporarily, domestically and globally. It focuses on several processes by which cities have emerged, evolved, and in some cases, declined. The idea behind this course is that our understanding of the evolution of cities must be historically informed and understood within a global context. This course surveys several themes which have underlined the changing dynamics of cities including colonialism, slavery and racism, capitalism, trade, and commerce as well as migration. These processes need not be mutually exclusive. However, a critical lens to their use is likely to uncover the roots of urbanization and the future of cities.

Course Description

This course provides students with an understanding of the development of cities in time and space. Discussions compare and debate urban processes from indigeneity to the mega-cities of the twenty-first century. The course involves intensive examination of three inter-related topics: (1) the political economy of development and globalization, inequality and injustice across time and space; (2) specific manifestations of urbanization; and (3) contemporary efforts to produce social change around these issues.

Course Objectives

The course moves between empirical observation and theory. Its purpose is fourfold:

- To imbue graduate students with knowledge of urbanization in history across social scientific perspectives;
- To provide them with insights regarding the ‘portability’ of grand theories over time and across space;
- To create a critical appreciation for processes which have shaped urbanized spaces into unequal places of commonality and conflict;
• To instill in students an intellectual curiosity that helps them independently postulate about the future trajectories and pathways of cities.

Learning Outcomes

This course will prepare students to:

• Exhibit a deeper understanding of the origins and history of “development” as a category of social science analysis and real-world object of political practice;
• Identify the differing positions of parties active in the design, application, and contestation of development, globalization, and other urbanization processes;
• Demonstrate a more thorough understanding of the causes and consequences of global inequalities across time and space;
• Recognize and evaluate the prospects for minimizing these inequalities and improving livelihoods around the world.

Course Readings

There are no required textbooks for this class. All other readings will be posted on iCollege. It is the student’s responsibility to download and review all assigned material PRIOR TO CLASS. Additional readings and course materials may be assigned, but at no cost to the student.

Course Grading

Grades will be awarded based on the following grade point average system, calculated to and truncated at two significant digits, with the following numeric equivalents as defined in the Board of Regents Policy Manual.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Value</th>
<th>GPA Equivalent</th>
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<td>100 - 97</td>
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<td>A</td>
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Grading Rationale

For grading, I consider an “A” to denote work of excellence, rising above the merely sufficient and competent to incorporate new insights as well as creative and critical thinking. It will, of
course, be well written and demonstrate depth of thought and clarity of conception. A “B” denotes a mastery of the concepts and issues, competent and well-written work. A “C” is given for work with logical inconsistencies, which fails to adequately explore all the arguments related to the topic, which has errors or fact or which is badly written and poorly organized or conceptualized. A “D” is for work that fails to meet even these minimal standards. An “F” is for work of exceedingly poor quality, including work that is plagiarized, unintelligible, and/or handed in extremely late. There is no extra credit offered in this course and no replacement assignments will be entertained.

Each student’s grade will be based on four areas. The purpose of designing the course in this manner is to allow students the opportunity to engage in different forms of learning and expression including oral and written assignments and class discussions. The following lists depicts the course breakdown:

I. Discussion Questions (25%)
A good question is both answerable and challenging. It will inspire analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and critical thinking. They require preparation and active management in order to facilitate student learning. A discussion question that is truly great is challenging and inspires students to think critically and respond with well thought out answers. These questions are a framework for creating prompts that encourage inquiry, challenge students to think bigger and connect the classroom to real world ideas and events. For this course, you are to provide 2 discussion questions each week (unless otherwise instructed) by 3:00 P.M. the day before class. You are also expected to respond to 2 other discussion questions asked by your peers. Your grade will be based on your ability to engage with the literature and to assess and critique your peers’ stances on the material provided.

II. Midterm (25%)
The midterm will be in the form of a response essay. A list of discussion questions will be provided to you at the starting time of class via email. You will have an assigned amount of time to answer the questions appropriately. The essay is meant to be integrative, i.e. to make use of lectures, readings, and discussions in order to make an argument that pulls material together. It should have a thesis or argument, provide evidence to support your position, demonstrate your conceptual thinking and control of information, refer with regularity to the appropriate readings and lecture material, and be clearly written. Each answer should be approximately 500-800 word and should be submitted as a .doc or docx (Word Document) file. This midterm is ‘open-book’ but students are NOT allowed to consult with each other. Consultation with other classmates during the exam will result in an automatic ‘0’ for the assignment and possible escalation in line with the academic integrity policies of GSU. The midterm should be double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1” margins, a running header, page numbers, and a full bibliography with no title page (APA format).

III. Class Participation (20%)
This course is designed as a seminar where students are presented with material each week to read and analyze. The structure is a mix of lectures and discussion of the material. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. This will add to the overall effectiveness of the
class so students may challenge how we understand these concepts and offer critical responses to problems. Failure to participate in class discussion may result in a lower grade. It should go without saying but to gain points for class participation, you must be present in class. In addition, different class activities are performed in the class to deepen your understanding to enrich the learning environment of the student individually and the class collectively. Failure to do so may also result in a lower participation grade.

IV. Final Paper (30%)

Students are expected to complete a substantive research paper over the course of the semester. This paper illustrates your ability to grapple with the material presented and to stimulate your own curiosity about different trajectories within and across cities. While there will be many ways to approach this paper, here are a couple suggestions. The first way to approach the paper is to think about one of the processes covered in the course and apply it to a particular case. For instance, your interest may be on gentrification in Atlanta and migration patterns between neighborhoods. Another approach is to pick a particular case and discuss several ways that case changed over time. For instance, Surat, India is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. It is projected to continue this growth well into the future. Your paper could focus on why this is happening.

Papers will be due during the Tuesday after our last class. The papers are to be between 12-15 pages not including your references. The paper should be double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1” margins, a running header, page numbers, and a full bibliography with no title page (APA format). A one-page prospectus for your paper will be due during Week 12. Further details will be discussed in class.

Policies for Lateness and Absences

Late submissions will not be accepted. Class lateness without prior notice will not be accepted. Students who arrive late to class without prior notice will be marked absent for the week. Such absences will affect their participation grade. If students plan to be absent from any class, they are to report the absence to the instructor as soon as possible. Emergency situations will be evaluated by the instructor to ascertain the necessary next course of action. This include sickness/illness, family emergencies, etc.

Academic Integrity

GSU guidelines on academic honesty/dishonest will be enforced. The guidelines are posted at https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/. Penalties can range from receiving no credit for an assignment/exam up to expulsion from the university.

Students with Accessibility Concerns

If you need accommodation for an accessibility concern, you may do so by registering with the Georgia State University Office of Disability Services either by coming in-person or online. You will be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan, and then you are responsible for emailing the copy of that plan to me and
faculty of all the classes in which you need accommodations. Students should provide a copy of the Plan to the instructor within the first two weeks of classes. To register for accommodations, please follow this link https://disability.gsu.edu/services/how-to-register/.

**Basic Needs Statement:**

Students who face challenges securing their food or housing and believe this may affect their performance in a course are urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide resources we may possess. The Embark Program at Georgia State provides resources for students facing homelessness.

**Veterans & Serving Military**

Students who are veterans, serving in the military, their dependents, and the survivors of serving military are encouraged to avail themselves of a range of college services and activities through the Military Outreach Center (MOC). For assistance or guidance, visit https://military.gsu.edu/. Be sure and let me know ASAP if or when there is any possibility of you being activated and deployed.

**Policy Regarding Changes to the Syllabus**

As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus in order to provide a better learning environment to the students. All changes will be made with advanced notice. Concerns or issues with changes to the syllabus should be addressed to me as soon as possible so a solution can be determined.

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**Course Overview**

**Week 1: Urban Studies as an Epistemological Exercise**

An introduction to the central concerns of the field of urban studies is needed before trajectories of urbanization are discussed. In this class, we revisit the notion of urban studies as a distinct field of theoretical and empirical inquiry. Urban Studies is a rich blend of theories and methods drawn from a variety of disciplines. But all of these theories and methods are bound together by the attempt to understand multi-faceted phenomena in and of ‘the city.’ The goal of understanding cannot be divorced from the desire for action, for progressive change to improve cities and urban life.

- General Introductions
- Review of Syllabus & Course Expectations
Week 2: Cities, Urbanization and Urban Trajectories

Concepts of ‘the city’ and of ‘urban’ are complex and even elusive. Before we debate the global trajectories of cities, we must attain an understanding of the essence of the city, that presumably can be generalized over time and across space. We also define the notion of trajectory, which implies a historical pathway along which the city may change some of its characteristics yet maintain the essence of urbanity. The notion of trajectory does not necessarily imply linearity. Cities can grow in size, stagnate, or shrink, and their importance to the outside world can change.


Week 3: Indigenous Land & Settler Colonialism

Processes of urbanization largely look at people moving across space, or more explicitly land. The inherent nature of people connected to place is a large topic of urban studies. As such, this class focuses on the roots of the twinning of self and surrounding by invoking narratives of Native People. Indigenous studies can disrupt western mythologies of wilderness, discovery, and benevolent settlers, etc. in order to address social constraints native peoples face as contemporary beings with distinct cultures.


Week 4: Gendered Urban Development

Gendered analysis of familiar urban topics provides new insights for our understanding of urban studies, not only by counting women who had formerly been invisible but also by integrating their presence into our explanatory frameworks and normative insights. Gender in urban research provides an introduction to urbanists who have not considered the implications of gender in their research and contributes to the existing body of work on women and cities. This class seeks to bridge feminist theories and theories of the state.

Week 5: Slavery & Bonded Labor

Discourses around slavery usually focus on the Atlantic Slave Trade as a force that gave rise to the economic powers of Western societies. However, this class pushes beyond that narrative to discuss the global reach of slavery as well as its unique form as bonded servitude to discuss how labor is used to make and remake urban areas.


Week 6: Capitalism & Uneven Development

Many theories of capitalism set aside slavery as something utterly distinct because under slavery, workers do not labor for a wage. However, a historical and empirical investigation reveals that the factory and the plantation co-evolved so we cannot understand them as artifacts of two discrete economic systems. Such systems had profound effects on changing the political economy of place. This class deals with this dilemma by looking at how scholars have wrestled with the city as a site of economic interests.


Week 7: Midterm

Week 8: Neoliberalism

The city has long been the site of neoliberalism policy experiments and contestation. For proponents of neoliberalism, the state ought to be limited to securing the institutional preconditions for a competitive market and, once established, remolding state practices in order to ensure market rule. As such, this ideology of cities as economic engines has reshaped urban areas
near and far. This class centers neoliberalism as a dynamic process which complicates the relationship between public and private in urban spaces.


**Week 9: Migration & Immigration**

Globalization has generated major changes in human flows and functions of cities. These changes have taken many forms: a new global hierarchy of urban migrant destinations has taken shape in every region around the world; immigration has affected the composition and the roles of the cities; urban life has transformed migrants into new urban ethnic communities. As these spaces change, new conflicts arise through acts of discrimination and questions of assimilation. This class looks at how migration shapes urban areas.


**Week 10: Spring Break**

**Week 11: Post-Colonial Cities**

A significant share of urbanization today occurs in the post-colonial world, particularly Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean. The historical evolution of these cities is markedly different from lending cities in Europe or North America. This class focuses attention on how cities of the Global South today are affected by the colonial past, their current role in the world economy, and the concept of the postcolonial city itself. We also consider the nature of present-day process of urbanization in the Global Couth.


Week 12: No Class

• Final Paper Prospectus Due

Week 13: World Cities

Economic globalization was accompanied with the emergence of the global urban system. So-called world cities are closely related to globalization and together constitute a global urban network that forms the backbone to the world economy. We discuss and debate the connection to globalization, the nature of world cities, and the characteristics of the resultant global city network.


Week 14: Urban Futures

While many of the other classes focus on historical and contemporary processes of the city, this week focuses on the future trajectories and pathways of urban areas. The city and urban systems of the 21st century (its form, functioning and prevailing mode of production, relations to the state, and the drivers behind urbanization) is in question as places struggle with other external forces (e.g. immigration, housing affordability, climate change, etc.). Arguably, the “city” as we knew it (or thought we knew it) is no more as it has made way for the more sprawling and heterogeneous urban region. As such, this class focuses on the formation of polycentric urban regions, the so-called ‘great inversion’, the new urban economy, and the widening urban-rural divide.


Week 15: The City of Atlanta Panel
This final class will have different figures from the city of Atlanta to talk about their views on the city’s historical, contemporary and future trends and challenges. While our focus has been across the globe in terms of understanding these dynamics, it is ever important that we understand local issues as well. As the ninth largest metropolitan area in the United States with a majority Black population, it is important that we pay homage to a place we extract time and resources from in our journey of academic exploration.