Course Syllabus

Culture and Society of World Cities (C&S)

ANTH-3500 (4 Credits / 60 class hours)
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International Honors Program (IHP)
Cities in the 21st Century

Course Description

This course examines the many ways people make urban life meaningful. What are the historical, political-economic, and socio-cultural contexts that frame the opportunities, constraints, and uncertainties of urban life? How, in those contexts, do people create a sense of place? Our study of social and cultural urban processes emphasizes the relationship of space to identity and power. The course examines aspects of identity, including race and ethnicity, gender, class, family, community, and citizenship. In each city, we will grapple with conflicts, struggles, and celebrations that are embedded in and emerge from specific historical, socio-economic, and political contexts. We will examine cities as physical and imagined spaces, exploring how spatial and social life are mutually shaped, and how the meanings of cities are multiple and contested by different groups and actors with often incompatible agendas.

The purpose of this course is twofold: a) to introduce students to analytical and methodological tools for studying cultural and social dimensions of urban life, and b) to explore articulations of politics, socio-economics, identity and culture that are ethnographically located in particular urban contexts, yet resonate theoretically toward a comparative understanding of cities and urban life.

Methodology

Through readings, oral presentations, and class discussions we will explore how, over time, anthropologists and other social scientists have adapted research methods and theoretical perspectives to understand local, regional, national, transnational, and global processes that converge (and diverge) in cities. Acknowledging cultural diversity and the various perspectives and assumptions about the world and its inhabitants is a crucial dimension of the anthropological
lens. Students will be strongly encouraged to recognise their own cultural assumptions and to take distance from them in order to make space for different ways of being in and imagining the world. Through written assignments students will be introduced to qualitative research methods, including ethnography or participant observation, which offer important tools for a comparative study of urban life. How do we learn from everyday life, careful observations of urban expressions and social interactions in specific urban spaces, and the stories people tell about themselves and their city? An ethnographic lens allows us to study detailed, local accounts of city life, while a comparative lens enables us to understand urban processes from a diversity of perspectives and experiences that characterize urbanism.

Materials
Required readings, compiled in individual course folders, will be available on dropbox throughout the semester. Thematic readings, to be posted on dropbox, are provided for further reference and to understand an issue in more depth. Students are expected to complete required readings before C & S faculty sessions and to use readings for reference 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. Please keep in mind that the reading assignments may be updated during the semester.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to
- Describe spatial expressions of social, political, and economic processes
- Discuss cultural processes of identity formation within the analytical frame of historical colonial / global processes.
- Compare and contrast social configurations of class, race and gender in different urban contexts;
- Apply qualitative research tools to undertake ethnographic research in intercultural settings and engage with local peoples and institutions in reflexive and substantive ways;
Course Schedule

NEW YORK, USA  10 January – 23 January 2016

Session 1 — Introducing Culture, Identity & Difference in Globalization (the politics of difference)

The purpose of this introductory session is to establish basic common grounds discussing the main key concepts and questions that will frame our conversations throughout the semester: what is globalization? How did it change old global interconnections? How can we approach the study of cultural dynamics of globalization in the context of asymmetrical power relations? How to understand the relation between culture and space?


Further reading:

AHMEDABAD, INDIA  25 January – 21 February 2016

Session 2—Colonialism, Modernity: a broad historical frame to outline key issues of nation-making and citizenship in the global south.

To add texture and historical depth to our introductory conversation on globalization, the purpose of this session is to provide students with a broad and general timeline on the history of European colonial expansion and the parallel development of modernity and capitalism. The discussion of Chatterjee’s ideas about ‘the rule of colonial difference’ will also allow us to propose a conceptual frame to explore constructions of identity and difference in the global south.


Further Reading:
Session 3 – Gender, Caste and Class in contemporary India
Is there any relation between caste and class? Do gender relations / tensions vary according to class, or caste? What are the local configurations of gender, caste and class identities? How do these local configurations change (or don’t) in the context of globalization? These are the kinds of questions we will address in this session as a way of providing students with references to understand key markers of identity and difference in Ahmedabad


Further Reading:

Session 4 – Space – Place and Conflict (the politics of space)
Since independence (1947) and the partition between India and Pakistan, conflicts between Muslims and Hindus have constantly erupted (in more or less violent ways) in Ahmedabad. While exploring the different forms these conflicts have taken in the last 20 years, we will address issues related to the politics of space and difference


Further Reading

ASSIGNMENT ➔ Sense of place, reading gender or ethnic relations / tensions in public or private spaces. Due Feb 8

SAO PAOLO, BRAZIL

23 February – 28 March 2016

Session 5 – Race and Class: nation making and regional identities (the politics of race)
While all processes of nation building after independence have involved racialized representations of social differences, particularly in the Americas, different countries have developed different discourses on race throughout their history. In this session we will briefly discuss Brazilian discourses on race and focus on the meanings and implications of what is known as ‘racial democracy’


Further Reading:

**Session 6— Urban violence, social mobilization and notions of rights (the politics of rights)**

Further reading:
• Dunford, Robin Frederick & Sumi Madhok. 2015. Vernacular rights cultures and the ‘Right to Have Rights.’ Citizenship Studies, 2015, 1-15

**Session 7— Urban struggles and contested meanings of the public**

Further Readings:

**Session 8- Development and its discontents**
• Ferguson, James 1994 The Anti-Politics Machine “development” and bureaucratic power in Lesotho. The Ecologist, 24 (5): 176-181
Further Reading:


**ASSIGNMENT** → *Urban struggles, meanings of citizenship and inequality in the city - Case Study  Group oral presentation on March 18*

**CAPE TOWN, SOUTH-AFRICA** 29 March – 1 May 2016

Session 9— Apartheid Legacies and post-apartheid changes: issues of citizenship (the politics of citizenship)

*One of the long last ing effects of the Apartheid system in South Africa was the racial segregation of space. How to address the issue / promise of equal citizenship in the context of racially segregated spaces is the question that will frame our conversation in our sessions in Cape Town.*


Further reading:


Session 10— Urban inequalities and segregations: old issues new challenges


Further Reading:


Session 11— Urban struggles, race, and citizenship: insurgency, protest and forms of resistance


Further Reading
• Mbembe, Achille 2015. Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive. Transcription of talk series
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhN_GzCbH0I

ASSIGNMENT ➔: Current forms of urban protest: old and new challenges – Due on April 15
Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments and Assessment
1. Program Participation (10%)
   Students are expected to participate in all field visits and faculty and guest lectures. Participation means engaging guests, faculty, and fellow students during all activities as well as completing all assigned readings before each faculty session.

2. Oral Presentations (10%)
   Discussion leaders: for most class sessions, two or three students will be assigned in advance to lead a class discussion about the session’s readings for 20 – 25 minutes. Be prepared to speak for 5 to 8 minutes about what you found most interesting, important or challenging about the assigned readings and how it relates to other lectures, site visits, and experiences. Prepare a couple of critical questions about the assigned readings to discuss with the class for 15 – 20 minutes.

3. Ahmedabad: Sense of place, reading gender or ethnic relations / tensions in public or private spaces - (25%) - Due: Feb 8
   The purpose of this assignment is to develop your ethnographic skills through careful observation and mapping of space as well as critical, analytical thinking. The assignment includes an annotated floor plan and an essay (800 words; 12pt font, 1.5 line space) addressing the following questions:
   1) How do the organization and use of space in a specific space (a section of a market, a public park, a mall, your host family house, etc.) express a) different gender or ethnic roles and b) gender or ethnic relations and tensions?
   2) How are gender or ethnic identities and differences negotiated, contested, voiced or silenced through the different ways in which different people use (or don’t use) certain spaces?
   Evoke the place/people through detailed and specific descriptive writing. Ensure that you develop an interpretation, with evidence. Use the readings and class discussion from session 2 (Gender, caste and class) or from session 3 (Space – place and conflict) to frame your analysis. More detailed instructions may be handed out in class nearer the assignment deadline.

3 Sao Paolo: Urban struggles, meanings of citizenship and inequality in the city - GROUP CASE STUDY with C&S lens (25%) Oral presentation on March 18
   A case study is an in-depth look at a particular topic or area of interest. In this case study your group will explore how people organize collectively to struggle against inequality in the city by focusing on the different ways in which different social movements or grassroots organizations challenge mechanisms of exclusion, discrimination or unequal access to urban services. For this project you will choose a specific grassroots organization / movement and explore a) their organizational history; b) the strategies they deploy; c) their perceptions of social justice / injustice and of citizenship rights; and d) their role / position in the city / neighborhood (or in relation to their constituency). Several days will be devoted to this project. Case studies typically begin with a briefing, followed by two days of fieldwork in small groups, reflection – which includes application & incorporation of scholarly materials into your analysis - and culminates in group presentations. In Sao Paolo students will analyze and present what they have learned through a C&S lens. The case study (group) grade counts as your individual C&S grade for Sao Paolo. Peer
responses to the presentations offer commentary but do not form part of the official final grade for the case study. More detailed instructions will be handed out during the case study briefing.

4. Cape Town: Current forms of urban protest: old and new challenges (30%) – Due April 15-
Building on what you learned from the case study, for this assignment you will choose one of the recent forms of protest / resistance in Cape Town and explore and reflect on its implications and significance. You will have TWO conversations (one with somebody involved in the movement and one with somebody not involved) about the recent protest you chose. In your essay (1000 words, 12pt font, 1.5 line space) you will briefly describe the protest / movement, introduce the people you interviewed, analyze their different perceptions and reflect on the implications and significance of this protest / movement in relation to either the movement you studied in Sao Paolo or a movement you are familiar with in the States. More detailed instructions will be handed out in class nearer the assignment due date.

In all written work, standard essay format is expected: title, introduction, body, conclusion, works cited, etc. All references must be cited. Essays should be well-organized with attention to grammar and spelling. Faculty will give grades in the form of points and will return assignments with written comments.

Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>90-93%</td>
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<td>87-89%</td>
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<td>below 64</td>
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Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner. Late work: In keeping with IHP policy, papers handed in late will drop one point per day. After 3 days the paper will not be accepted unless permission is granted by faculty AND Program Director. Course assignments are due at the beginning of the day, unless specified otherwise.
• Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
• Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
• Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.