Urbanization and Public Health

IPBH-3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Kenya: Urbanization, Health, and Human Rights

Course Description
African urban growth rates are the fastest in the world, making the African metropolis one of the most important and challenging spaces of 21st life, with tremendous implications for health and human rights throughout the continent. Roughly two million people in Nairobi – or over half the population – live in informal settlements at great costs to human dignity, health, and well-being. “Slum” dwellers lack basic services including running water and sanitation and access to safe and reliable transportation, while suffering from insecurity, marginalization, and discrimination. Evictions are an ever-present risk. In Kenya’s second and third largest cities – Mombasa and Kisumu – issues of access to safe, affordable, and viable shelter, are similarly challenging though unique to each site due to historical, linguistic, economic, ecological, and socio-cultural distinctions. While images of urban Africa focus on slums, luxury housing and gated communities grow exponentially in Kenya’s cities, providing a stark contrast to the precariousness of the informal settlements. With more Kenyans moving to urban areas, the challenges associated with insufficient affordable housing – and the attendant health and human rights crises these foreshadow – are becoming more acute. The Urbanization and Public Health seminar is focused on housing – primarily housing in urban areas – as a fundamental issue at the intersection of health, citizenship, and human rights in Kenya. Course content is provided via lectures, discussions, readings, presentations, and educational excursions.

Course Objectives
The Urbanization and Public Health seminar has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 contact hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Understand historical patterns of urban space in Africa through colonial medical discourses;
- Gain in-depth knowledge, understanding, and critical analyses of present-day Kenya, with a focus on issues pertaining to health and human rights in urban contexts;
- Identify Kenya’s health care and human rights challenges as they relate to housing and infrastructure in urban areas; and
- Integrate hands-on, experiential learning with academic understandings of housing policies and practices in Kenya and their implications for health and human rights.

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

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Learning Outcomes
By the completion of *Urbanization and Public Health*, students will be expected to:

- Identify policies and practices of urban planning in colonial cities and their continuing ramifications;
- Discuss the histories and present-day challenges of Kibera, Mathare, and the informal settlements of Kisumu and Mombasa as they relate to health and human rights;
- Analyze the role of various state and private actors and institutions in urban settlement patterns and policies in Kenya and their effects on health; and
- Demonstrate the connections between urban spaces, public health, and human rights as they intersect with processes of social, economic and political change.

Course Requirements
Through a focus on cities in Kenya, this seminar provides students with an overview of the relationships between urbanization, health, and human rights. The course begins with an exploration of the links between colonialism, urbanization, and health. Students will explore contemporary struggles over land tenure, informality, and evictions, and engage with the challenges of current urban infrastructures as they relate to health, citizenship, dignity, and belonging in the city.

Readings
You are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.


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**PLEASE NOTE:** COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS, AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Assignments**

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence. The final grade for the *Right to the City* seminar will be comprised of the following assessments:

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**Synthesis Paper**: The synthesis paper offers students an opportunity to explore a topic of their choice relevant to issues of Urbanization and Public Health in Kenyan cities. The synthesis paper allows students to explore literature that may be useful in developing a more grounded theoretical framework within which to frame your ISP and/or make sense of your ISP experiences. The synthesis paper must be structured along the lines of a standard academic paper – clear introduction, thesis, engaging and rigorous argument, insightful conclusions and recommendations, and consistent referencing. The final synthesis paper will be 8-10 pages (excluding figures and illustrations) and double-spaced, using a 12-point font.

**Mapping project**: Students are required to use a variety of possible mapping strategies in order to better understand the realities of living in dense, informal urban settlements in three Kenyan cities: Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. Students may utilize existing base maps and gather primary data that will assist in illuminating issues related to health, housing and human rights in the respective cities. The output of this project is a series of at least three maps that visually represent data drawn from sources including: field observations, semi-structured interviews, and/or community mapping techniques. An oral presentation/discussion of the maps provides students with an opportunity to share results of the project.

**Theory/Practice Reflection Journal**: Students will prepare a two-page analytical journal entry reflecting on the visit(s) included in the excursion. Five journal submissions are required—one for each of the modules presented in the course. Following each academic excursion students should reflect on critical issues observed and knowledge gained. The aim of the reflection will be to connect theory as presented in lectures and practice as experienced during the academic excursions.

**Participation**: Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Grading Scale**: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>84-86%</td>
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<td>80-83%</td>
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<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Below 64%</td>
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**Grading Criteria**

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation, consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and

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responsible behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account.

All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Always remember to keep back up files or email files to yourself so that nothing gets accidentally lost or erased.

Program Calendar

Lecture topics may include:

**Module 1: Colonial roots**
- Colonialism and its legacies
- The foundations of inequality
- Health and hygiene discourse in colonial cities

**Module 2: Planning and infrastructure**
- Urban planning in Africa
- Human settlement patterns in African cities
- Infrastructure: shelter, food, mobility in the city
- Formality/informality
- Planning for growth

**Module 3: Africa's urban century**
- Urbanization and growth in African cities
- Push/pull factors in urbanization and growth
- Consequences of rapid urbanization

**Module 4: Living with urbanization**
- Informality in the African city
- Health and hygiene in slum cities
- Flying toilets
- Housing provision in a growing city

**Module 5: Citizenship and belonging**
- The right to the city
- Public space and participation
- Removals, containment and control
- Land tenure and rights
- The gendered city
- Contemporary urbanisms

Educational Excursions may include:

- **Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions** - COHRE is an international NGO with a mission to ensure the human right to adequate housing for everyone, everywhere, based in Nairobi.
- **Carolina for Kibera** – CFK is an NGO in Kibera offering an integrated approach to poverty alleviation through collaborations including a clinic, sports association, trash recycling program, education, and a reproductive health and women's rights center providing a safe space for women and girls in Kibera.
- **Coast Rights Forum** – An NGO advocating for land and human rights on Kenya's coast.

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• **Kisumu Social Rights Association** – KISORA is a community-based human rights NGO with a focus on housing, land, and evictions in the Lake Victoria region.

• **Kituo cha Sheria** – Human rights organization, based on Mombasa, focusing on policy advocacy and law reform for land and housing on the Kenyan coast.

• **MUHURI (Muslims for Human Rights)** - MUHURI promotes and advocates for human rights among marginalized communities in urban Kenya.

• **MYSA (Mathare Youth Sports Association)** - MYSA is a self-help youth program linking sports with environmental cleanups, AIDS prevention, leadership training and other community service activities involving approximately twenty thousand young people in the Mathare informal settlement.

• **School of the Built Environment, University of Nairobi**

• **UN HABITAT** - The United Nation’s agency for Human Settlements, headquartered in Nairobi.

### Student Expectations

**Class Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.