

Sustainable Urban Development and Right to the City Project

URST 3500 (3 credits)

Spain: Sustainable Urban Development and Social Justice

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.

Course Description

The Project on Sustainable Urban Development and Right to the City offers the students the possibility of carrying out a short research project on a topic related to the different issues that they have been studying during the summer program. The outcome of this research project can be a short original academic article or a creative project piece, either way it must comply with drawing from the course topic, the ethical standards stated in class, and the use of qualitative methods. Students select and analyze a relevant issue in Sustainable Urban Development or the Right to the City in consultation with the program academic director, giving students the opportunity to engage more thoroughly with some of the issues discussed during lectures and academic excursions. Students apply experience-based learning and interactive research skills to their chosen project with support and guidance from the program faculty.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Organize and design a short research project that studies a subject related to Sustainable Urban Development and the Right to the City in the Basque Country or Spain;
- Identify and understand primary and secondary sources, as well as carry out basic qualitative methods;
- Communicate orally and through an academic article the findings of their research project about a topic related to the program theme.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to issues concerning policy, law, sustainable development, human rights and social movements in Spain and the EU.

Required Texts

Dunlap, Alexandre (2021): Spreading 'green' infrastructural harm: mapping conflicts and socio-ecological disruptions within the European Union's transnational energy grid, *Globalizations*, DOI: 10.1080/14747731.2021.199651

Jelin, Elisabeth (2000): Towards a Global Environmental Citizenship? *Citizenship Studies*, 4:1, 47-63

Madden, David J., and Peter Marcuse (2016) *In defense of housing: the politics of crisis*. Verso Books. (read «Introduction» chapter, but the whole book is worth reading)

Kara, Helen (2018) *Research Ethics in the Real World Euro-Western and Indigenous Perspectives*, Chapter 3: Euro-Western research and ethics, Policy Press.

Course Schedule

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs. Despite this, at orientation students will be given a calendar with all classes, hours, excursions, meetings with the academic director and important dates to consider during the summer.

Weeks 1 and 2

Students work with the academic director from day one to identify interests and choose a topic that is related to Sustainable Urban Development and Right to the City in Spain. Time is scheduled in which the students discuss their ideas with the academic director, but students are also encouraged to seek support with both the academic director, other members of the program faculty, and lecturers from the program. Students will submit a *preliminary* research question and their planned methods by the end of Week 2. Also during these first two weeks the academic director will do two classes to outline the project, discuss different topics, and also address the ethical considerations for the short field work that will be carried out in a different country and culture.

Week 3

Students develop and submit their proposals by the end of Week 3. The academic director will work with the students so that their proposals and final papers are ethically respectful of local communities and procedures.

Week 4

During the excursion to Catalonia students are encouraged to continue their research as well as to arrange talks and exchanges with the lecturers and social organizations that we will visit. The academic director will also have one-on-one meetings with the students during this excursion.

Week 5

Students focus on collecting relevant data. The academic director facilitates student contact with appropriate primary sources. Field research is strongly encouraged. Students will begin analyzing their data and should begin writing their research papers.

Week 6

Students complete their analyses, write and present their research projects to the rest of the class and invited guests by the end of Week 6.

Assignments and Evaluation

Methods

Throughout the four weeks of seminars and excursions, students identify primary and secondary sources related to the topic of their research. Students meet with the academic director to evaluate and discuss the progress of their research. Students contact experts working in fields related to the topic of their project and meet with them if possible. During the last two weeks of the program students work exclusively on their project that include data collection, synthesis and analysis, interactive research, interviewing experts, writing the paper, and work journal. Students continue to meet with the academic director throughout the research and writing period.

Course Requirements

1. At least two face-to-face interviews with experts and two meetings with the academic director;
2. Student uses interviews, towards completion of the project; the work journal accounts for the design of the project, the time periods of research, the research locations and the human resources/experts;
3. A 20 page (250 words/page) academic paper that includes: abstract, title page, preface, acknowledgments, table of contents, theoretical framework of analysis, research methodology, conclusions, notes, and bibliography;
4. As an alternative to the paper, students can choose to carry out a creative project using writing, photography, theater, video, or sound recording, among other forms of creation

Project on Sustainable Urban Development and the Right to the City Written Format—Organization and Presentation

I. Introduction

- a. Explain why you chose this topic
 - i. Points of interest (i.e., thematic courses, personal observations, previous research interests, future research interests, personal interests, etc.).
- b. Describe why this topic is relevant to the region/country/culture and program theme.
- c. Define the general parameters of your study, including the scope, depth, and expected outcomes (hypothesis).
- d. Define your terms, including the overall theory on which you are basing your work, while situating your work in a scholarly context.

II. Literature Review

- a. This segment is usually a general introduction into the literature and theories relevant to your topic.
- b. Link your topic to the literature currently available on the subject—cite authors, book titles, theories, or general perceptions that you may or may not agree with.
- c. Explain why you feel these authors were right or wrong; argue with or against their theories using your own observations or those of other theorists.

III. Body of Paper/Methodology

- a. This should be the fun part of the paper, as it allows you the opportunity to describe your overall research experience.
- b. Describe the way you decided to set out on your research (i.e., how you chose the participants that you interviewed or worked with, the locations where you conducted your research, etc.).
- c. Describe the methods you used while planning your strategy to obtain the data for your research (i.e., protecting the identity and integrity of your participants, maintaining the integrity of your data, how you planned to avoid any misunderstanding/misinterpretation of your data).
- d. Describe the obstacles and problems that arose during the course of your research.
- e. If necessary, explain how and why you had to change your original plans (basically a cause/effect section) and how that affected the quality, depth, and scope of your data.

IV. Findings

- a. The really fun part! This is where you get to explain what you found out during the research process.
- b. It's better to focus on the important points of your hypothesis in this section. Highlight the most important aspects of your data and cite responses or observations that either prove or disprove your original hypothesis (it's okay to be wrong here) using the data you generated during the study.
- c. You can include your analysis of the data/interpretation of findings in this section or you can include this discussion in the "Conclusions" section.

V. Conclusions

- a. This is where you get to tie up all the loose ends and bring things together, while proving or disproving your original hypothesis.
- b. You can include your analysis/interpretation of findings in this section as the proof you need to argue for or against your original theory.
- c. Describe what the implications of your study are (i.e., why your findings are important. How can this information enhance the existing body of knowledge already available on the topic? What new questions arose out of your findings? How will these findings inform your future research interests?)

VI. Limitations of the Study

Though optional, this section is highly recommended. Legitimize your study by proactively pointing out its shortcomings and biases (all studies have them, of course).

VII. Recommendations for Further Study

This should consist of a short list of recommendations on how your study might be expanded upon or used as the basis for future ISMDs.

VIII. Endnotes (unless you have used page-by-page footnotes)

IX. Bibliography and List of Sources

This should include all primary and secondary resources used. Primary resources (usually consisting of personal communications) and secondary (textual) resources should be listed under separate headings. Whatever style you choose to use, be accurate and consistent.

X. Appendices

- a. Include a copy of your questionnaire, survey questions, etc. if applicable

- b. Include a copy of your written consent form (not the ones signed by participants—those you keep in a safe place), if applicable.

Creative Project on Sustainable Urban Development and the Right to the City

Regardless of the creative production developed, the students must also follow these criteria and conditions:

Students must turn in a short-written report that includes the following:

- Contextual issues (historical, social, cultural, political, economic, etc.) that are related to the project or within which the project was created.
- Specific project objectives including the project's connection to the program theme
- Description of methods and resources used as well as the documentation of activities.
- Critical analysis/reflection of project experience including difficulties encountered and recommendations for future study.
- Follow ethical norms discussed in class
- A bibliography and/or resource list.
- Consideration should be given to special materials, expenses and travel which such project often necessitate.
- The length of this written report will be talked with the Academic Director prior to the beginning of the project in the scheduled one on one meetings
- These projects will also be presented orally during the final evaluation week

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

The evaluation of the research and paper will be completed by the Academic Directors. Assessment of the project is based on the accuracy of information conveyed, the quality of analysis and argumentation. Special emphasis is put on the student's ability to integrate primary sources and methods of interactive research and to present the findings in a clear, organized and well-synthesized format. The Academic Directors assign the final grade.

Description of Assignments:

Field Work Journal (10%):

The Sustainable urban development and the right to the city Work Journal documents the information-gathering process and records all information relevant to the evolution of the paper. This journal can be helpful in the event that students have to demonstrate to their university advisor what this course involved. Before determining what categories to include student has to consider the objectives of their research and how you can best organize information in a coherent, convenient, and accessible manner. The first part of the journal will be completed with cultural observations during the first weeks abroad.

Sustainable Urban Development and the Right to the city Paper (60%):

Assessment of the paper is done on the basis of grading evaluation and criteria listed below.

Title/Acknowledgements/Abstract

- The title is succinct, interesting, and engaging, and it clearly explains the project
- The acknowledgments are complete and professionally written
- The abstract clearly summarizes the project

Research Question/Objectives/Justification

- The study/research question is relevant, thought-provoking, and original
- The project aims to contribute information on a topic relevant to local community and/or other researchers
- The objectives of the study are clearly presented and appropriate
- The justification of the project is clear and contextualized

Context and Literature Review

- The content is relevant. Important themes and background information is provided
- The paper includes appropriate, high-quality relevant background sources, including several from peer-reviewed journals

Methods

- The explanation of methodology is clear and accurate and supporting materials are included
- Implementation of methods through the research process is thoughtful and handed with care
- The methods are appropriate

Ethics

- Ethical guidelines are adhered to and discussed
- Appropriate consideration is given to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of Participants.

Presentation of Results/Findings

- The findings are complete and are logically and convincingly presented
- The prose discussion of findings is clear, succinct, and logical
- Tables, graphs, photos, and direct quotes are relevant and support the argument

Depth of Analysis/Conclusions

- Important implications raised by the findings are included
- The argument is well-structured and different sources of information are well-integrated
- Patterns in the findings (or lack of a pattern) are identified and discussed
- The author gives logical explanations of what findings mean
- The author clearly and specifically related his/her findings to the study/research question and to previous research in the field

Technical Aspects/Effort

- The paper is organized into major sections and/or follows the guidelines in accordance with the orientation of the program
- Table of contents, in-text citations, and reference list or bibliography are done correctly and completely
- There are no mistakes in writing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Oral presentation (30%):

Oral presentation of the results of the research carried out during the end of the summer program in front of student peers.

Assessment:

Paper	60%
Oral presentation	30%
Work Journal	10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination. It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the program. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

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

Program Expectations

- 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.
- 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.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or

participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.

- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

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.

