Course Overview
Cities constitute the physical context in which economic, political and social relations take shape, the concentration and allocation of resources occur, and opportunities for cooperation and processes of conflict emerge. The city is an arena where economic disparities and exclusions from power are made apparent. This course explores, questions, and critiques the intersection of politics and development in cities at multiple scales, from local to global, and examines how related institutions, policies, and processes shape the evolution of the city.

We will pay particular attention to these guiding questions: What economic, social, and political factors (local, national, and international) shape the development/organization of cities? How are different actors involved (or excluded) in the creation, maintenance, and functioning of urban environments? Whose knowledge/voices are considered relevant in the discussion of what the city could be? In essence, Urban Politics and Development will explore how and why urban development is a tension-filled, conflictual process that occurs at multiple scales. From this standpoint, meaningful ways of addressing problems and solutions for urban development will also be explored.

In order to frame this learning experience, we will focus on the neoliberal project. Neo-liberalism is a philosophical tradition, an economic and political policy framework, and a set of cultural practices that have shaped global society since the 1980s. At its core there is a belief that individual freedom to participate in the market place (individual tenacity) is the only viable way to organize societies and cities. The neoliberal project has become the 'common sense’ in the political and economic organization of cities throughout the world. Thus, while we will discuss a variety of issues during the semester (social and spatial inequality, gentrification, ‘informality’, citizenship, governance, etc.), the neoliberal project will be a common thread that will unite the cities we will visit and provide us with a lens for ‘reading’ the city.
Course Objectives

- To discuss the neoliberal project as an intellectual current of analysis that became a political project, and how this project has concrete implications in the spatial/social organization of cities – or the normative ideals of what cities should be and do;
- To experience, observe, understand, and respond to the multi-scalar impacts and manifestations of government policy, citizen action, and regional and global forces on the development of the city;
- To challenge students to engage with people and places through discussion, dialogue, and observation in reflective and substantive ways, towards effectively evaluating multiple, often contradictory sources;
- To develop critical assessment and analytical skills to connect theory to practice and outcomes in order to formulate one’s own position on course-related concepts, including development, democracy, and citizenship.

Course Methodology
The course will use a combination of lecture presentations, seminar discussions, group work, and individual projects. The intention is to create a learning community where students actively contribute ideas and questions, and everyone helps everyone else learn. The readings are designed as a springboard to frame what we will see and hear, with the readings. The course aims to make the most out of the richness and variety of the assignments that involve looking at particular political and developmental issues in the cities studied and gathering and analyzing primary data from field sources.

Course Materials
Required readings are available to students via digital download. Thematic readings, listed at the end of the syllabus, are for further reference and for individual exploration in greater depth. Students are expected to complete the specified readings by each Politics and Development faculty session and to reference readings in discussions as well as essays. In addition, students are encouraged to make use of thematic readings and IHP in-country libraries and to investigate local resources, including news media. Reading newspapers regularly in each city offers a valuable resource for understanding current issues and debates. Students are also encouraged to use individual initiative to find supplementary resources.

Course Policies
Attendance and Participation: All students are expected to be present at every program 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 IHP 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.

Assessment
Students will be assessed on individual class participation, one group case study and presentation and two individual projects. These four legs as a whole will constitute your final grade. In all written work, standard essay format is expected: title, introduction, body, conclusion, works cited. All references must be cited using an accepted academic style. Essays should be organized and logically argued; use proper grammar and spelling.

Class participation (10%): Assessment of participation is based on the level of engagement during course activities. Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Missing or being late to class will negatively affect your participation assessment. What do I qualify as “good” participation? It means active participation: think about what you have been experiencing; listen to the comments of others and help in the production of a collective dialogue; make comments that relate to the readings and field experiences. In order to participate in discussions, students must complete all assigned readings prior to each faculty session and come to class prepared to discuss or to reference readings: be prepared to speak for several minutes about what you found most interesting, important, or challenging about the reading assignment.

Group Case Study and Presentation (30%):  
(Scheduled for Sao Paulo)
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 the underlying reasons for certain conditions. Students will divide into groups to explore and compare issues of significance in Sao Paulo. Students will analyze and present the topics that fall under the wider framework of “urban social movements in Sao Paulo,” using what they have learned through a lens of P&D. Students will explore the tools and tactics used by social movements to claim for their demands, and see how successful they have proven to be. They will examine the present constraints and how social dynamics of urban movements have changed or not throughout time. The case study grade in Sao Paulo counts toward each student’s individual P&D course grade, but is awarded according to presentation group—all members of a case study team receive the same grade for their Sao Paulo presentation. Students will receive feed-back from all faculty and the country coordinator, but the grade for this case study is the responsibility of the P&D instructor.

* This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester. In addition, considerations of student safety may change some course content.
Individual Project 1 (30%): (Scheduled for Cape Town)
Observing and mapping segregation: With this case study you try to observe and depict how racial, economic, class differences are translated into urban formations (i.e. neighborhoods, gated communities, security measures, policing, transportation and urban planning. This will give you a great opportunity to draw parallels and observe differences between U.S. cities and the cities in global South. The remnants of apartheid and reshaping process of Cape Town throughout the post-apartheid neoliberal period will provide you with a very rich set of urban phenomena for investigating how inequalities, exclusions and reform shape and be shaped by urban structure.

Individual Project 2 (Self-assessment, 30%): (Scheduled for Ahmedabad)
Urban renewal for whom? Observe and analyze gentrification and urban renewal projects you encounter in Ahmedabad. For instance, to what purpose rehabilitating the “old city” serve? What could be the alternative purposes for rehabilitation? How do notions like “world city” or increasing the urban appeal work for tourism? Is tourism the only method of reviving the urban economy? Also, question the notion of tourism itself as a business form, economic behavior and leisure activity. Does increasing consumption of spaces and goods provide a viable solution for contemporary urban problems? Could we contemplate on alternative forms of tourism? The grading for this assignment will be a self-assessment. Guidelines for self-assessment will be provided during the semester.

**New York, USA**

**Session 1: Neoliberalism as a political and urban process**

*The global transformation of the political and economic infrastructure of the last two decades has had a profound impact in the structure and organization of cities throughout the world. In this session, we will discuss some of the intellectual and political foundations of these transformations as a basic framework that will inform our conversations during the semester.*

**Required Reading:**

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Further/Recommended Reading:


Sao Paulo, Brazil

Session 2: Citizenship and politics in neoliberal city

Is there an owner of the city? Who is a citizen and who determines the past, present and future of cities? The recent neoliberal transformations have highlighted the tension between the perceived roles of what cities “should be” and the desires of the type of city “we want.” The promise of the city is expressed through the claims of citizenship.

Required Reading:


Further/Recommended Reading:

criticized based on contemporary forms of national and urban belonging)


Session 3: Challenging the neoliberal citizenship

People are not simply hapless victims of economic and political forces. In this session, we will discuss how residents of marginalized neighborhoods (and their allies) are crafting strategies not only to improve immediate living conditions, but also challenge the process that made their predicament a “common occurrence” or a “natural” by-product of urban life. We will inquire whether a more democratic city is possible.

Required Reading:


Further/Recommended Reading:


Session 4: Reclaiming the urban commons

Most accumulation attempts by private companies in cities today resemble the “entrenchment” activities in the 18th Century England. Enclosure of commonly used pastures and grazing lands marked a significant era of
transferring public land and goods to private property. Today, similar attempts to privatize water, parks, fisheries, public buildings etc. characterize the neoliberal transformation of urban sites. However, the struggle for “urban commons” and reclaiming what is publicly owned and enjoyed is also on the rise, globally. Can the city be imagined as a common? Do non-commodified methods exercised by communities to satisfy social needs pose a constitutive alternative against the arrangements devised by market forces? Can we go beyond fighting for rights only and begin constructing urban lives based on solidarity and mutual aid?

**Required Reading:**

**Further/Recommended Reading:**
Stavrides, S. “Brazilian Urban Movements ‘Re-inventing’ the City as Collectively Produced ‘Common’” (Unpublished Manuscript)
Blomley, N. 2008. “Enclosure, common right and the property of the poor”, *Social & Legal Studies*, 17, 311-331. (A discussion on how commons complicate the notion of property. Extensive reference to Vancouver example)

**Session 5: Political economy of cities: Back to macro level**

*Urban spaces are material expressions of political and economic forces. The desire to build competitive/global/world-class cities requires particular forms of governance (i.e. logic and scope of institutional organization and action) that express a ‘common sense’ of the expectations of what the city should be, should do, and for whom. In this session we will establish a political economy lens through which we examine São Paulo, by locating the city in a broader context of state power and governance.*

**Required Reading:**

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other generalizing approaches in urban studies. In favor of more particularistic and detailed analyses)

**Further/Recommended Reading:**


**Cape Town, South Africa**

**Session 6: Managing inequalities and crime in the neoliberal city**

There is a long history of attempts to “manage” (or erase) the deep-seated forms and structures of inequality. However, as inequality continues to make the built environment criminalization of the excluded and policing of desirable spaces is taking center stage as a way of diverting our attention. In South Africa, the legacy of Apartheid adds a layer to the inequalities that shape daily life. This is what Patrick Bond described as the transformation from “racial to class Apartheid”.

**Required Reading:**


**Further/Recommended Reading:**


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Session 7: Everyday life and the right to the city

Moving from macro to micro level of analysis, in this session, we will begin thinking about the ‘right to the city’ as a conceptual and political framework for and how daily life issues provide us with particular insights for action. We will try to make sense of concepts and ideas we discussed before, such as citizenship, struggle for urban commons, and right to the city, by referring to our learning experience in Cape Town.

Required Reading:

Further/Recommended Reading:

Session 8: Rearranging/dividing the urban space: Politics of gentrification, race, and class

South Africa is a perfect case for complicating our understanding spatial inequalities created by neoliberal urban designs. In this session, we will explore how post-apartheid visions for rearranging the urban space were imposed on apartheid politics of urban divisions. The intersection of class and race in the South African case will lead us towards a better understanding of the political economy of the cities of global south in general and Indian cities in particular.

Required Reading:

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Further/Recommended Reading:


Ahmedabad, India

Session 9: Producing social/spatial inequality: space and class:

One of the common threads that unite all cities we have visited is the ways in which the built environment expresses social inequalities. In this session we will further discuss how the logic of capital (accumulation) produce and perpetuate social inequality not only socially but also spatially in the Indian urban context.

Required Reading:


Further/Recommended Reading:


Session 10: Composition of the new urban workforce: How class needs and preferences shape cities in India.

As needs and preferences of the working classes – both in manufacturing and service sectors – put pressure on governance and redesign of urban centers, policy makers are struggling to invent and deliver by introducing notions such as “world cities” or “cities with appeal.” Not without contradictions and conflict, new economies, such as tourism, leisure and increasing consumption that support new urban lifestyle are promoted by the decision-making elite.
Course Syllabus

**Required Reading:**


**Further/Recommended Reading:**


**Session 11: The struggle and the promise of democratic cities**

After 4 months and 4 cities, the question remains, what can we do with all that we’ve learned and experienced? Are we more hopeful or pessimistic about the role of cities in shaping the kind of society we want? What kind of cities do we want? The city we want may or may not share the principles, processes and/or outcomes of the people you met during the semester. How do we negotiate that? And, probably most important, where do we stand/fit in these processes?

**Required Reading:**


**Further reading:**

