

## Urban Politics and Development (P&D) DVST 3500 (4 credits)

### International Honors Program (IHP) IHP Cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: People, Planning, Politics

*This syllabus is representative of a typical 3-country program. Note that program locations may change due to Covid-19 precautions. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

*...it takes a lot of things to change the world:*

*Anger and tenacity. Science and indignation, The quick initiative, the long reflection,*

*The cold patience and the infinite perseverance,*

*The understanding of the particular case and the understanding of the ensemble: Only the lesson of reality can teach us to transform reality*

*Bertolt Brecht*

#### Course Description

The Urban Politics and Development course is designed to equip you to understand how the cities we study have developed as they have, and to critically engage with the challenges which they face. In the course of the semester, we will pay particular attention to these guiding questions:

- What economic, social, and political factors (local, national, and international) shape the development/organization of unequal 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/should be?
- How are people constructing alternatives in their daily practices that aim to re-define the terms of the type of city they/we want?

In order to understand how global historical processes have been shaping the cities we will visit, this course will focus on the current expression of global capitalism. Particularly, we will emphasize the types of *political frameworks* deployed to naturalize and justify current notions of (urban) *development*. While we will discuss a variety of issues during the semester (social and spatial inequalities, governance, insurgency, citizenship, 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 and critically assessing promises, failures, and possibilities. In this sense, this course will provide broad frames of analysis that will help us ask questions and understand that forms of social inequality and barriers for people to improve the basic living conditions are not natural occurrences but deeply contested processes that we hope will permit you to ‘read’ beyond the surface. Similarly, we will explore the motivations and implications of insurgent actions in efforts to build more just and equitable cities. The goal is not necessarily ‘finding *the* solution’, but to understand the historical complexity of the problems and the strategies and practices people deploy.

### *Understanding Urban/ Global Inequality and Insurgency*

We live in times of astounding wealth production and grotesque social and economic inequities. According to the director of OXFAM International, 42 individuals control the same amount of wealth as 3.7 billion people (Byanyima, 2018). About 22% of the world population live on less than \$1.90 per day, considered extreme poverty (World Bank, 2014). This is not limited to the ‘global south’. In the United States, 43.1 million people (13.5% of the population) do not have enough resources to have access to basic necessities according to the 2015 census. We also live in times in which mainstream political narratives have difficulty explaining the persistence of inequalities. In spite of the evidence of a political economy that benefits and privileges certain sectors of society, we still believe on the imaginaries of benevolent globalization, responsive institutions, participatory (liberal) democracy, and the endless opportunities of capitalism (de Sousa Santos, 2017). If we want to live in more just and equitable cities, we need to better understand the historical and structural causes (and material outcomes) of global inequities, and the underlying logic that informs the reproduction of narratives and political institutions that insist there are no alternatives. In order to understand why and how this has been happening we cannot rely simply on the current ‘façade’ of cities, but need to understand the historical processes and forces that shaped cities.

In addition to the analysis of the social/spatial (re)production of inequalities, this course aims to highlight and explore the variety of political and economic alternatives which are being practiced around the world. These range from broad bold ideas to build a different world, institutional reconfigurations, and radical practices. These practices –ranging from holding government accountable to their constitutional mandates to challenging the status quo through occupation of abandoned buildings– come from people that because of their situation or condition have been forced to develop creative alternative practices for managing their resources, spaces and communities. (Simone & Pieterse, 2017). As such, cities are not only important sites for discussing social and economic dynamics across the planet, but also sites from which residents challenge the current political and economic order: the demands for truly inclusive and democratic forms of citizenship; the inherent promise of cities to access to collective consumption goods/services; and the everyday practices that inform alternative urban spaces. These are some of the basic frameworks that allow us to locate cities such as São Paulo, Barcelona, and Cape Town both in terms of issues that connect them and those that make them unique.

### **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 and challenges everyone else to learn. The readings are designed as a springboard to frame in-class discussions about what we experience in a particular city. The course aims to make the most of the richness and variety of the classroom and experiential learning opportunities. The assignments involve looking at particular political and social issues in the cities visited as a way for gathering and analyzing primary data from field sources.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The Urban Politics and Development course comprises 16.5 classroom hours of instruction (4 credits). The total amount of classroom hours will be complemented with neighborhood and site visits, debriefings, and synthesis sessions that will allow us to connect formal classroom discussions with your own experiences. This is what we call **experiential learning**. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- To **build an analytical framework** in order to discuss how intellectual current of analysis that become a

political project, and how political projects that become common sense have material implications in the spatial/social organization of cities --or the normative ideals of what cities should be and do.

- To learn to critically understand how seemingly ‘marginal’, ‘radical’ or “innocuous” **practices provide powerful insights into thinking about alternative** policy/political frameworks.
- 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 **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 to outcomes** in order to formulate one’s own position on course-related concepts, including development, democracy, and citizenship.
- To **interrogate our political positionality** as we learn about the choices and challenges other actors face in their particular historical contexts. This means that while we are learning about “others” we are aiming to draw lessons about our own social contexts.

### Course Materials

Required readings are available to students via Moodle. 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 (available upon request) and IHP in-country libraries and to investigate local resources, including news media. Reading newspapers (English-language resources included in CUI syllabus) regularly in each city offers a valuable resource for understanding current issues and debates. Students are also encouraged to find supplementary resources.

### Assignments

**São Paulo → the (re)production of inequities (25%).** As you are beginning to focus and fine-tune your CA research topic, one issue that you will need to consider in most research project is the connections between processes – actors – material/spatial outcomes. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the (re)production of inequalities in São Paulo in relation to a particular issue in the particular sites we visited.

**Barcelona → between radical practices and democratic governance (30%).** Some of the interesting things about Barcelona has been the history of insurgency, radical practices and cultural centers in the process that lead to current municipal arrangement. On this case study you will reflect on the type of urban governance taking shape in Barcelona, and the implications of radical practices.

**Cape Town → inequalities and insurgencies (35%).** In São Paulo, Barcelona and Cape Town we have witnessed how specific histories of each city reflect particular forms of inequities. Similarly, forms of insurgency reflect particularities of each city in terms of narratives, practices, views of institutions, political tensions and outcomes. In this comprehensive exam you will address a series of questions that aim to connect what we read with what you witnessed/experience during the semester.

**Class participation (10%):** Assessment of participation is based on the level of engagement during course activities. Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Showing up receives the minimum passing participation grade. Missing or being late to class will negatively affect your participation assessment. What qualifies as “good” participation? The short answer is intellectual engagement. This means active participation: critically reflective (think about what you have been experiencing), be intellectually present (listen to the comments of others and help in the production of a collective dialogue), and dynamically

interactive (comments that relate to the readings and experiences).

### **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

## **SESSIONS AND READINGS**

### **Introduction**

**Session 1:** Introduction to studying urban inequities.

*The global transformation of the political and economic infrastructure has had a profound impact in the structure and organization of cities throughout the world. In this session, we will connect two seemingly disconnected processes: the transformation of many areas of NYC into attractive centers of consumption and entertainment, and the implications for those left outside of the imaginary of leisure urban consumption. In this session, we will present some of the main guiding ideas that will guide our discussions during the semester will be presented: inequalities and inequities; capitalism and its relation to urban space, the implications of (post)Fordism on urban transformations.*

- Harvey, David. 2007. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Lang, Steven and Julia Rothenberg. 2017. "Neoliberal urbanism, public space, and the greening of the growth machine: New York City's High Line park" *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*. Vol. 49, No. 8, Pp. 1743-1761.

### **São Paulo**

São Paulo is the largest city and financial capital of one of the most unequal countries on the planet. The sessions in São Paulo address the following questions:

- What have been the historical process that shaped the (re)production of inequalities on the global south?
- What have been the spatial/social manifestations of these historical processes in São Paulo?
- What have been the strategies of those living with the negative consequences of inequalities to gain better living conditions?

**Session 2:** Cities of the 'global south' in context

*As you will experience during the semester, cities of the 'global south' share many similarities with US and European cities. However, there are also historical particularities that define each city. In this session, we will build from the discussion on the transformation to a post-fordist (1970s) system of production as a way to establish some of the common trends (policies, actors, etc.) that have shaped cities in the so-called global south or third world.*

- McFarlane, Colin. 2011. “Translating policy”. In *Learning the City: Knowledge and Translocal Assemblage*. Wiley-Blackwell. Pp. 117-121.
- Caldeira, Teresa. 2008. “From modernism to neoliberalism in São Paulo: reconfiguring the city and its citizens”. In A. Huyssen (ed.) *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*. Duke University Press. Pp. 51-78.

Further reading:

- Amin, Ash. 2013. “Telescopic urbanism and the poor” *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*. Vol. 17, No. 4, Pp. 476-492.
- Schindler, Seth. 2017. “Towards a paradigm of Southern urbanism”. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*. Vol. 21, No. 1, Pp. 1-18.

**Session 3:** Producing social/spatial inequality: space and class

*One of the common threads that unites all cities we are visiting is the ways in which the built environment expresses and (re)produces social inequalities. While in the previous sessions we discussed macro processes, in this session we will focus on how social/spatial inequalities are produced. Specifically, we will look through the lens of monopoly rent to discuss how the logic of capital (accumulation) produces and perpetuates social and spatial inequities.*

- Harvey, David. 2012. “The art of rent”. In *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Verso. Pp. 89-112.
- Villaça, Flávio. “São Paulo: Urban segregation and inequality”. *Estudos Avançados*. No.71, Pp. 37-58.

Further reading:

- Não repara a bagunça → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3Zwjs7WqIQ>
- Israel, Emil & Amnon Frenkel. 2018. “Social justice and spatial inequality: Toward a conceptual framework”. *Progress in Human Geography*. Vol. 42, No. 5, Pp. 647-665.
- Slater, Tom. 2017. “Planetary rent gaps”. *Antipode*. Vol. 49 No. S1, Pp. 114–137.

**Session 4:** Challenging social/spatial inequities

*People are not simply hapless victims of economic and political forces. Residents of marginalized and impoverished 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. In this session, we will discuss how these actors deploy narratives of citizenship as a strategy to justify their actions, but also force government institutions to live up to their mandates.*

- Dagnino, Evelina. 2007. “Citizenship: A perverse confluence”. *Development in Practice*. Vol. 17, No. 4/5, Pp. 549-556.
- Earle, Lucy. 2012. “From insurgent to transgressive citizenship: housing, social movements and the politics of rights in São Paulo”. *Journal of Latin American Studies*. Vol. 44, No. 1, Pp. 97-126.
- Caldeira, Teresa. 2015. “Social movements, cultural production, and protests: São Paulo’s shifting political landscape”. *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 56, Supplement 11, Pp. S126-S136.

Further reading:

- da Silva Andrade, Luciana & João Paulo Huguenin. 2017. “Between street and home: Mobility, housing, and the 2013 demonstrations in Brazil”. In J. Hou and S. Knierbein (eds.). *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space in the Age of Shrinking Democracy* . Routledge. Pp. 19-29.
- Watts, Jonathan. 2017. “Resistance! São Paulo's homeless seize the city”. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/nov/27/resistance-sao-paulo-homeless-reclaim-city-occupations>
- Alonso, Angela & Ann Mische. 2017. “Changing repertoires and partisan ambivalence in the new Brazilian protests”. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. Vol. 36, No. 2, Pp. 144–159.

**PAPER DUE**

**Barcelona**

Barcelona became a world-renowned city after hosting the 1992 Olympics and the development of what became the ‘Barcelona model’ of urban development. This urban governance model became a benchmark urban marketing and attracting investment. Simultaneously, the city became an important center of radical practices that have permeated how the municipal government functions. In the Barcelona sessions we will address the following questions:

- What was/is the ‘Barcelona model’ about and how it relates to a particular form of urban governance?
- How radical/insurgent practices came about and what have been the outcomes of these practices?
- How social centers became important places in the organization of social actions and new ways of engaging and participating in local politics?
- What have been the relation between forms of governance and radical practices?

**Session 5:** A political economy of urban governance

*The perceived need 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 explore elements of the “Barcelona model” of urban regeneration and competitiveness focusing on the underlying logic of the model and the material outcomes.*

- Harvey, David. 2001. “From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism”. In *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. Routledge. Pp. 345-368.
- Degen, Mónica & Marisol García. 2012. “The transformation of the ‘Barcelona Model’: An analysis of culture, urban regeneration and governance”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol.36, No. 5, Pp. 1022-1038.

Further reading:

- Charnock, Greig, Thomas Purcell, & Ramon Ribera-Fumaz. 2014. “City of rents: The limits to the Barcelona model of urban competitiveness”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol. 38, No. 1, Pp. 198-217.
- Rius Ulldemolins, Joaquim. 2014. “Culture and authenticity in urban regeneration processes: Place branding in central Barcelona”. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 51, No. 14, Pp. 3026-3045.

**Session 6:** Challenging underlying logic of governance through radical practices

*Often, forms of urban governance do not respond to or even go against the needs and interests of the majority of residents even as it is presented as the only realistic strategy to organize democratic processes. In this session we will compare São Paulo forms of insurgency with Barcelona's "insurgent urbanism" as a way to understand types and implications of political action.*

- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2017. "Insurgent urbanity and the political city". In M. Moshen (Ed.) *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*. Lars Müller Publishers. Pp. 46- 57.
- Cattaneo, Claudio & Enrique Tudela. 2014. "¡El Carrer Es Nostre! The autonomous movement in Barcelona, 1980–2012" In B. van der Steen, A. Katzeff, & L van Hoogenhuijze (eds.) *The City Is Ours: Squatting and Autonomous Movements in Europe From the 1970s to the Present*. PM Press. Pp. 95-128.

Further reading:

- Benjamin, Solomon. 2008. "Occupancy urbanism: radicalizing politics and economy beyond policy and programs". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol. 32, No. 3, Pp. 719-729.
- Vilaseca, Stephen Luis. 2013. *Barcelonan Okupas: Squatter Power!* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

**Session 7:** Social centers as a territorialization of politics

*With the advent of entrepreneurial governance and (post)fordist forms of labor flexibilization trade unions are no longer the principal (or sole) reference of social mobilization and organization. It is argued that territorial forms of organization transcends narrowly defined forms of identity politics and open the possibilities for new forms of solidarities. In this session, we will explore the role of social centers in the conformation of new forms of governance and the organization of political spaces.*

- Yates, Luke. 2015. "Everyday politics, social practices and movement networks: daily life in Barcelona's social centres". *The British Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 66, No. 2, Pp. 236-258.
- Sánchez Belando, Maria Victoria. 2017. "Building alternatives to the creative turn in Barcelona: The case of the socio-cultural centre Can Batlló". *City, Culture and Society*. Vol. 8, Pp. 35-42.

Further reading:

- Islar, Mine & Ezgi Irgil. 2018. "Grassroots practices of citizenship and politicization in the urban: the case of right to the city initiatives in Barcelona". *Citizenship Studies*. Vol. 22, No5, Pp. 491-506
- Salvini, Francesco. 2018. "Space invaders in Barcelona: Political society and institutional invention beyond representation". *Antipode*. Vol. 50 No. 4 Pp. 1057-1075.

**Session 8:** Municipalism: rethinking governance through radical practices

*We tend to think that the way to influence decision-makers is through voting or lobbying. In the US there is a generalized notion that social movements and protests do not really accomplish much. But, what if, those people who have been deploying radical practices become the decision makers? In this session, we will discuss what happens when actors involved in radical practices enter government as a potential new way for thinking and framing governance.*

- Rubio-Pueyo, Vicente. 2017. "Municipalism in Spain: From Barcelona to Madrid, and Beyond". Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, *City Series*, #4. Pp. 2-22.
- Eizaguirre, Santiago, Marc Pradel-Miquel & Marisol García. 2017. "Citizenship practices and

democratic governance: ‘Barcelona en Comú’ as an urban citizenship confluence promoting a new policy agenda” *Citizenship Studies*. Vol. 21, No. 4, Pp.425-439.

Further reading:

- García, Marisol, Santiago Eizaguirre, Marc Pradel. 2015. “Social innovation and creativity in cities: A socially inclusive governance approach in two peripheral spaces of Barcelona”. *City, Culture and Society*. Vol. 6, No. 4, Pp. 93-144.
- Calavita, Nico & Amador Ferrer. 2004. “Behind Barcelona’s success story — citizen movements and planners’ power”. In T. Marshall (ed.) *Transforming Barcelona*. Routledge. Pp. 47-64.

## CASE STUDY PRESENTATION

### Cape Town

Cape Town manifests both the implications of inequalities and the continued challenges of build more just and equitable cities.

- What are the potentials/limits of state actions and citizens practices in building more just and equitable cities?
- What could be our roles in these processes?

### Session 9: Promises, hopes, and deceptions: post-Apartheid urbanism

*With the formal end of Apartheid (or the start of democracy) in 1994, many South Africans hoped and expected that with the abrogation of institutionalized discrimination better living conditions would ensue. However, the promise of a more just country (and cities) are still to materialize, giving way to deceptions. In this session we will discuss the tensions and contradictions between the expectations of an inclusive and just city, and the so called “realities” of building an efficient and competitive Cape Town.*

- Amin, Ash and Liza Rose Cirolia. 2018. “Politics/matter: Governing Cape Town’s informal settlements”. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 55, No. 2, Pp. 274-295.
- Oldfield, Sophie & Saskia Greyling. 2015. “Waiting for the state: a politics of housing in South Africa”. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*. Vol. 47, No. 5, Pp. 1100- 1112.

Further reading:

- de Satgé, Richard & Vanessa Watson. 2018. “Struggles for shelter and survival in post-apartheid South African cities: The case of Langa”. In R. de Satgé & V. Watson (eds.) *Urban Planning in the Global South: Conflicting Rationalities in Contested Urban Space*. Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 63-93.
- Jacobs, Floortje & David Jordhus-Lier and Pamela Tsolekile de Wet. 2015. “The politics of knowledge: knowledge management in informal settlement upgrading in Cape Town”. *Urban Forum*. Vol. 26, No. 4, Pp. 425-441.

### Session 10: Context matters: citizenship, infrastructure and insurgency

*Why in certain contexts acts of insurgency or radical practices can create conditions for better urban living, but in other contexts this seems impossible? In this session, we will explore how infrastructure is not a neutral dispositive for service delivery, but a crucial point of analysis of how practices of citizenship (above and beyond formal rights bestowed by the state) demand forms of insurgent action that aim to gain access to already existing legal rights and/or claim rights that have been historically negated.*

- Bayat, Asef. 2000. "From 'dangerous classes' to 'quiet rebels': Politics of the urban subaltern in the Global South". *International Sociology*. Vol. 15, No. 3, Pp. 533-557.
- McFarlane, Colin and Jonathan Silver. 2017. "The political city: 'seeing sanitation' and making the urban political in Cape Town". *Antipode*. Vol. 49 No. 1 Pp. 125-148.

Further reading:

- Von Schnitzler, Antina. 2016. "Introduction: democracy's infrastructure, Apartheid's debris". In *Democracy's Infrastructure: Techno-politics and Protest after Apartheid*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-24.
- Miraftab, Faranak and Shana Wills. 2005. "Insurgency and spaces of active citizenship: the story of Western Cape anti-eviction campaign in South Africa". *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. Vol. 25, No. 2, Pp. 200-217.

**Session 11:** Thinking and acting for/in the future

*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?*

- Friedman, John. 2011. "The good city: In defense of utopian thinking" In *Insurgencies: Essays in Planning Theory*. Routledge. Pp. 144-163.
- Bond, Patrick. 2017. "Limits to South Africa's 'right to the city': prospects for and beyond urban commoning". In S. Hall & R. Burdett (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of the 21st Century City*. Sage Publications. Pp. 236-255.

Further reading:

- Massey, Doreen and Michael Rustin. 2015. "Displacing neoliberalism". In S. Hall, D. Massey and M. Rustin (eds.) *After Neoliberalism: The Kilburn Manifesto*. Lawrence & Wishart. Pp. 191-221.
- Marcuse, Peter. 2011. "Whose right(s) to what city?" In Brenner, Neil, Peter Marcuse, Margit Maye (eds). *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*. Blackwell. Pp. 24-41.

**EXAM DUE**