



INTERNATIONAL HONORS PROGRAM

comparative study around the world

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International Honors Program Cities in the 21st Century

Contemporary Urban Issues: Problems and Solutions (CUI) URST – 3000 (4 credits) Spring Semester 2010

Course Overview

Contemporary Urban Issues (CUI) explores place-based examples of challenges currently facing the cities you are studying. In New York City, Sao Paulo, Curitiba, Cape Town and Hanoi you will discuss matters of current public concern, debate or dispute. 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.

The guiding question for the course is: *What are the forces that shape cities, and how can they be influenced to create equitable, sustainable urban environments?* We will begin addressing this question in New York City and reconsider it at the final workshop in Vietnam, comparing findings in Sao Paulo, Curitiba, Cape Town, and Hanoi. This question also provides the thread for individual, comparative analysis projects to be undertaken during the semester. Our investigations of contemporary urban issues will emphasize the solutions, small and large, as well as the problems. We will use observers of the city as well as actors as sources of information and inspiration in our investigations.

Course Objectives

- To encourage new ways of learning about cities, through observation and direct experience, and from multiple viewpoints;
- To provide students with the appropriate methods and concepts to investigate contemporary urban issues.
- To examine current urban issues and their potential responses systematically and critically.
- 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, academic, 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, individual and group research, 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.

Course Components

Pre-departure Assignment: An exercise on urban issues, introducing the concept of reading a city through the study of a contemporary controversy and visions for urban change. The assignment is not graded, (although you will receive feedback from faculty) but it is factored into your course participation.

Neighborhood Days: Neighborhood days involve trips by small groups of students to different parts of the city. Students spend a half to full day investigating a particular neighborhood using a variety of formal and informal methods based on direct observation as well as engagement with the local community. Findings and experiences are shared through group presentations. Neighborhood days are not graded but are factored into course participation.

Case Studies: A case study is an in-depth look at a particular topic or area of interest. It includes research into the facts of the subject and an analysis of those facts to understand the dynamics of the situation and underlying reasons for certain conditions. Students will divide into groups to 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, analysis, 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 information and analysis 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. Case studies are graded as a group assignment.

Lectures: All lectures and panel discussions in the *Cities* program serve as critical inputs in the experiential learning process. Guest lecturers bring a range of perspectives, including civil society, government, and academia, which will contribute to your understanding of place-specific urban issues as well as your comparative analysis project.

Faculty Sessions: CUI faculty sessions will be devoted to advisement on students' comparative analysis projects as well as reflection and discussion of urban challenges and issues encountered through experiencing the city.

Comparative Analysis Project: Students will undertake a semester-long comparative analysis research project on a topic of their choice. Knowledge and insights gained from this assignment will directly contribute to discussion and synthesis in the final workshop in Vietnam.

Final Workshop: The CUI course culminates with a final workshop in the last week of the Vietnam program. The final workshop brings students around full circle to revisit the guiding question: *What are the forces that shape cities, and how can they be influenced to create equitable, sustainable urban environments?* This final group assignment provides an opportunity for students to reflect upon their own academic and personal journey through the semester, to consider major issues they have come across in the different cities, and consider values, approaches, policies and broad strategies that could be applied in response to these issues. All that the students have learned throughout the semester, through guest lectures, site visits, case studies and their own comparative analysis project is preparation for and culminates in the final workshop.

Notebooks: Keeping a notebook is an important part of the experiential learning process as well as a tool in the comparative analysis project. Your notebook will serve as an instrument for documenting, processing, analyzing and synthesizing the variety of experiences you will encounter over the next sixteen weeks. In a notebook that is separate from your personal travel journal, take note of images, reflect on articles/site visits/lectures, make drawings, and record conversations you have pertaining to your comparative analysis project. In addition, use the notebook to develop an awareness of your learning process, including an awareness of your expectations and progress as well as issues and ways to improve the learning process. Regular use of the notebook will help you to observe, develop, and record your thinking about ideas central to this course. Notebooks will also be actively used as a method of communication between you and your faculty advisor during CUI faculty sessions.

Readings: City-specific **required** readings will be distributed to each student in the CUI course reader. These readings (a) provide background information on the city, (b) cover topics of current importance in each city, and (c) serve as reference material for guest lectures. Additional **recommended** readings cover a wide range

of issues of interest in each city. They are intended to serve as a traveling reference library, used on a flexible basis to provide background information on a comparative analysis topic, a site visit, case study, etc. Recommended readings are digitized and will be readily available upon request.

Course Requirements

1) Participation (20% of final grade)

Assessment of participation is based on attendance *and* engagement in program activities. Students are encouraged to listen, ask questions and contribute ideas to the intellectual growth of the class. We expect that students will improve their ability to do so over the course of the semester. Each coordinator and faculty member will contribute to the assessment of student engagement and contribution to group learning, especially on Neighborhood Days, Case Studies and the Final Workshop.

2) Case Study Group Assignment/Presentations (30% of final grade - 3 presentations, 10% each)

Case study investigations of specific urban issues in Sao Paulo, Cape Town and Hanoi will include field research, critical analysis, and presentations. 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.

3) Comparative Analysis Project (40% of final grade)

The IHP Cities program provides the unusual opportunity for students to learn directly from primary sources and resources in multiple cities. Students are expected to take the initiative in this assignment by pursuing an individual research project throughout the semester. The project is intended to be comparative and cumulative so that students build up a body of work to bring to the final workshop in Hanoi at the end of the semester. Your topic should relate to the key question of the course: *What are the forces that shape cities, and how can they be influenced to create equitable, sustainable urban environments?* We encourage you to delve into your topic, because it could be the subject of a future thesis or publishable article or career interest!

It will be important for you to identify the problems and issues related to your individual comparative analysis topic and research question(s) in each city. All too often, however, we focus on the problems (which are considerable) in the cities we are visiting. Identifying problems is prerequisite to finding solutions. In this project we are asking you to also consider, “what works?” Responses to problems exist at many scales and in many guises; sometimes they exist only as brilliant ideas poised for implementation. They are the seeds of success and the work of many individuals that you will meet. Report back on practices or processes that seem to be working, at any scale.

Both the process and product of research are critical components of the comparative analysis assignment. CUI class sessions will be devoted to faculty advisement and work-shopping the research process. In NYC students will propose a topic for Comparative Analysis and begin formulating research questions conducive to a semester-long investigation.

Students will share their findings, by means of a brief summary and oral presentation, at the end of the Brazil and South Africa programs, drawing on their notebook entries and materials they have gathered in the field. A final essay and poster in Hanoi will complete the assignment. The semester-long Comparative Analysis project will be assessed as follows:

- Brazil summary and sharing (5%)
- Cape Town summary and sharing (5%)
- Hanoi: Final essay (20%)
- Hanoi: Poster (10%)

Questions to guide the research process:

What is your research question(s)? What urban issue(s) are you addressing through this comparative analysis project? How feasible is it to study this topic in each city? What are the parameters? What kind of everyday sources and resources are you using to understand your topic? How might a response or solution to the issue be applicable to other cities – including the city in your pre-departure assignment? What are the different perspectives that inform your comparative analysis topic? How would a planner or an anthropologist or an economist frame this topic or this issue?

Sources and Resources:

What are they? Who are they? How can you be creative about your sources and resources? We usually rely on the experts, but in IHP and this project it is important to rely on all of your senses. What can you observe, hear, feel, taste and smell in the city? What can you learn from informal conversations with shopkeepers or homestay families, for example? What can you learn through a related discussion by a guest lecture? What can you learn from the everyday patterns of people, vehicles, sounds, and sights? The Comparative Analysis project is not intended to be entirely independent of Cities programming. Therefore, attention must be paid while developing a topic to the feasibility of the project in the context of existing programming. Draw on the sources and resources that are part of the Cities program or are relatively accessible in your daily experiences.

Criteria used for evaluation of summaries, final report and poster:

- Is a research question clearly articulated? How does the student's work contribute to answering that question?
- To what extent does the student make use of existing program resources as well as seek out and make reference to a range of primary sources?
- How successful is the project in drawing comparisons of the topic in different cities?
- How clearly does the evidence support the argument and analysis?

4) Final Workshop (10% of final grade)

Throughout the semester, students will have examined their topic for comparative analysis by looking not only at the problems and issues related to that topic but at “what works” and “for whom” – responses or solutions at many scales and in many guises. They will have developed a certain level of understanding of the topic by the time they submit their final essays and posters. Students will draw upon this newfound knowledge and expertise as well as insights gained throughout the semester – from guest lecture, site visits, case studies, etc. to work together on a final group assignment in Vietnam. The final workshop serves as a vehicle for reflection and synthesis of key concepts and issues learned during the course of the semester. It provides an opportunity for students to make interdisciplinary and comparative linkages and to experiment with creative forms of representation.

Grading

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. At the end of the semester, your cumulative point score will be calculated in order to determine the final letter grade for the course. Point grades on individual assignments are not directly correlated to letter grades. The final letter grades will be determined on the basis of cumulative points on assignments completed across countries.

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

Attendance and Participation: All students are expected to be present at every class session, with the only exceptions being illness (written note required from a non-IHP adult, e.g. homestay parent, or preferably, health care professional). Unexcused absences and habitual lateness *will* result in penalties reflected in your participation grade. Please inform the instructor if tardiness is anticipated. **All students are expected to come to class on time.**

Late work: In keeping with IHP policy, papers handed in late will drop one point per day, unless permission is granted otherwise. Course assignments are due at the beginning of the day.

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 IHP 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, 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 January 2010

Orientation

- Jacobs, Allan B., “Seeing Change” from *Looking at Cities* (1985), in *The Sustainable Urban Development Reader*, Stephen M. Wheeler and Timothy Beatley, eds., Routledge, 2004. pp. 220-224.
- Berger, Joseph. 2005. “Around the World in 5 Boroughs.” *New York Times*. January 30, 2005.

Country themes

Food

- Lappé, Anna and Bryant Terry, *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2006. Chapter 4 (Grub 101), pp 55-73.

Water

- Gleick, Peter H., “The Future of Water.” In *Water-Works: The Architecture and Engineering of the New York City Water Supply*, Kevin Bone, Editor, The Monacelli Press, 2006, pp. 236-247.

Guest lectures

- *A Region at Risk: A Summary of the Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area*, Regional Plan Association, 1996.
- United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000, “Millennium Development Goals and Targets” 2003.

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

30 January – 16 February and 26 February – 7 March 2010

Orientation

- Juste, Raul, “São Paulo’s Urban Opportunity.” Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp. 36-40.
- Maxwell, Kenneth, “History Lessons, the Problem of Persistence,” *ReVista Harvard Review on Latin America*. Spring 2007. pp. 3-6.
- Coatsworth, John, “Why Brazil is ‘Underdeveloped’ and What Can be Done About It,” *ReVista Harvard Review on Latin America*. Spring 2007. pp.7-9.

Country themes

Market-driven city

- Sassen, Saskia, “South American Cities and Globalization,” Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, December 2008. pp. 4-6.
- Cymbalista, Renato and Paula Freire Santoro, “Property Rights and Real Estate Markets in São Paulo,” in *The challenges of the democratic management in Brazil: the right to the city*, São Paulo Instituto Pólis: Ford Foundation, 2008. Renato Cymbalista, org. pp. 119-137.

Role of social movements in shaping the city

- Jones, Gareth. “Social Engagement in the Latin American City.” Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp. 16-17.
- Spink, Peter K., “Equity and Public Action, Facing the Challenge of Brazil’s Inequity,” *ReVista Harvard Review on Latin America*. Spring 2007. pp. 33-36.
- Earle, Lucy, August 2008. “Social Movements and Citizenship: Some challenges for INGOs,” Policy Briefing Paper 20, International NGO Training and Research Center, 2008. pp.1-6.

Guest lectures

- Carter, Miguel, “The Landless Rural Workers’ Movement (MST) and Democracy in Brazil,” Working Paper No. CBS-60-05. Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford, 2007. pp. 1-33.
- Silva, Graziella Moraes D., “Re-defining Race and Class: Recent Debates on Affirmative Action in Brazil,” *ReVista Harvard Review on Latin America*. Spring 2007. pp.56-59.
- Peñalosa, Enrique, “The Limits of Politics,” Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp.14-18.

- Biderman, Ciro, "Mobility in the São Paulo Metropolitan Regions," Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp.45-46.
- De Avila Gomide, Alexandre, "Transport and the Poor," Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp.47-48.
- Caldeira, Teresa, "Worlds Set Apart," Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp. 49-53.
- Miraglia, Paula, "Safe Spaces," Urban Age South American Conference, London School of Economics, 2008. pp. 54-58.

CURITIBA, BRAZIL

17 February – 26 February 2010

Orientation

- McKibben, Bill. "Curitiba: A Global Model for Development." *CommonDreams.org*, November 8, 2005.
- PBS Frontline World Fellows. "Curitiba's Urban Experiment." December 2003. Available: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/fellows/brazil1203/>

Country themes

Role of the state in shaping the city

- Parasram, Vidisha. "Efficient Transportation for Successful Urban Planning in Curitiba." April 28, 2003. Available: http://www.solutions-site.org/artman/publish/article_62.shtml

Environmental sustainability

- Goodland, Robert and Herman Daly, 1996 Environmental Sustainability: Universal and Non-Negotiable. *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 6, No. 4. pp. 1002-1017.

Guest lectures

- Ultramari, Clovis and Denis A. Rezende, 2007, "Urban Resilience and Slow Motion Disasters." *City and Time* 2, Vol. 3, No. 5. pp. 47-64.

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

8 March – 12 April 2010

Orientation

- City of Cape Town, 2009, City Statistics and Population Census <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/Documents/City%20Statistics%202009.htm>
- UNDP, Human Development Report, Country Factsheet – South Africa, 2007/2008 http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ZAF.html

Country themes

Echoes of the previous regime

- Robins, Steven. 2008. "Rights." In Nick Shepherd and Steven Robins, Eds. *New South African Keywords*. Cape Town: CTP Book Printers, pp. 182-192.
- Western, J. 2002. "A Divided City: Cape Town." *Political Geography* 21: 711-716.

2010 Soccer World Cup

- Newton, Caroline. 2009. "The Reverse Side of the Medal: About the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the Beautification of the N2 in Cape Town." *Urban Forum* 20: 93-108.
- Pillay, Udesch and Orli Bass. 2009. "Mega-Events as a Response to Poverty Reduction." In Udesch Pillay, Richard Tomlinson, Orli Bass, eds. *Development and Dreams: The Urban Legacy of the 2010 Football World Cup*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. <http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/>
- Swart, Kamilla and Urmilla Bob. 2009. "Venue Selection and the 2010 World Cup: A Case Study of Cape Town." In Udesch Pillay, Richard Tomlinson, Orli Bass, eds. *Development and Dreams: The Urban Legacy of the 2010 Football World Cup*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. pp. 114-130.

Guest lectures

- Pieterse, Edgar, "Unravelling the Different Meanings of Integration: The Urban Development Framework of the South African Government," *Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratizing Society*, Philip Harrison, Marie Huchzermeyer and Mzwanele

- Mayekiso, eds. University of Cape Town Press, 2003. pp.122-139.
- Thomas, W. H. 2006. "Western Cape Economic Trends and Issues Pre- and Post-2005." unpublished paper, 18 pp.
 - Behrens, Roger and Peter Wilkinson, "Housing and Urban Passenger Transport Policy and Planning in South African Cities: A Problematic Relationship?" *Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratizing Society*. Ed. Philip Harrison, et al. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2003. pp. 154-174.
 - Harrison, Philip, Alison Todes and Vanessa Watson, "Planning and Transformation: Learning from the Post-Apartheid Experience," Routledge. 2008. pp. 225-234.

HANOI, VIETNAM

13 April – 17 May 2010

Readings

Orientation

- Van Horen, Basil, "City profile: Hanoi," in *Cities*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Elsevier Ltd., 2005. pp. 161–173.

Guest lectures

Week 1: The private sector impulse: Informal space production and space use

- Koh, David (2004) "Illegal Construction in Hanoi and Hanoi's Wards", *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, pp. 337-369
- Gerrmant Stephanie (2007), Chapter 11: Autonomous popular housing transforming into apartment and commercial development, the transformation of popular housing estates since Doi moi, pp. 257 - 272, *The self-organizing city in Vietnam, processes of change and transformation in Housing in Hanoi*.

Week 2: Hanoi extension: vision and dream by whom and for whom

- Leaf, M (1999) A tale of two villages: Globalization and Peri-Urban Change in China and Vietnam, *Cities*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 23–31, 2002.
- Han, Sun Sheng and Kim Trang Vu (2008), Land acquisition in transitional Hanoi, *Urban studies*, 45(5&6) 1097–1117, May 2008.
- Rural urbanisation - empty promises, empty houses, empty lives, VietNamnet Bridge 24/11/2009. <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/features/200911/Rural-urbanisation-empty-promises-empty-houses-empty-lives-880458/>
- Hanoi expansion takes effect, Thanhniennews.com August 1, 2008. <http://www.thanhniennews.com/politics/?catid=1&newsid=40786>
- Hanoi swallows more farms, VietnamNet Bridge, published 21 December 2008, <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/social/2008/12/819751/>

Week 3: The skyscrapers of Hanoi: Global local interactions

- Tasan-Kok Tuna, Jan Van Weesep (2007) Global local interaction and its impacts on cities, *Journal of Housing and the Built environment* 22, pp. 1-11.
- Pieterse, Jan Nederveen (1995) Globalisation as Hybridisation, in M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (eds), *Global Modernities*, London: Sage.
- The regulation of Design in Global architecture Firms: Embedding and Emplacing Buildings, *Urban Studies* 46(12) 2537–2554, November 2009