



# INTERNATIONAL HONORS PROGRAM

comparative study around the world

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## **International Honors Program (IHP) Cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### **Contemporary Urban Issues: Problems and Solutions (CUI) URST – 3000 (4 credits) Fall Semester 2008**

#### **Course Overview**

Contemporary Urban Issues (CUI) explores a range of challenges facing cities through place-based examples in New York City, Bangalore, Cape Town and Buenos Aires. Some of these challenges are closely connected to a city's unique history while others are more general, recurrent, or even common to cities worldwide. Students are encouraged to think comparatively in this course, identifying and discussing both singularities and patterns. Issues will be explored through classes with the local coordinators, neighborhood days, case studies, guest lectures, homestays and field trips.

The course is led by the country coordinators in each city, with support from the traveling faculty. Urban explorations through the structural elements of IHP such as neighborhood days and case studies are credited to this course. The course will reflect particular priorities to analyze problems and solutions to issues of some urgency at this moment in their city.

In New York, we will examine the method of learning through a study of urban issues, using your pre-departure assignment as the starting point. In Bangalore, the course will examine the issues of eminent domain, Commons privatization, public travel, and urban waste. In Cape Town CUI will focus on housing, xenophobic violence, and community-based health services. In Buenos Aires, the issues will be urbanization, public space and state power.

#### **Course Objectives**

1. To provide students with the appropriate methods and concepts to investigate contemporary urban issues;
2. To examine current urban issues and their potential responses systematically and critically;
3. To draw linkages among places, and comparisons within political-economic, socio-cultural and environmental contexts.

#### **Course Methodology**

CUI is designed to take advantage of local resources, knowledge and experiences. Because the course is taught jointly, it will draw upon multiple organizational and individual perspectives. Place-based readings, many from local newspapers and independent media, will support experiential learning. The course integrates a variety of learning methods, including discussion and lectures, case studies, neighborhood days, homestays, and exposure to local mainstream and independent media. Since active independent learning is encouraged, and the exchange of information among peers is essential to achieving the above objectives, student-led presentations and synthesis are key components of CUI. Student participation in all elements of the course is critical for developing a greater awareness and understanding of comparative urban issues.

## **Elements of the Course**

**Lectures:** Course time includes issues lectures and discussion. Given the interdisciplinary nature of IHP, other lectures and field visits will contribute to your understanding of the urban issues in each city.

**Neighborhood Days:** Neighborhood days involve small group trips to different parts of the city. Students spend a half to full day investigating their destination using a variety of formal and informal methods based on direct observation and engagement. Experiences will be shared among groups through informal presentations.

**Case Studies:** A case study is an in-depth look at a particular topic. It includes research into the facts of the subject and an analysis of those facts to understand the reasons why the topic behaves as it does. Students will explore issues of significant importance in each city through a series of interrelated learning exposures. Several days in each city are devoted to this project. Case studies typically begin with a briefing, followed by two to three days of fieldwork in small groups, reflection, and student presentations. During the briefing, students are given background information on the case study options. Presentations give students the chance to explore a variety of techniques for conveying urban issues to an audience of their peers and local experts. Community representatives may attend presentations, responding to students' work, challenging their conclusions and expanding their interpretations.

**Readings:** Required, city-specific readings will be distributed in each country in the CUI course reader. Additional readings on each city will be available through the in-country library.

**Note:** *Graduate students are expected to complete all optional readings.*

**Notebooks:** We strongly recommend that each student use a notebook during the case studies and neighborhood days to record contacts and ideas, and to begin linking, analyzing and critiquing experiences. This will also be the place to record and explore developing and changing ideas on the definition of a city.

## **Course Requirements:**

### Participation (4 grades, 5% each city)

Assessment of participation is based on *attendance and engagement* in synthesis sessions, lectures, and site visits. At any point in the program, students may be asked to write a one paragraph self-assessment of their participation for consideration by faculty in determining their participation grade and in guiding student involvement.

Students are encouraged to listen, ask questions and contribute ideas in a professional manner. We expect that students will improve their ability to do so over the course of the semester.

### City-specific assignment (3 assignments, 10% each)

You will have a city-specific urban issues assignment in each city. The basic outlines are included in this syllabus; you will receive more details in each country.

### Case study assignment/presentations (3 presentations, 10% each)

Case study investigations of specific urban issues in Bangalore, Cape Town and Buenos Aires will include assignments and presentations. These presentations provide the opportunity for creative, academic synthesis of what has been learned in the case studies. Students are expected to work together in small groups during the case studies as well as the presentations. The structure of case study investigations and analysis will vary by country.

### Semester assignment (10%)

Reflection on the term "city." This assignment, handed out in New York is a continuation of your pre-departure assignment. It is to be completed by the second week in Buenos Aires.

### Final presentation (10%)

Students will prepare and collectively present the work of the semester during the final week of the semester in Buenos Aires. The final presentation serves as a vehicle for reflection and synthesis of key concepts and issues. It provides an opportunity for students to make interdisciplinary and comparative linkages and to experiment with creative forms of representation.

### **Grading System**

Students are expected to attend all classes, guest lectures and field trips unless they have a medical excuse. Exercises are due at the beginning of class on dates as assigned. Unexcused absences and late work will result in a lowering of the student's grade one point per day. Faculty may give unannounced "pop" quizzes in each country. Participation includes completing all assigned readings, writing regular entries in notebooks, and engaging guests, faculty, and fellow students during all facets of the academic program. *Participation is more than just showing up or speaking out; it means that you actively contribute to the intellectual growth of the class.*

Faculty will give grades in the form of points and will return assignments with written comments. Faculty will describe the range of points received for the assignment so that a student will know how his/her work compares with the rest of the class. Faculty will also give points for student participation in that country. At the end of the semester, points will be combined in order to determine the final letter grade for the course.

For final grades in IHP *Cities* courses it is useful for both faculty and students to think of letter grades in the following way. An "A" represents truly outstanding work that exemplifies thorough analysis, superior insight, and crystal clear presentation. A "B" signifies highly competent work that accomplishes the task at hand very well, through considerable thought, reasonable analysis, and an organized presentation. A "C" represents adequate work that meets basic requirements but demonstrates no distinction in terms of analytical insight or organization. A "D" is characterized by poorly or partially completed work that reflects a lack of initiative, inconsistent analysis, and/or erratic presentation. Plus and minus indicates relatively better or less-good work within each category. There is no A+.

### **Course Policies**

Students are expected to attend all classes, guest lectures and field trips unless they have a medical excuse. Course assignments are due on the assigned deadlines. Unexcused absences and late work will result in a lowering of the student's grade one full step per day (for example: one day unexcused absence or one day late assignment and a B will drop to a B-, two days C+).

### **Plagiarism**

All students are responsible for having read the IHP statement on plagiarism, which is available in the IHP Student Handbook. Students are advised that the penalty on a IHP program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Program Director, subject to approval by the Executive Director."

Refer to the Student Handbook for IHP policies regarding academic integrity, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, harassment protocols, and the academic appeals process.

The International Honors Program is offered in affiliation with the School for International Training, the accredited higher education institution of World Learning.

## Course Chronology:

### NEW YORK CITY, U.S.A.

19 – 29 August 2008

#### *Introduction to the Study of Urban Issues*

#### Week 1 – Reading a City Through Contemporary Urban Issues

- Roberts, Sam. 2008. “Ups and Downs for Older Cities in Population Report.” *New York Times*. July 10.
- Bloomberg, Michael (Mayor) 2008. *PlaNYC Progress Report 2008, A greener, Greater New York*. City of New York. Pp. 3-7. (full text in optional readings)
- Angotti, Tom. 2008. “Is the Long-term Sustainability Plan Sustainable?” *Gotham Gazette* April 21.

#### *Recommended Readings:*

- Bloomberg, Michael (Mayor) 2008. *PlaNYC Progress Report 2008, A Greener, Greater New York*. City of New York.

#### Week 2 – New York and Beyond

- Jacobs, Jane. 1993 (orig published 1961). “Chapter 6, The Uses of Neighborhoods.” *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Modern Library. Pp. 146-183.
- United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000, “Excerpt: What are the Millennium Development Goals?” *Millennium Development Goals and Targets 2003*.

#### *Readings for semester assignment: Reflection on the term “City.”*

- Mumford, Lewis. 2003. “What is a City.” In Richard LeGates & Frederic Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*. London & New York: Routledge. Pp. 92-96.
- Wirth, Louis. 1938. “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 44, No.1, July, 1938. Pp. 1-24.
- Neely, Jack. “Philosopher at Fontana.” Tennessee Valley Authority. <http://www.tva.gov/heritage/ext/index.htm>
- Sartre, Jean Paul. 1945. “American Cities.” *Le Figaro*. Paris. (translated and published in English *Finding the City*)
- Definition of “Urban.” Demographic Yearbook 2001, Table 6. [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/Defintion\\_of\\_Urban.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/Defintion_of_Urban.pdf)
- Bender, Thomas. 2002. “Chapter 14, Cities, Nations, and Globalization.” *The Unfinished City: New York and the Metropolitan Idea*. New York: The New Press. Pp. 239-253.
- Peirce, Neal. 2008. “A New ‘Metropolitics’ – Are We Ready?” Washington Post Writers Group. June 26.

#### *Recommended Readings:*

- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “The Millennium Development Goals Report.” June 2007.
- World Bank-IMF Global Monitoring Report 2008. “MDGs & the Environment.”

#### **New York Assignment:**

Through the course of the semester, reflect, research, test, and reconsider your definition of a city. Discuss the subject with people you meet along the way. Listen to how people use terms and come to a new definition or commit to the one you started with. Communicate your conclusions in the medium that best suits your point. The assignment is due at the end of the second week in Buenos Aires.

Details on the assignment will be given to you in New York.

**Week 3 – Private Rights vs Public Purpose - An Inquiry Into Eminent Domain**

- Fernandes, W., Paranjpye V., Hundred Years of Involuntary Displacement in India: Is the Rehabilitation Policy an Adequate Response? p.1-34, in Rehabilitation Policy and Law in India: A Right to Livelihood, Indian Social Institute and Econet, 1997. (Chapter 1)
- Saldanha, Leo F., A NICE Road goes Dangerously Off-course, Indian Architect and Builder, May 2007.

*Recommended Readings:*

- Srinivasaraju, Sugata, Raiders Lost the Arc, Outlook, 17 December 2007.

**Week 4 – Privatisation of Commons**

- Iyer, R. R., p.77-99, in Water Perspectives, Issues, Concerns Sage Publications, 2003.
- Kumar R. L., Public Spaces: The Architecture of Supervised Freedom. Centre For Vernacular Architecture. COA Journal, June 2004.

*Optional Readings:*

- Goldman, Michael, Inventing the commons: Theories and Practices of the Commons' Professional in Privatising Nature: Political Struggles for the Global Commons, Rutgers University Press, 1998.
- Nair, Janaki. Battles for Bangalore: Reter.

**Week 5 – Improving Public Travel and Transport Efficiency in Bangalore**

- Flyvbjerg, Bent. et. al., The Megaprojects Paradox in Megaprojects and Risk. Cambridge University Press, 2003. (Chapter 1)
- Report of the workshop “Namma Raste: Reclaiming Bangalore’s roads” July 19, 2008.

*Optional Readings*

- A Public Hearing Report on Bangalore’s Metro, CIVIC Bangalore, 2007.
- Environment Support Group, et. al., Report of the public consultation on “Road widening schemes of Bengaluru: Impacts and Alternatives”, 20 December 2007.

**Week 6 – Managing the City’s Waste**

- Solid Waste Management in Class 1 Cities in India, Report of the Committee constituted by the Hon. Supreme Court of India, March '99 (Introduction Chapter)
- Saldanha, Leo F., Thomas, Ranjini and Benekal, Shammanna T. J., Capacity Building Approach to a Sustainable Community Level Solid Waste Management Strategy by Empowering Municipal Pourakarmikas to a new role of Local Solid Waste Managers, Environment Support Group, 2002.

*Optional Readings:*

- Water Quality in the vicinity of the Mavallipura illegal Solid Waste Dump near Bangalore. Environment Support Group Report for SACODI (Segregation, collection and disposal of hazardous waste) project, Asia Pro Eco, European Union, 2006.

**Bangalore Assignment:**

A paper analyzing the challenges and prospects of Bangalore’s growth using these themes as background. Details of the assignment will be given to you in Bangalore.

**Week 8 – Responding to Health Emergencies: Xenophobic Violence and Urban Displacement**

- Materials from the People’s Health Movement and the Treatment Action Campaign’s response to the xenophobic violence (including minutes of meetings, resolutions, testimonies collected about “refugee” health needs, reports from fieldworkers)
- Local newspaper articles on the violence and the health department’s response.

**Week 9 – Popular Struggles for Housing and Services in “the Squatters”**

- Chapter 4 from Steven Robin’s forthcoming book on rights-based politics and housing in Cape Town
- Fiona Ross, *Urban Development and Social Contingency: A Case Study of Urban Relocation in the Western Cape, South Africa*, *Africa Today* - Volume 51, Number 4, Summer 2005, pp. 19-31
- Chapter 3 from Edgar Pieterse’s *City Futures* on slums and social mobilisation in Cape Town.

**Week 10 – Extending Health Services through Community-Based Workers and Organisations**

- An evaluation of the Western Cape Province’s “Community-Based Response to HIV/AIDS” program (if publicly available by that time)
- Draft national policy documents on community health worker programs and strategies

**Week 12 – Semester Break. Enjoy!**

**Cape Town Assignment:**

You will choose one of the following:

1) Policy Formulation: Devise a disaster management plan for the health department for the next time they have to deal with large numbers of displaced people (not necessarily “foreigners”

Or

2) Manifesto on the Right to Housing: Write a “manifesto” on the right to housing for all in Cape Town from the perspective of a “squatter” community. Imagine that your audience is the middle-class residents of Cape Town (of all “colors”) who are made nervous by the presence of informal settlements throughout the city.

Details on the assignment will be given to you in Cape Town.

**Week 13 – The Complex City of Buenos Aires – Greater Buenos Aires Area: Urbanization Trends and Challenges**

- Morello, Jorge et al. “Urbanization and the consumption of fertile land and other ecological changes: the case of Buenos Aires.” In *Environment and Urbanization 2000*; Vol 12 N° 2, October 2000. Pp. 119-131. Sage Publications/IIED.
- Pérez, Pedro. “Buenos Aires: Fragmentation and Privatization of the Metropolitan City”. In *Environment & Urbanization 2002*; Vol 14 No 1, April 2002. Pp. 145-159. Sage Publications/IIED.
- Payne, Geoffrey and Richard Grover. “Between Command and Market Economies: The Changing Roles of Public and Private Housing Sectors in Transitional Economies”. In Hamza, Mohamed (Ed.). *From Welfare to Market Economy: Policy Shifts in Urban Development*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2004. Pp. 147-162.

**Week 14 – Uses and Legitimacies of Use of Public Space**

- Huysen, Andreas 2003 “Memory Sites in an Expanded Field: The Memory Park in Buenos Aires”. In *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Ch. 6, pp.94-109. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kaiser, Susana (2003) “The Struggle for Urban Territories: Human Rights Activists in Buenos Aires” In Irazábal, Clara 2008 *Ordinary Places/Extraordinary Events: Citizenship, Democracy and Public Space in Latin America*. Ch. 8, pp.170-197. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis.

**Week 15 – Main Issue: Social Agency and the Role and Capacities of Argentinean State**

- Almansi, Florencia and Andrea Tammarazio. “Mobilizing projects in community organizations with a long-term perspective: neighbourhood credit funds in Buenos Aires, Argentina”. *Environment and Urbanization 2008* Vol. 20, pp. 121-147. Sage Publications/IIED.
- Herzer, Hilda et al. “The formation of social organizations and their attempts to consolidate settlements and neighborhoods undergoing transition in Buenos Aires”. *Environment & Urbanization* Vol 12 No 1, April 2000. Sage Publications/IIED.
- Petras, James. “Popular Struggle in Argentina. Full Circle and Beyond”. In *Monthly Review* 12, September 2003, Pp. 22-36. EBSCO Publishing.
- Valente, Marcela. *Buenos Aires Residents Rebel Against Apartment Towers*. In [www.tierramerica.net](http://www.tierramerica.net)

**Week 16**

Group visual and oral final presentations of Urban Issues in-depth studies. Summary and closure.

**Week 17**

Final Student Presentations—Summary of the Semester

**Buenos Aires Assignment**

Students will divide into groups (4 groups with 6 students each) and will select, assisted by the Program Coordinator, one of the issues that will be discussed along the course. Within the group, each student will focus on a specific aspect of the selected issue and submit a 750 word paper. The group will combine the results of each individual research into a final visual and oral presentation.