SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014
 Discipline: Urban Planning
PLAN 5500-101: Global Cities/Ordinary Cities
Lower Division
Faculty Name: Ellen Bassett, Associate Professor Urban and Environmental Planning, UVa

Pre-requisites: None.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Cities are one of the defining features of humankind – densely settled urban agglomerations serve as centers of commerce and production, seats of government, places of information exchange, loci of the arts and culture, and much more. The shape and function of cities, however, can and has differed over time with once powerful trading or industrial cities losing influence due to economic decline (e.g., Detroit, Manchester) while other former backwaters emerge as important urban centers (e.g., Houston, Bangalore).

For contemporary cities, one major driver of growth and change is globalization—which can be thought of as the flow of people, capital, goods and knowledge across national boundaries. In a globalized world, cities are increasingly forced to compete with one another to succeed. For many urbanists (essentially scholars who study urban life), this competition is inevitable and positive; the winner cities in this competitive landscape are known as “global cities.” Global cities are important nodes—the top tier—in the world economic system; their success is both indicative of and important for the future of the world. Three uncontested global cities are represented on our itinerary, namely Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore. But other urban theorists challenge the centrality (and normative approbation) of global cities and question whether city typologies and rankings really help us understand cities fully. Instead of pigeonholing cities as “global cities”, “world class cities” or “third world cities”, these authors suggest that we think of cities as “ordinary” and learn to appreciate them in their myriad forms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In this course, students will examine the implications of an urbanizing world, examine and debate competing concepts of cities (global cities, Third World cities, ordinary cities), and use the framework provided by urban theory as a lens for exploring and understanding the cities we will be visiting on Semester at Sea.

Specifically, students will delve into the history, economy, social structure (e.g., race, class), built form, and central function of most of the cities we visit. In the process, students will learn more about the field of architecture and urban planning and the role played by both public and private actors in creating cities.

Students will complete two observation-based field experiences (in addition to the required field lab; one of these field experiences will be presented in class), take one exam, and write a research paper. The research paper—which will draw upon structured field visits to the cities—will give the student an opportunity to understand a selected city in depth, compare this city with others studied in the course, and reflect upon contemporary urbanization and the debates over city typologies, city planning strategies, and the challenge of creating cities that work for all members of society.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

ISBN #: 978-4129-8803-2

NOTE: When the syllabus was prepared in August 2013, the links to Al Jazeera 101 East videos worked. They apparently are no longer available in the USA. I’ve left them there as they may be available in the future and in general Al Jazeera is an important source of international reporting.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

A1- January 12: Course Introduction

Class Period Activity: Review of Syllabus, Self-Introductions (Professor and Students)
In-Class Activity: City Identification
Readings: None

A2- January 14: Introduction to Urban Theory

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Why We Urbanize
Readings: Sassen, 2012, Chp. 1 and 2

A3- January 16: Our Urban World

Class Period Activity: Lecture and Discussion – Global Urbanization
Readings: Angel, 2012, Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 77 to 131) NOTE: ON RESERVE; NOT ELECTRONICALLY AVAILABLE; Sassen, 2012, Chp. 3
Video: http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2008/05/200861517015377831.html

January 17: Hilo

A4- January 19: The “First World”

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Globalization and Global Cities

A5- January 22: The “Third World”

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Urbanization in the Global South: “Third World” Cities
Readings: Dick and Rimmer, 1997; Roy, 2011; Davis, 2004

January 24: Study Day

A6- January 25: The “Whole World”? 

Class Period Activity: Discussion – Ordinary Cities
Readings: Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2005; Shatkin, 2007
In-Class Activity: City Observation Data Sheets

A7-January 27: Architecture and the Image of the City

Class Period Activity: Lecture - Does a Global City Look Different? Property, Architecture, and Exclusion

January 29- February 3: Yokohama and Kobe

A8- February 4: China’s Economic and Urban Transformation

Class Period Activity: Video – The Last Train Home
Reading: Heikkila, 2007; Liu, 2008; Wang, et al, 2009

February 6-11: Shanghai, transit, Hong Kong

A9- February 12: Cities and National Identity
Class Period Activity: Lecture and Discussion – HCMC or Saigon? The Post-Colonial, Post-Communist City
Readings: Freeman, 1996; Truit, 2008

A10- February 20: The Developmental City-State
Class Period Activity: Lecture and Discussion - Singapore and its Transformation
Readings: Olds and Yeung, 2004; Yeoh and Chang, 2001; Sassen, 2012, Chp. 6
Video: http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2013/04/2013430122726453458.html

February 22-23: Singapore (Field Lab City – Reserve 22 Feb. for class)

A11- February 24: Preservation of the Cultural and Colonial Capital
Class Period Activity: Post-Field Lab Discussion; Lecture and Discussion– Historic Preservation by Neglect: Rangoon (Yangon)
Readings: Spate and Trueblood, 1942; Seekins, 2005; visit webpage: http://yangonheritagetrust.org/
Video: http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2013/05/20135229324313702.html

February 25: Study Day

A12- March 5: Rapid Urbanization and Its Discontents – India
Class Period Activity: Lecture – Right to the City (1): Access to Land and Services in India
Readings: Roy, 2009; Dobbs and Shanke, 2010 (Executive Summary)
Video: http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2011/10/20111041013729171.html (on Gurgaon, but indicative of broad urbanization and growth issues in India)

A13- March 7: The Challenge of Global Tourism and Heritage Protection
Class Period Activity: Lecture –The City of Cochin
Readings: Streekumar and Parayil, 2002; Joseph, 2005
Web-based: http://www.lestariheritage.net/kerala/

March 9-14: Cochin

A14- March 15: Discussion Day
Class Period Activity: City Observation Presentations (short powerpoints or other formats, draw from observation sheets and journal; half of class presents)
Readings: None

March 17: Study Day
A15- March 18: Building a Better City for All (1)

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Planning New Towns
Readings: Sassen, 2012, Chp. 7; Recommended: Chalfin, 2010

A16- March 20: Race and Space in South Africa 1

Class Period Activity: Video - Skin
Readings: Mabin, 1992; McDonald and Smith, 2004
Optional Pre-Class Video (more background on South Africa): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOA66AOG52M

March 21: Port Louis, Mauritius

A17- March 23: Race and Space in South Africa 2

Class Period Activity: Discussion of Skin. Lecture – Right to the City (2): The Post-Apartheid City of Cape Town
Readings: Lemanski, 2007; Minty, 2005
Video: On District 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b67yryzEeag
(Consider visiting the District 6 Museum when in Cape Town)

March 25: Study Day

A18- March 26: Exam

March 28-April 2: Cape Town

A19- April 3: Building a Better City for All (2)

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Land Rights and Informal Settlement “Upgrading”
Readings: de Soto, 1994; Grant, 2006; Amoeko and Kobinah, 2011
Web resource: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrdbGfQR7N8 (UN Habitat video)

A20- April 5: Primacy and National Development

Class Period Activity: Lecture – Accra—A West African “Primate” City
Readings: Yankson and Gough, 1999; Arguello, et al, 2003; Grant and Yankson, 2002

April 10-14: Takoradi and Tema (Accra)

A21- April 8: Comparative African Urbanization

Class Period Activity: Video: Nairobi Half-Life
Readings: None

A22- April 15: Discussion Day

Class Period Activity: City Observation Presentations (short powerpoints, draw from observation sheets and journal)

A23- April 17: Envisioning the Modern Muslim City
Class Period Activity: Lecture – More than a Movie: Casablanca

April 19: Study Day

A24- April 20: Building a Better City for All (3)

Class Period Activity: Charter Cities: Discussion and Debate
http://www.ted.com/talks/paul_romer.html
View website: http://chartercities.org/

April 22: Global Lens Finals/Study Day

A25- April 28: A-Day Finals

Class Period Activity: Discussion (Impressions of Casablanca); Final discussion of Sassen
Readings: Sassen, 2012, Chp. 9
Term Papers are Due

May 2: Arrive in Southampton, United Kingdom

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FIELD WORK

Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of our field lab.

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Our field lab will be conducted in Singapore. We will be meeting with urban experts from the Center for Livable Cities and the National University of Singapore and get an overview of the city’s planning, growth and current development challenges. We will have lunch with students studying in the fields of architecture and urban planning at the National University of Singapore. Then together with the students we will be taking a walking or bus tour of the city. Prior to the field lab students will be expected to create a set of questions suitable for interviewing urban experts, city leaders, and their fellow students. (These will be submitted to the instructor.) A written reflection on the field lab constitutes 10% of your final grade.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be asked to conduct structured observations of the cities they are visiting. Students will develop an “observation form” to help them structure their visits (and photography) in the cities visited over the course of the term. The point of the observation data is to have tangible evidence that you can use to support, refute, improve, (put your choice of verb here) the ideas about cities and city systems with which we are engaging in the class.

Students will complete two written observation assignments. These assignments will ask the students to compare and contrast 2 or more cities—relative to our readings and discussion. For one of the observation assignments, students will create a small presentation (using any software of choice); this 10-minute presentation will be given to the entire class on one of two designated days.
METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Participation (class attendance/discussion) 10 Points
Field Lab Reflection Assignment 10 points
2 City Observation Assignments 30 Points
1 City Observation Presentation 5 Points
1 Exam 20 Points
1 City Profile and Analysis (Term Paper) 25 Points

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Saskia Sassen
TITLE: Cities in a World Economy
PUBLISHER: Sage (Pine Forge Press)
ISBN #: 978-4129-8803-2
DATE/EDITION: 4th, 2012

AUTHOR: Schlomo Angel
TITLE: Planet of Cities
PUBLISHER: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
ISBN #: 978-1-55844-245-0
DATE/EDITION: 2012, first (and only)

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

Other readings will be found on the ship’s intranet.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Video resources (links to Al Jazeera East 101 and other sources); Last Train Home and Nairobi Half Life is owned by the professor. Skin will need to be obtained for the voyage.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”