



## Urbanization and Public Health

IPBH-3500 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

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

Please Note: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### Course Description

Over three million people reside in Nairobi and over five hundred thousand in Kisumu and in both cities half of the residents live in informal slum conditions. Slum dwellers generally lack basic services such as running water, sanitation, access to safe and reliable transportation and live in dilapidated housing at great costs to their human dignity, health and well-being. They feel insecure and marginalized and they constantly live under the threat of evictions. Images of urban Africa largely focus on degenerated slums conditions, and yet luxury housing and gated communities grow exponentially in Kenya's cities, providing a stark contrast to the precariousness in informal slum settlements. With more Kenyans moving to urban areas, and with this startling inequality, the public health challenges associated with insufficient slum infrastructure in the face of rising inequality are becoming more acute. The Urbanization and Public Health seminar is focused on the intersection between housing, the environment and public health in Kenya. This course examines the effects of rapid urbanization on the equity and access to health and how the built environment and property regimes affect public health outcomes in Kenya's urban areas. Kenya's largest and third largest cities – Nairobi and Kisumu – provide the case studies for this course, and in many ways exemplify public health challenges presented by urbanization in many other parts of the world.

### Learning Outcomes

By the completion of Urbanization and Public Health seminar, students will be expected to:

- Identify policies and practices of urban planning in colonial cities and their continuing ramifications on public health;
- Discuss the histories and present-day challenges of the informal settlements of Kisumu and Kibera 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 and public health as they intersect with processes of social, economic and political change.

## **Methods of Instruction**

This course is delivered through a series of carefully planned field visits and assignments. Lectures help students to place the various issues that they encounter within a broader historical, social and political context, as they help students to explore those issues in greater depth. Assigned reading and critical reflection sessions with the academic director help to draw out critical learning lessons and generate more questions. Students are responsible for all 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 knowledge of issues encountered on site visits.

### *Course Schedule*

## **Module 1: Introduction to Urbanization and Public Health:**

Equity, access and public health outcomes are products of place of residence and social class. This module investigates settlement patterns and how these affect access to and utilization of health infrastructure and health outcomes in Kisumu City. A tour of Kisumu city introduces students to the spatial distribution of social amenities and their historical relations to social class and race. Students explore drivers of urbanization from the perspective of city planners and local people, how settlement patterns affect health outcomes, and then assess the measures that urban authorities have taken to mitigate the effects of rapid urbanization and its public health dimensions.

### *Assigned Reading:*

- Curtin, Philip (1985) Medical Knowledge and Urban Planning in Tropical Africa. *American Historical Review* 90(3): 594 – 613
- Fumtim, Joseph (2010) Building Cities for and by the people: The Right to the City in Africa in *Cities for All: Proposals and Experiences toward the Right to the City*. Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet, Eds. Habitat International Coalition: Santiago, 195 – 200.
- Mbembe, Achille and Sarah Nutall (2004) Writing the World from an African Metropolis. *Public Culture* 16 (3): 347 – 372.
- Mitullah, W. and Kibwana, K. (1998) 'A Tale of Two Cities: Policy, Law and Illegal Settlements in Kenya. In Fernandes, E. and Varley, A. (Eds.) *Illegal Cities: Law and Urban Change in Developing Countries*. London: Zed Books.

## **Module 2: Property Rights in an Urban Setting and Implications for Public Health**

Land is a politically charged issue in Kenya and processes of urbanization established added frontiers for contestation. How have the historical shifts of property regimes (access to land, capital, water) in Kisumu shaped equity and access to health? How does social class shape the right to the city and how does the right to the city in turn affect the physical organization of health amenities and human rights? What possibilities exist for the urban poor to address their marginalization? This module draws on a case study in Ubunga community in Kisumu through which students explore the combined effects of foreign capital inflows and commercialization of fishing on local employment, the local fishing industry, health and nutrition.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Huchzermeyer, M. (2009) Enumeration as a grassroots tool towards securing tenure in slums: insights from Kisumu, Kenya. *Urban Forum* 20: 271 – 292.
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2011) *Cities with 'Slums': From Slum Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa*. Juta/UCT Press, Cape Town. <http://uctpress.bookslive.co.za/blog/2011/10/19/marie-huchzermeyer-studies-informal-settlement-eradication-in-cities-with-slums/>
- Marcuse, Peter (2010) Rights in Cities and the Right to the City? in *Cities for All: Proposals and Experiences toward the Right to the City*, Ana Sugeranyes and Charlotte Mathivet, Eds. Habitat International Coalition: Santiago, 87 – 98.
- UN Habitat. 2008. *The State of African Cities: A Framework for Addressing Urban Challenges in Africa*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat). Introduction and Chapter 1: IV – 35.
- Movie: Mauriat, E., & Sauper, H. (2004). *Darwin's nightmare*. [New York, N.Y.]: International Film Circuit, Inc.

### **Module 3: Development, Displacement and Public Health**

This module employs a series of case studies to draw students' attention to and examine how contemporary global capital flows combine with industrialization to shape employment and public health outcomes.

*Case Study 1 – Lake Victoria and the Nile Hydro politics (a local issue of global interest):* A regional resource turned to “Regional toilet” due to rapid urbanization in the basin which empties its waste into the Lake Victoria.

*Case Study 2 – Visit to Homalime Company –* A community with rich colonial history linked to the growth of Koru town. Picnic lunch at the “old” farm house now turned guest house.

*Case Study 3 – Visit Muhoroni Sugar Company –* Linked to the process of land redistribution and introduction of commercial farming to local communities in the post independent Kenya and also linked to the growth of Muhoroni town and small scale sugarcane farming (Field based).

*Case Study 4 – Visit Kericho Tea Factory and Farm –* Review the influence of the tea factories and farms on Kericho town. Appraise the living conditions for tea workers and learn about their rights including access to health.

*Case Study 5 – Visit Kisii Town* to appreciate the rapid growth associated with indigenous residents who stay in the diaspora. Look at the soapstone industry and its influence on the town. Understand the depth of gender violence and advocacy.

### **Module 4: Public Health and Human Rights in Nairobi City**

This module consists of classes that will be taught at the American University's Center in Nairobi and field visits to various NGOs and Community Based Organizations.

*Case Study 1: Mathare/Kibera:* Migration, displacement and public health (how communities adapt and adopt). Urbanization challenges brought about by the rise of informal settlements.

*Case Study 2: Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA):* 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.

*Case Study 3: Nairobi National Park:* During this visit, the students explore the contentious co-existence of human settlement and wildlife management.

*Case Study 4—Women Fighting Aids in Kenya (WOFAK):* Students explore the challenges of accessibility to HIV/AIDS treatment and the role of community health workers.

*Case Study 5—Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO):* Community health service provision challenges.

*Case Study 6—Health Rights Advocacy Forum (HERAF):* Examine the challenges faced by health rights lobbyists in some of their current programs and learn some key lessons of health advocacy.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Gathanju, Deni (2009) Nairobi Redraws its Planning Strategy. *Planning* 75 97: 28 – 31.
- Gulyani, Sumila (2008) Slum Real Estate: The Low-Quality High-Price Puzzle in Nairobi's Slum Rental Market and its Implications for Theory and Practice. *World Development* 36(10): 1916 – 1937.
- Hendriks, B. (2010). City-Wide Governance Networks in Nairobi: towards contributions to political rights, influence and service delivery for poor and middle-class citizens? *Habitat International* 34(1): 59 – 77.
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2007) Tenement city: The emergence of multi-storey districts through large scale private landlordism in Nairobi. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31 (4), 714 – 732.
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2008) Slum upgrading in Nairobi within the housing and basic services market: A housing rights concern. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43(1): 19 – 39.
- Kamau, P. K. (2010). *Factors that Affect Self-Build Housing in Nairobi Kenya*. VDM Verlag.
- Omenya, A. and Huchzermeyer, M. (2006) Slum Upgrading in the complex context of political change: The case of Nairobi in Huchzermeyer, M. and Karam, A. (Eds.) *Informal Settlements A Perpetual Challenge* Juta/UCT Press, Cape Town.
- Otieno Opiyo, Romanus and Onyango Oyugi, Maurice. (2010). The Dialectics of Sustainable Neighborhood Development for Nairobi's Kibera Informal Settlement. *The IUP Journal of Architecture* 2(1): 19 – 46.
- White, Luise (1983). A Colonial State and an African Petty Bourgeoisie: Prostitution, Property and Class Struggle in Nairobi, 1936-1940. In *Struggle for the City*, Frederick Cooper, (Ed.), Beverly Hills: Sage, 167 – 195.

## **Module 5: Urbanization and Public Health in Rwanda.**

How does Rwanda's urbanization and health policy compare with Kenya's urbanization and public health policies? What are the pros and cons of each and what explains their similarities and differences? Students will visit genocide memorials to obtain insights into the history of genocide and through this explore how this history has informed Rwanda's urbanization and public health policy approaches and perspectives. Students explore these issues through visits to the Rwanda Development Board and the Kigali City Council Planning Department where students learn more about the country's urbanization vision.

*Assigned Reading:*

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 seminar will be comprised of the following assessments:

- I. Synthesis Paper 40%
- II. Mapping Project 30%
- III. Theory/Practice Reflections 20%
- IV. Participation 10%

**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/internship and/or make sense of your ISP/internship 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 Nairobi 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 two 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:**

- 94-100% A
- 90-93% A-
- 87-89% B+
- 84-86% B
- 80-83% B-
- 77-79% C+

74-76% C  
70-73% C-  
67-69% D+  
64-66% D  
Below 64 F

### **Grading Criteria**

An “A” grade 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 respectful 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.

### **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.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.