

SIS 620: Urban Political Ecology
Global Environmental Politics Program, School of International Service
American University

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Class time: Thurs, 1145am-225pm
Class location: EQB 11
Office hours: Mon, 10.30am-12pm, Wed 2-4pm, or by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This graduate seminar probes the history and politics of our rapidly expanding urban world. It goes beyond standard pronouncements of “corruption” and “government failure” in the “Third World” to carefully investigating how colonial urban histories, political economic shifts, and new forms of expertise and discourse are shaping the urban environment. We will draw from geography, urban planning, history, anthropology, and sociology, among other fields, to build a strong foundation in urban political ecology. Urban political ecology is a radical interdisciplinary scholarly field that provides insights into the power relations underlying unequal access to urban space, resources, and infrastructure in the Global South and North. While the field has its roots in Marxian geographical thought, its frontiers are being expanded through post-colonial theory, feminist theory, science and technology studies, environmental justice and health research, and geographical information science (GIS), among other rich theoretical and methodological influences. As a field that sits at the cutting edge of theory and practice, urban political ecology is increasingly being leveraged to innovate progressive possibilities for healthier, more inclusive, and more just cities. Ultimately, the aim of this course is for students to come away with a critical “toolkit” for grasping and acting on the complex human-environment webs that constitute our cities. This toolkit consists of the following core components:

- Key *theoretical* perspectives in the field of urban studies more generally and urban political ecology specifically
- Multiple *methods* used by scholars and practitioners to research urban environmental questions
- Formative *debates* around major contemporary issues as learned through paradigmatic case study cities from around the world

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, successful students should have gained the following:

- Understanding of major urban environmental and infrastructural challenges in the Global North and South, their causes, and their policy possibilities
- Appreciation for why historical phenomena matter so much in our understanding of and actions towards addressing contemporary urban environmental problems
- Fluency with theoretical perspectives in urban political ecology and related scholarly lenses
- Awareness of how the problems discussed in the literature are not just those that occur “elsewhere”, but are also present in the DC area
- Familiarity with global urban databases, including statistic, cartographic, and photographic databases
- Greater confidence and sophistication in reading comprehension, oral presentation, and qualitative research and writing

REQUIRED BOOKS

This is a reading- and writing-intensive seminar. You will get the most from this class if you do the readings *carefully* and *critically*. You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class. Thoughtful and respectful class participation is a major part of the learning experience, and I look forward to hearing insights from each of you throughout the semester. The following texts are required and are available for purchase at AU’s Student Bookstore or online (where they may be cheaper):

- Boo, Katherine. 2012. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random House
- Gandy, Matthew. 2003. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

All other required readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Over the course of the semester, I will keep updating a list of suggested readings, films, websites, and other materials pertaining to the week’s topics. Here is a preliminary list of recommended (not required) books outside of the ones I am assigning for the course:

- Cronon, W. 1991. *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Norton: New York and London
- Loftus, A. 2012. *Everyday Environmentalism: Creating an Urban Political Ecology*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis
- Myers, G. 2005. *Disposable Cities. Garbage, Governance, and Sustainable Development in Urban Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Rademacher, A. 2011. *Reigning the River: Urban Ecologies and Political Transformation in Kathmandu*. Duke University Press: Durham and London
- Roy, A. 2003. *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis
- Simone, A. 2010. *City Life from Jakarta to Dakar: Movements at the Crossroads*. Routledge: New York and Abingdon
- Swyngedouw, E. 2004. *Flows of Power: The Political Ecology of Water and Urbanization in Ecuador*. Oxford University Press, Oxford

BLACKBOARD SITE

To access the course Blackboard site, go to <https://blackboard.american.edu>, login, and click on the SIS 620 tab. Unless it is in one of the required books listed above, all readings are under the “Course reserves” tab. You can sort by author name to find the readings assigned for the week.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND DUE DATES

Assignment	%	Due Date
Attendance and participation	10%	Throughout the semester
Response papers (5% x 4)	20%	By 5pm on Bb the Tues before class, four times during the semester
Discussion co-facilitation	10%	Once during the semester
Colonial legacies and contemporary infrastructure short paper	15%	February 20 by 5pm on Bb
Final research paper: Critical analysis of urban environmental policy (Draft 1 and Bibliography)	15%	March 20 by 5pm on Bb
Final research paper	30%	May 8, by 5pm on Bb
Total	100%	

Attendance and participation (10%)

- Your *punctual* attendance in class is crucial to your overall performance. Each student is allowed one unexcused absence. Additional absences will lower your grade. Absences for valid reasons such as medical or family emergencies will be excused, but you will still be responsible for material missed. Please contact me in advance if you know you will be late or absent, or as soon as possible following the missed class. Please ensure you make up for your absence by attending my office hours.
- We are here to learn from each other: active and meaningful participation in class is not only required; it will also improve your overall experience in the class. Most class sessions will comprise of a mixture of lecture and structured discussion in which you will be expected to make informed contributions.

Response papers (4 x 5% = 20%)

You must write four one-page (double spaced) response papers to the readings assigned in four different weeks of your choice. Response papers are not meant as summaries of the readings, but as critical syntheses of how the readings relate to or differ from each other. You are expected to point out connections to theoretical perspectives and themes encountered in the class to date and raise questions that speak to the class. Post each of these responses under “Reading responses” on Blackboard by 5pm, the Tuesday before class. Your peers and I will be using your responses to lead a discussion of the readings for the day (see below), so write clearly and compellingly.

Discussion co-facilitation (10%)

At the beginning of semester, you will team up with one to two other classmates and sign up to present the readings of a particular week of your choice (a roster will be ready by the second week of class). You are responsible for coordinating with your teammate(s) to co-facilitate a discussion of this reading. As a discussion co-facilitator, you are responsible for: (a) briefly summarizing the readings, pointing out the author’s main arguments, and relating them to the themes of the class and (b) raising questions for the class to discuss based, in part, of your review of your peers’ response papers.

Colonial urban legacies and contemporary infrastructure/space short paper (15%) [Due February 20, by 5pm on Bb]

Historic research provides a key method and theoretical building block in urban political ecology. Without understanding the historical causes for particular phenomena we observe today, we risk producing empirically thin and politically inert analyses of urban environmental problems. In this spirit, write an 8 to 10-page (double-spaced) paper exploring the legacies of colonialism and segregation on the infrastructural and environmental challenges of a contemporary city of your choice, either in the Global North or South. For instance, you could choose to look at how the outbreak of cholera and the colonial response to poor urban “natives” shaped the reproduction of uneven water infrastructure in Jakarta, Indonesia. Or you could consider how the legacies of apartheid continue to structure the urban environment in South Africa. Or you could trace the historic roots of toxics exposure in New York City, from segregation to the contemporary moment (I have excellent reading suggestions on each of these individual topics, if you are interested). Your paper must include analysis of one (historic or contemporary) map or photograph, which you must carefully cite from journal articles, atlases, websites, or other spatial history repositories.

Final research paper: Critical analysis of an urban environmental policy (Draft 1 and Bibliography) (15%) [Due March 20, by 5pm on Bb]

For your final paper, you will critically analyze the emergence and effects of one set of urban environmental policy changes in a city of your choice through the literature covered in this class and beyond. Examples of urban environmental policy changes include: urban water privatization or commercialization, the formalization of informal trash workers, urban reforestation, a change in the policy discourse pertaining to urban food insecurity, a new public transportation project, an urban sustainability plan, higher user fees for infrastructure, etc. You must address the following questions:

- What problem is this policy change trying to address? What explains its historic emergence? How do the theories covered in this class help to better grasp the root causes of this problem? Draw on at least two important theoretical strands laid out in class.
- How is the “problem” discursively constructed or represented by proponents of the policy change? What “knowledge” is emphasized and what is left out? Who makes major decisions?
- What are the material effects of the policy? Who benefits and who loses?
- How does political-ecological analysis shed light on the possibilities (policy and beyond) for addressing the problem at hand?

Your paper draft (10 pages, double spaced) should address the first two bullet points above. It should also include a tentative bibliography, with at least five articles from top ranked urban geography/urban studies/urban political ecology journals. Here is a list of some key journals in this field:

-*Annals of the Assn of American Geographers*

-*Antipode*

-*Cities*

-*Environment and Planning: A*

-*Environment and Planning: D*

-*Geoforum*

-*Int'l Journal of Urban and Regional Research*

-*Urban Affairs Review*

-*Urban Geography*

-*Urban Studies*

Final research paper (30%) [Due May 8, by 5pm on Bb]

Your final paper (15-20 pages, double spaced) should integrate the four bullet points above. A grading rubric delineating the relative importance of the quality of your prose, clear articulation of your arguments, effectiveness of your citations, and grammatical accuracy will be handed out in advance.

EMAIL AND OFFICE HOURS

Ask questions regarding class logistics and assignments in class well ahead of deadlines, and use Blackboard to share questions and answers with your classmates. As a last resort, email me, and I will aim to reply within two days. I highly encourage you to come to my office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your assignments and any thoughts you may have about the course and your future interests. If you cannot make my office hours, please email me so that we can find another time to meet.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND OTHER COURSE POLICIES

- Ethics. When in doubt, cite your resources. Plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional, is unacceptable under any circumstance, and easy to discover in our Internet era. I will post instructions on the recommended citation style for your final assignment and go over them in class. Refer to AU's Code of Academic Integrity at www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm for definitions of plagiarism and the University's policies.
- Electronics. You are allowed to use your laptop or tablet to take notes and refer to the readings in-class, but other uses, when observed, will count against your grade without warning. Out of respect for your classmates and professor, cell phone use of any kind is not permitted and will count against your grade without warning.
- Disability accommodations. The University has an extensive support system for various learning styles and needs, and I am keen to accommodate these needs in my class. Please bring a letter from the Disability Office and let me know if you need any classroom or learning accommodations.
- Emergency preparedness. In the event of an emergency, AU will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site (<http://www.prepared.american.edu>) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND DUE DATES

Date	Topic
January 16	<i>Course Introduction: Cities in the 21st Century Urban Political Ecology as Critique and Praxis</i>
<i>Foundations</i>	
January 23	Urban Natures, Modernity, and Capitalism
January 30	Producing Urban Space
February 6	The (Post-)Colonial City: Discourse, Knowledge, Architecture, Health
February 13	Urban “Apartheids” in the North and South: Tracing Environmental Injustices
<i>Contemporary Debates</i>	
February 20	Urban Informality, Marginality, and Poverty: Disentangling Myth from Reality [<i>Colonial Urban Legacies Short Paper due</i>]
February 27	Urban Environmental Governance and the State, Left and Right
March 6	“Sustainable Cities”, “Smart Cities”, “Resilient Cities”: Influential Imaginaries and Practices
March 13	<i>No class</i>
<i>Infrastructural and Resource Politics</i>	
March 20	Hydro-Politics - I [<i>Final Research Paper Draft due</i>]
March 27	Hydro-Politics - II
April 3	Trashy Cities: Dirt, Disorder, and Dystopia
April 10	Geographies of Mobility and Accessibility
April 17	Urban Revolution? The “Right to the City” and “Insurgent Citizenship”
April 24	<i>Wrap-up Discussion</i>
May 8	[<i>Final Research Paper due</i>]

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Remember that each set of readings must be done **before** the date indicated below.

Jan 16 – Cities in the 21st Century | Urban Political Ecology as Critique and Praxis

This introductory lecture lays out the key themes of the course taking Ash Amin's provocative assertion that "the human condition and the urban condition may have become one and the same" as a point of departure. We will review some major aspects of the contemporary urban condition, particularly the urban environmental condition, and outline what a political ecological perspective brings to the table.

- Amin, Ash. 2013. "The Urban Condition: A Challenge to Social Science," *Public Culture* 25 (2): 201-208.
- Lawhon, M, H Ernstson, J Silver. 2013. "Provincializing Urban Political Ecology: Towards a Situated UPE Through African Urbanism". *Antipode* (DOI: 10.1111/anti.12051)

Recommended readings:

- Jarosz, Lucy. 2004. "Political Ecology as Ethical Practice." *Political Geography* 23 (7)
- Keil, R. 2003. "Urban Political Ecology Progress Report". *Urban Geography*, 24 (8): 723-738.
- Davis, Mike. 2004. "Planet of Slums". *New Left Review*. <http://newleftreview.org/II/26/mike-davis-planet-of-slums> [this will be required reading later on in the course]
- UN Habitat. 2010. State of the World's Cities: Bridging the Urban Divide. Nairobi: United Nations Habitat.

Jan 23 – Urban Natures, Modernity, and Capitalism

Cities are made through the harnessing of nature (broadly defined) by human labor. Complex flows of water, energy, waste, food, and other raw materials are necessary to produce and sustain urban systems. Interactions between humans and nature—what Karl Marx called "metabolism"—are deeply shaped by uneven power geometries within a capitalist political economy. In this lecture, we will explore the relevance of "metabolism" and other key concepts for grasping modernity and the uneven effects of capitalist urbanization.

- Heynen, N., M. Kaika and E. Swyngedouw. 2006. "Urban political ecology: Politicizing the production of urban natures". In N. Heynen, M. Kaika & E. Swyngedouw (eds.). In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism. New York: Routledge.
- Swyngedouw, E. 2006. "Circulations and metabolisms: (Hybrid) Natures and (Cyborg) cities", *Science as Culture*, 15:2, 105-121
- Shillington LJ. 2013. "Right to food, right to the city: Household urban agriculture and socrionatural metabolism in Managua, Nicaragua". *Geoforum* 44 (1): 103-111.

Recommended readings:

- Swyngedouw E. 1996. "The city as a hybrid: On nature, society and cyborg urbanization". *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 7 (2): 65-80.
- Heynen, N. 2013. "Urban Political Ecology I: The Urban Century" *Progress in Human Geography* (DOI: 10.1177/0309132513500443)
- Marx, K. Capital, Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy (any edition)
- Harvey, D. 2010. A Companion to Marx's Capital, Volume 1. London: Verso Books.
- Kaika, M. and E. Swyngedouw. 2000. "Fetishizing the Modern City: The Phantasmorgia of Urban Technological Networks". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (1): 120-138 [this will be required reading later in the course].
- For a brief summary of the Marxist concept of metabolism, see: <http://sdonline.org/56/volume-25->

[no-2/the-dialectic-of-social-and-ecological-metabolism-marx-meszaros-and-the-absolute-limits-of-capital/](#)

Jan 30 – Producing Urban Space

How space is conceptualized *matters*. Space is not simply inert and empty, waiting to be filled by the march of time or human activities and objects, but rather is actively produced through relations of power, systems of knowledge, and material artifacts (take for instance, gates, public squares, highways, parks, etc...how do these shape who has access to space and who does not? What political-economic processes and cultural notions produce these spaces?). In this lecture, we will look at key theories related to the production of urban space and why these ideas are relevant for understanding urban environmental injustices. Of particular import here will be Lefebvre's notion that capitalism is premised on the "production of space".

David Simon. 2013. "There are now two Americas. My country is a horror show" *The Observer*, Sunday, 8 December. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/08/david-simon-capitalism-marx-two-americas-wire>

Smith, N. 1984 [2008]. "Introduction" and "Chapter 3: The Production of Space" in Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press.

Loftus, A. 2012. "Introduction" in Everyday Environmentalism: Creating an Urban Political Ecology. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Quastel, N. 2009. "Political Ecologies of Gentrification". *Urban Geography* 30 (7): 694-725.

Recommended readings

Harvey, David. 2001. "Globalization and the 'spatial fix,'" *Geographische Revue* 3 (2): 23-30.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. Chapter 1 in *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Christophers, B. 2011. "Revisiting the Urbanization of Capital". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 101 (6).

Blomley, N. 2003. "Law, property, and the spaces of violence," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92 (1): 121-41.

Caldeira, T. 2000. City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in Sao Paulo. University of California, Berkeley.

Feb 6 – The (Post-)Colonial City: Discourse, Knowledge, Architecture, Health

Much of what we observe in cities today can be traced to enduring legacies of the colonial enterprise. Such legacies include patterns of racial and ethnic segregation, uneven infrastructure access, and attitudes and policy languages directed at the poor and slum dwellers. Moving beyond Marxist political-economic (structural) explanations for how capitalist processes shape urban space and resources, we now turn to the role of discourses, subjectification, and architecture in shaping urban environments, drawing in particular from the (post-structural) contributions of French philosopher Michel Foucault. In particular, we will focus on urban health as a major field of intervention in colonial cities.

AlSayyad, N. (Ed). 1992. "Introduction" in Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise. Aldershot and Vermont: Ashgate Publishing.

Foucault, Michel 2000. "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century" in Power/Knowledge. Essential Works of Foucault, Volume 3. New York: The New Press: 90-105.

Swanson, M. 1977. "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony", 1900-1909. *The Journal of African History*, 18 (3): 387-410.

- Kooy, M. and K Bakker. 2008. "Technologies of Government: Constituting Subjectivities, Spaces, and Infrastructures in Colonial and Contemporary Jakarta". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32 (2): 375-91.
- McFarlane, C. 2008. Governing the Contaminated City: Infrastructure and Sanitation in Colonial and Post-Colonial Bombay. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32 (2).

Recommended readings:

- Bryant, R. 1998. "Power, knowledge and political ecology in the third world: a review". *Progress in Physical Geography*. 22: 79-94
- Chakrabarty, D. 2002. Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Legg, S. 2007. Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities. Blackwell Publishing, Malden.
- Kidambi, P. 2004. "'An infection of locality': plague, pythogenesis and the poor in Bombay, c. 1896-1905". *Urban History*, 31 (2): 249-267.

Feb 13 - Urban "Apartheids" in the North and South: Mapping Environmental Injustices

In the US, the rise of environmental justice as an activist movement and policy arena coincided with the latter years of the Civil Rights movement. In South Africa, environmental justice became an important language of urban activist struggles during the latter years of apartheid rule. While as a scholarly field, environmental justice retains important differences, particularly in its liberal conception of justice, its overarching goals strongly overlap with those of urban political ecology. In this lecture, we embark on a comparative analysis of "apartheids" and environmental injustices in cities of the North and South.

- Holifield, R. 2001. Defining Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism. *Urban Geography* 22 (1): 78-90.
- McDonald, D (Ed). 2002. "Intro: What is Environmental Justice?" and Ch 1: "The Roots of Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice in the 1990s" in Environmental Justice in South Africa. Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press.
- Williams, B. 2001. "A River Runs Through Us". *American Anthropologist* 103 (2).

Recommended readings

- Morello-Frosch, R. 2002. Discrimination and the political economy of environmental inequality. *Environment and Planning: C*, 20 (4): 477-496.
- Heynen, Nik, Perkins, Harold, and Roy, Parama. 2006. "The Political Ecology of Uneven Urban Green Space: The Impact of Political Economy on Race and Ethnicity in Producing Environmental Inequality in Milwaukee." *Urban Affairs Review*, 42:1, 3-25.
- Pulido, L. 2000. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90 (1): 12-40.
- Bullard, R. and G. Johnson. 2000. "Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and Its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making". *Journal of Social Issues*, 56 (3): 555-578.
- Debbane, A. and R. Keil. 2004. "Multiple disconnections: environmental justice and Urban water in Canada and South Africa". *Space and Polity*, 8 (2): 209-225.

Feb 20 - Urban Informality, Marginality, and Poverty: Disentangling Myth from Reality

In cities around the world, people live under conditions of precarious land tenure; laws and regulations (particularly around land) are flexibly and differentially interpreted; and various groups are involved in everyday negotiations around basic services, such as water and shelter.

Arguably, “urban informality” can be posited as “the new normal”. As Roy and others have suggested, informality is not necessarily synonymous with poverty (i.e. even the wealthy and middle class engage in informality). So what is urban informality? How is it related to marginality and poverty? And why does informality matter from an environmental standpoint? This lecture takes a hard look at these questions, tracing key debates from the early 1970s to the current moment.

Skim this brief blog entry for a thought-provoking summary of the genesis of the term of “urban informality” and its discontents:

<http://projectafricanewschool.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/everyday-africa-and-the-theory-of-informality/>

Perlman, Janice. 2004. “Marginality: From Myth to Reality in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro,” In Roy, A. and N. AlSayyad (eds) Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia. Washington: Lexington Books, pp. 105-146.

Rademacher, A. 2009. “When Is Housing an Environmental Problem? Reforming Informality in Kathmandu”. *Current Anthropology*. 50 (4): 513-533.

Davis, Mike. 2004. “Planet of Slums”. *New Left Review*. <http://newleftreview.org/II/26/mike-davis-planet-of-slums>

Recommended readings

Roy, A. 2005. “Urban Informality: Towards an Epistemology of Planning”. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71 (2): 147-158.

Simone, A. 2001. “Straddling the Divides: Remaking Associational Life in the Informal African City”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 25 (1): 102-117.

Ghertner, A. 2008. “Analysis of new legal discourse behind Delhi’s slum demolitions”. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43 (20): 57-66.

Devlin, R. 2011. “‘An area that governs itself’: Informality, uncertainty and the management of street vending in New York City”. *Planning Theory*, 10 (1): 53-65.

Rakowski, C. 1994. Contrapunto: The Informal Sector Debate in Latin America. State University of New York Press, Albany

Roy, A. 2009. “Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization”. *Planning Theory*, 8 (1): 76-81.

Portes, A., M. Castells and L. Benton. 1989. The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore

Auyero, J. 1999. “This is a lot like the Bronx, isn’t it? Lived experiences of marginality in an Argentine slum,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23(1): 45-69.

Neuwirth, R. 2005. Shadow Cities: How 600 Million Squatters are Creating the Cities of Tomorrow

Feb 27 – Urban Environmental Governance and the State, Left and Right

Over the last three decades, cities have become staging grounds for new forms of market-led governance that have shaped every sphere of metropolitan development, from infrastructure to real estate to urban natural resources management. Among urban scholars, there is considerable interest in theorizing these various articulations of “neoliberal” environmental governance and implications for the role of the state and marginalized groups (particularly in the urban water sector which we will look at later). The readings for this session delve into various paradigms of urban planning and governance paying close attention to how urban policies have been transformed in recent years.

Scott, J. 1998. Chapter 2: “Cities, People, and Language” and Chapter 4: “The High Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique”. In Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. Yale University Press, New Haven.

- Prudham, S. and J. McCarthy. 2004. "Neoliberal nature and the nature of neoliberalism". *Geoforum*, 35 (3).
- Brenner, N. and N. Theodore. 2002. "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism'". *Antipode*, 34 (3).
- Harvey, D. 1989. "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation of Urban Governance in Late Capitalism". *Geographiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 17 (1): 3-12.
- Perkins, H. 2012. "Consent to Neoliberal Hegemony through Coercive Urban Environmental Governance". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, In press.

Recommended readings:

- Peck, J. and A. Tickell. 2002. "Neoliberalizing space". *Antipode*, 34 (3): 380-404.
- Hackworth, J. 2002. "Local Autonomy, Bond-Rating Agencies and Neoliberal Urbanism in the United States". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26 (4): 707-725.
- Harvey, D. 2005. [A Brief History of Neoliberalism](#). Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Leitner, H, J. Peck & E. S. Sheppard (eds.). 2007. [Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers](#) The Guilford Press, New York.
- Miraftab, F. 2004. "Public-Private Partnerships: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?" *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 24 (89).

Mar 6 – "Sustainable Cities", "Smart Cities", "Resilient Cities": Influential Imaginaries and Practices

Growing recognition of the importance of urban climate change mitigation and adaptation, among other environmental challenges, has given rise to new visions of "sustainable", "smart", and "resilient" cities. What does this hopeful vocabulary entail in practice? In the Global South, does the "sustainable city" run up against the consumer-oriented "world-class city"? In this lecture, we look critically at the emergence of influential urban imaginaries, whether and how they shape urban planning, and their effects on the ground. Read the following critical pieces with a broad understanding of Washington, DC's Sustainability Plan: <http://sustainable.dc.gov/finalplan>.

- Stewart, E. 2013. "Urban sustainability: what will a smart city look like in the future?" *The Guardian* <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/urban-sustainability-smart-city-future>
- Hollands, R. 2008. Will the real smart city please stand up? Intelligent, progressive or entrepreneurial? *City* 12 (3).
- Bulkeley, H and M Betsil. 2010. "Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Multilevel Governance and the 'Urban' Politics of Climate Change". *Environmental Politics* 14 (1): 42-63.
- Pow, CP and Neo, H. 2013. "Seeing Red Over Green: Contesting Urban Sustainabilities in China" *Urban Studies* 50 (11): 2256-2274.
- Krueger, R and J Agyeman. 2005. "Sustainability schizophrenia or "actually existing sustainabilities?" toward a broader understanding of the politics and promise of local sustainability in the US". *Geoforum*. 36 (4): 410-417.

Recommended readings:

- Sassen, S. 2005. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept." *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 11 (2): 27-43.
- Comfort, L. 2006. "Cities at Risk: Hurricane Katrina and the Drowning of New Orleans". *Urban Affairs Review*, 41 (4): 501-516
- Robinson, J. 2002. "Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26 (3): 531-554.
- Goldman, M. 2011. "Speculative Urbanism and the Making of the Next World City". *International*

Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 35 (3): 555-581.

Brand, P. 2007. "Green Subjection: The Politics of Neoliberal Urban Environmental Management". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 31 (3): 616-632.

Mar 13 – No class

Mar 20 – Hydro-Politics - I

Given its salience to urban metabolism and the complex power relations shaping its delivery, water is an important area of study in urban political ecology. In Part I, we will look at formative works that theorize the relationship between urban water, power, and money, and in Part II, we will move on to contemporary debates. Of particular interest to scholars have been the implications of water privatization and market-based reform on access and the sustainability of the sector, as well as the forms of political struggle that take root at sites of water policy change.

Gandy, Matthew. 2003. Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City. Cambridge: MIT Press (selections).

Swyngedouw, E. 1997. "Power, nature, and the city: The conquest of water and the political ecology of urbanization in Guayaquil, Ecuador, 1880-1990". *Environment and Planning A*, 29 (2): 311-332.

Kaika, M. and E. Swyngedouw. 2000. "Fetishizing the Modern City: The Phantasmorgia of Urban Technological Networks". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (1): 120-138

Recommended readings:

Monstadt, J. "Conceptualizing the political ecology of urban infrastructures: insights from technology and urban studies", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

Swyngedouw, E. 2009. "The Political Economy and Political Ecology of the Hydro-Social Cycle". *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education*, (142): 56-60.

Graham, S. and S. Marvin. 2001. Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition. Routledge, London.

Mar 27 – Hydro-Politics – II

Loftus, A. and D. McDonald. 2001. "Of liquid dreams: a political ecology of water privatization in Buenos Aires". *Environment & Urbanization*, 13 (2): 179-199.

Bakker, K. 2007. "Trickle Down? Private sector participation and the pro-poor water supply debate in Jakarta, Indonesia". *Geoforum*, 38 (5): 855-868.

Ranganathan, M. 2013. "Paying for Pipes, Claiming Citizenship: Political Agency and Water Reforms at the Urban Periphery". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Online version published May 27, 2013.

Recommended readings

Smith, L. 2004. "The murky waters of the second wave of neoliberalism: corporatization as a service delivery model in Cape Town". *Geoforum*, 35 (3): 375-393.

Bakker, K. 2010. Governance Failure and the World's Urban Water Crisis. Cornell University Press, New York.

Anand, N. 2011. "Pressure: The Poli-Technics of Water Supply in Mumbai." *Cultural Anthropology*, 26 (4): 542-562.

Loftus, A. and F. Lumsden. 2008. "Reworking hegemony in the urban waterscape". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 33 (1): 109-126.

Gandy, M. 2008. "Landscapes of Disaster: Water, modernity, and urban fragmentation in Mumbai". *Environment and Planning A*, 40 (1): 108-130.

Apr 3 – Trashy Cities: Dirt, Disorder, and Dystopia

The generation of municipal solid waste presents one of the gravest threats to urban health and sustainability everywhere. In the Global South, most recycling work is carried out under dangerous and exploitative conditions by the urban poor. We will read award-winning New Yorker journalist Katherine Boo's heart-wrenching account of trashwork in a Mumbai slum, alongside political-ecological accounts of municipal solid waste management in other cities of the South.

Boo, K. 2012. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random City (entire book)

Nejeru, J. 2006. "The urban political ecology of plastic bag waste problem in Nairobi, Kenya". *Geoforum*. 37 (6): 1046-1058

Recommended readings:

Packer, J. 2006. "The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos". *New Yorker*

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/11/13/061113fa_fact_packer

Beall, Jo. 2006. "Dealing With Dirt and the Disorder of Development: Managing Rubbish in Urban Pakistan," *Oxford Development Studies* 34 (1): 81-97.

Chakrabarty, D. 2002. *Of Garbage, Modernity, and the Citizen's Gaze. Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. pp) University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Mustafa, D. 2005. "The Production of an Urban Hazardscape in Pakistan: Modernity, Vulnerability, and the Range of Choice". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 95 (3): 566-586.

Apr 10 – Geographies of Mobility and Accessibility

People and things in cities seem to be constantly on the move. A surging middle class in cities across Asia and Africa has meant an explosion in the demand for personal vehicles and associated air pollution. Yet, even as some urban dwellers have gained more mobility, a significant proportion of people in both the North and South rely on public transit and para-transit systems, and often lack accessibility to employment and healthy and nutritious food (as is the case in some cities in the US). In this lecture, we look at uneven geographies of mobility and accessibility in developing and developed cities.

Véron, René. 2006. "Remaking urban environments: the political ecology of air pollution in Delhi." *Environment and Planning A*, 2093-2109.

Grengs, J. 2005. "The abandoned social goals of public transit in the neoliberal city of the USA", *City*, 9 (1): 51-66

Walker, R et al. 2010. "Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: a review of food deserts literature" *Health and Place* 16 (5): 876-884

<http://www.pps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PPS-Placemaking-and-the-Future-of-Cities.pdf>

Apr 17 – Urban Revolution? The Right to the City, Insurgent Citizenship, and Beyond

Political struggle against unfair policies or conditions of oppression takes many forms, from outright resistance and protest—as has been the case in anti-privatization protests in Latin

America—to what Asef Bayat has called “quiet encroachment”. We will look at various political practices that seek to challenge, subvert, or parody dominant forms of rule and subjectivities and ask how these analyses enrich the field of urban political ecology.

Gabriel, N. 2014. Urban Political Ecology: Environmental Imaginary, Governance, and the Non-Human, 8 (1): 38-48/

Holston, J. 1999. Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship. In J. Holston (ed.) *Cities and Citizenship*. pp) Duke University Press, Durham.

Harvey, D. 2008. The Right to the City. *New Left Review* 53: Available at: <http://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>

Bayat, A. 2000. From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South. *International Sociology*, 15 (3): 533-557.

Appadurai, A. 2002. Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics. *Public Culture*, 14 (1): 21-47.

Bhan, G. 2009. "This is no longer the city I once knew". Evictions, the urban poor and the right to the city in Millennial Delhi. *Environment & Urbanization*, 21 (1): 127-142.

Apr 24 - Wrap-up Discussion