

SIS 620: Urban Political Ecology

Global Environmental Politics Program
School of International Service
American University

Spring 2017

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Class time: Thursdays 5.30-8pm

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Office hours: **Wed 2-4pm and Thurs 430pm-530pm sign-up only**—please use <http://tinyurl.com/jk365ms> to sign up. If none of these times work, please email me.



“Radical means simply grasping things at the root”

-Angela Davis

“Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will”

-Antonio Gramsci

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course investigates our rapidly expanding urban world with an explicit focus on the history, politics, and policy challenges of urban environments. We will go beyond alarmist narratives and standard “best practice” fixes. Instead, we will develop historical explanations for contemporary urban environmental inequalities marked by race, ethnicity, class, zip code, gender, religion, and other intersecting axes of social and spatial difference. We will draw from geography, sociology, urban studies, environmental studies, and anthropology, among other fields to build a strong foundation in *urban political ecology*. Urban political ecology is an interdisciplinary and radical field that deploys critical social theory, political-economic analysis, and history to explain unequal access to urban space, environmental resources such as clean air and water, and infrastructure. The field’s frontiers are increasingly being pushed to create progressive options (policy and beyond) for healthier, more sustainable, and more inclusive cities. Crucially, urban political ecology has begun to decolonize knowledge by interrogating the limits of Northern intellectual traditions (e.g. classical European social theory) and to take seriously the contributions of Southern theory, indigenous perspectives, and critical race theory. The ultimate objective of the course is for students to come away with a critical “toolkit” for thinking, writing, and acting on complex social and ecological problems in our cities and urban regions.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I am an urban geographer who brings a critical social theory lens to my teaching, research, and writing. Pedagogically, this means that I encourage students to problematize dominant paradigms, especially those that are subtle and taken-for-granted; understand that uneven power relations come in many forms; and make connections between history and the present. My scholarship is positioned in solidarity—though not uncritically—with marginalized groups and their struggles. I believe that a critical theory approach better equips students for practical and ethical careers. I strive to create a classroom that is inclusive, diverse, and committed to naming and fighting racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

EMAIL AND OFFICE HOURS

Read the syllabus carefully. Ask questions regarding logistics and assignments in class or via email (malini@american.edu) ahead of deadlines. I encourage you to sign-up and come to my office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your assignments and your interests. If you cannot make my office hours, please email me so that we can find another time to meet.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Appreciation for why history (e.g. of colonialism, capitalism, socialism, segregation, post-war suburbanization, market-driven reform) matters so much in our understanding of and actions to address contemporary urban environmental problems
- Fluency with critical social theories (e.g. Marxian, Foucaultian, postcolonial, critical race theory, feminist, etc), in urban political ecology and environmental justice (EJ) scholarship
- Transnational sensitivity towards urban problems including those present in the DC area and across the US
- Greater confidence and sophistication in writing and public speaking, particularly the art of crafting and defending an argument (note that potential employers of SIS students highly value “critical thinking” and “oral and writing skills”)
- Familiarity with multiple qualitative methods used by scholars, practitioners, and activists to research urban environmental inequality, including ethnographic research, case study research, archival research, surveys, oral history, mapping, and photo/video documentary

REQUIRED BOOKS AND COURSE RESERVES

The following texts are required and are available for purchase at AU’s Student Bookstore or online (where they may be cheaper). All other required readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site. To access the course Blackboard site, go to <https://blackboard.american.edu>, login, and click on the course tab. Beyond the required books above, all readings are available under “Course Reserves”. You can search by author last name to find the readings assigned for the week.

- Zeiderman, Austin. 2016. *Endangered City: The Politics of Security and Risk in Bogota*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Boo, Katherine. 2012. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random House.

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 course (and please do make suggestions!). Here is a preliminary list of recommended (not required) books outside of the ones I am assigning for the course:

- Anand, N. 2017. *Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Agyeman, J. 2005. *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice*. New York University Press: New York.
- Bullard, R. 1994. *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*. West View Press: Boulder.
- Cronon, W. 1991. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Norton: New York and London.
- Gandy, Matthew. 2003. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge: MIT Press (selections).
- Pellow, DN. *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago*. MIT Press: Cambridge.
- Pulido, L. *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Swyngedouw, E. 2004. *Flows of Power: The Political Ecology of Water and Urbanization in Ecuador*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Sze, J. 2007. *Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice*. MIT Press: Cambridge.

RECOMMENDED LONG-FORM BLOGS ON RACE, JUSTICE, AND CITIES

The Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/>
 The Atlantic City Lab: <http://www.citylab.com/>
 The African American Intellectual History Society's Black Perspectives Blog: <http://www.aaihs.org/black-perspectives/>
 The Boston Review: <http://bostonreview.net/> particularly its recent special issue: <https://bostonreview.net/forum-i#>
 The Guardian's Story of Cities: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/series/the-story-of-cities>
 Verso Blog: <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs>
 N+1 Magazine: <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/>
 The Nation: <https://www.thenation.com/>
 Society and Space Open Site: <http://societyandspace.org/>

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND DUE DATES

Assignment	%	Due Date
Class participation	20%	Throughout the semester
Weekly prompt responses (5 x 5%)	25%	By 6 pm on Bb the Wednesday before class, 5x during the semester on Bb
Reading discussion facilitation	10%	1x during the semester
Team-written Washington, DC blog	15%	February 23 by 5pm on Bb
Final research paper 1-page outline	5%	March 30 by 5pm printed out
Final research paper	25%	May 4 by 5pm on Bb
Total	100%	

Class participation (20%)

This is a reading heavy course. It is unlikely that you will earn an A-range grade in this course if you do not come prepared to discuss the weekly readings and prompts. Most class sessions will comprise of a mixture of lecture, discussion, and group work in which you will be expected to make informed contributions. I will occasionally collect in-class writing assignments to check-in on your progress.

Weekly prompt responses (5 x 5% = 25%)

For each set of weekly readings below (there are 11 altogether), I have provided a prompt in bold. During the course of the semester, you are required to submit a response to 5 of the 11 prompts on Bb. One week can be the same week in which you are the reading discussion leader (see below). Your response must be

~one single spaced page (1" margins, 12 pt font). Post each of these responses under "Weekly prompt responses" on Blackboard by 6 pm the Wednesday before class. **Late responses will not be accepted.** Your peers and I will be using your responses to lead a discussion the next day, so write clearly and compellingly. You are required to submit your first response paper **on or before our third class** so that I can give early feedback on your writing.

Reading discussion facilitation (1x during the semester) (10%)

At the beginning of semester, you will sign up to present a set of readings of your choice (a roster will be ready by the first class). As a discussion leader, you are responsible for spending the first 10-15 minutes of the second half of the class (after the break) discussing the readings by using my prompt as a guide. You should not provide a summary of the readings—assume that everyone has done them. Instead, focus on the take-home points and use the empirical examples to illustrate. You should not use any PPT slides, but instead prepare a set of notes from which to speak. You should end your presentation by asking the class additional questions for discussion.

Team-written Washington, DC blog with visuals (15%) [Due February 23]

Washington, DC is one of the most environmentally unequal "global" cities in the world. It faces serious issues ranging from toxics pollution around the Anacostia, to homelessness, to food deserts, to unequal climate risk. In this assignment, you will practice co-writing a "long form" blog entry on the origins and dynamics of a local DC-area environmental justice issue. Your blog should be about 1,000 words, written in a lively, yet authoritative and sober style. You should hyperlink relevant text in your blog as is the practice with Internet writing. You must include 1-2 visuals that you and your teammates take yourselves and 1-2 visuals (e.g. maps, old photographs, YouTube videos) you obtain from elsewhere, giving due credit. If you do not have access to a camera, you can check one out from the library. Your team will be presenting this blog in class. Instructions for how to post your blog will be circulated in due course.

Final research paper: Analysis of an urban environmental justice issue of your choice

Your final assignment will be a research paper. Your paper will critically analyze the historic origins and contemporary dynamics of an urban environmental issue of your choice either in the US or abroad, critically assessing both the root causes and its potential paths forward. Your paper should include a creative title, a compelling introduction with thesis statement/argument, appropriately titled sub-sections (more on this later), and a conclusion that summarizes the main points in the paper. The following questions should be answered:

- What are the historic and political-economic origins of this problem? Draw on at least two theoretical and historical ideas covered in class in your analysis.
- Who or what is most gravely affected by this problem and how?
- Who is involved in making major decisions around this problem, and what kind of discursive or knowledge frameworks are used in framing the problem? Are these knowledge framings helping or hindering the problem?
- What, if anything, is being done through policy interventions, activism, education, media, donor funding, etc to address this problem, and what are the effects?

Your final paper has two deliverables:

- **Outline (5%)** [Due March 30, by 5pm printed out in class]. Your 1-page outline should discuss your final paper idea and sketch of your argument (more on this later) and list at least 3 scholarly references on a 2nd page. During the last few classes, we will break into small groups to get feedback on your outlines.
- **Final draft (25%)** [Due May 4, by 5pm on Bb]. Your final paper (15-20 double spaced pages not including references, 1" margins, 12 pt font) should integrate the four bullet points above and make a central argument. A grading rubric delineating the relative importance of the quality of your prose, clear articulation of your argument, effectiveness of your citations, and grammatical

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND DUE DATES

Date	Topic
January 19	Course Introduction: Urban Environments in the 21 st Century
<i>Historical Foundations and Frameworks</i>	
January 26	The Industrial Working Class and the Modern City
February 2	The Colonial City: Segregation, Discourse, and Health
February 9	Urban Racial Segregation, Gentrification, and the Housing Crisis in the US
February 16	Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice
<i>Contemporary Governance Challenges</i>	
February 23	Urban Informality: Land and Housing in an Age of Inequality <i>Team-written Washington, DC blog due on Bb</i>
March 2	The “Sustainable City” against/in Late Capitalism
March 9	Climate Change Risk and the City
March 16	No class – <i>Spring Break</i>
<i>Infrastructural and Resource Politics</i>	
March 23	Urban Water and Sanitation Politics
March 30	Urban Transit Politics <i>Final research paper outline due, printed out</i>
April 6	<i>In class film</i>
April 13	Urban Waste Politics
April 20	What Kind of Urban Politics?
April 27	Wrap-up Discussion – Final class
May 4	<i>Final research paper due on Bb</i>

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Each set of readings and each weekly prompt response must be completed **before** the date indicated below. Please note that I have deliberately placed readings in a particular order so as to maximize logic and learning. “Further readings” are **optional** and are meant as deeper dives into the theme at hand. Note: for links, you might have to copy and paste the link into your browser in case it does not open upon clicking or you get a 404 error message. All links were current as of Jan 9, 2017.

Jan 19 – Course Introduction: Urban environments in the 21st Century

In our present moment of climate change skepticism at the federal level, coupled with the realization that urban regions concentrate enormous environmental and climate risks, inequalities, and opportunities, it would appear that all eyes are on “the urban”. In this introductory class, we consider the place of cities and “the urban imaginary” in recent global and domestic policy conversations, as well as what environmental justice and political ecology lenses brings to the table.

Metcalfe, J and L Bliss. 2016. “How Cities Plan to Fight Climate Change in the Trump Years”, *Atlantic City Lab*, 22 November. <http://www.citylab.com/weather/2016/11/how-cities-can-fight-trump-on-climate/508280/>

Wachsmuth, D, DA Cohen, and H Angelo. 2016. “Expand the Frontiers of Urban Sustainability”, *Nature*, 23 August. <http://www.nature.com/news/expand-the-frontiers-of-urban-sustainability-1.20459>

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Jan 26 – The Industrial Working Class and the Modern City

This and the following lecture will provide a broad historical sweep of the evolution of urban environments in the west and the people who produced them. In the mid 1800s, Karl Marx and his friend Frederick Engels wrote a good deal about the working class in Europe’s burgeoning industrial cities. We learn from them how the “capitalist mode of production” sought to extract “surplus value” (profit) from labor power, only to leave those same laborers with low wages and without decent housing and sanitation. Marxist theories were used to understand how modern cities were made through the harnessing of “nature” (food, fuel, water, raw materials, etc) by human labor, a process Marx called “metabolism”. These themes of the industrial working class and the modern city got taken up in literary works, especially that of Charles Baudelaire, who wrote about the effects of urban renewal on Paris’ poor. Many of these historical observations on urban poverty, natural resource exploitation, inequality, and the problems of capitalist urbanization and the urbanization of nature continue to be relevant today. **Weekly prompt 1: What is the modern city? What is the modern city’s relationship to “nature”?**

Engels, F. 1845. “The Great Towns” in *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*.

Berman, M. “Preface to the Penguin Edition” (p. 5-12: Note the post-Reagan moment!) and “Part III, Chapter 3. Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets: The Family of Eyes”, pages 148-155 in *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin.

Harvey, D. 2008. “The Right to the City”. *New Left Review*, <https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city> [READ ONLY UP TO THE END OF THE ‘URBAN REVOLUTIONS’ SECTION]

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.

Further readings:

Lefebvre, H. 2016. *Marxist Thought and the City*. Translated by R Bonono. Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press.

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

Feb 2 – The Colonial City: Segregation, Discourse, and Health

In this lecture, we turn to the colonial city. Much of what we observe in cities in the Global South today can be traced to processes of capitalist urbanization, as well as enduring legacies of the colonial encounter (why is it called the colonial encounter?). Here, Orientalist knowledge and discursive frameworks aimed at controlling the native "other" become particularly important. In this lecture, we move beyond Marxian explanations and turn to the role of discourse, knowledge, and subjectification in shaping urban environments as read through postcolonial and critical race theory. We draw in particular from the contributions of theorists Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, and Michel Foucault. **Weekly prompt 2: Why was discourse so central to racialized planning in colonial cities? How does such discourse matter today?**

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

Hall, S. 1993. "The West and The Rest: Discourse and Power" in B Glieben and S Hall (Eds), *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies: an Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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): 375-391.

Further readings:

Fanon, F. 1952. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press

Foucault, M. 2003. "Governmentality" in P Rabinow & N Rose (Eds.), *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. New York: The New Press.

Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House.

Bryant, R. 1998. "Power, knowledge, and political ecology in the third world: a review". *Progress in Physical Geography*. 22: 79-94

Feb 9 – Urban Racial Segregation, Gentrification, and the Housing Crisis in the US

We turn now to how racial segregation played out in American cities in the 20th century and how it continues to affect space, housing, and resources. The terms "de jure" and "de facto" segregation are often used to describe the difference between Jim Crow policies in the American south and economically and culturally driven segregation in the north. The former refers to legally mandated segregated housing, schools, public facilities, etc. The latter refers to class-based processes and personal prejudice that ultimately produced similar and enduring outcomes of racial segregation in the American north. In this lecture we will also discuss debates surrounding gentrification so as to set the stage for future lectures. **Weekly prompt 3: Given the deliberate role of federal and local agencies in racial segregation in the post-war period even in the US north, does the differentiation between de jure and de facto segregation make sense?**

Rothstein, R. 2014. "The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of its Troubles" Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson/>

Highsmith, A. "Demolition Means Progress: Urban Renewal, Local Politics, and State-Sanctioned Ghetto

- Formation in Flint, Michigan”. *Journal of Urban History* 35 (3): 348-368.
- The debate on gentrification rages on. Read the following two as a debate:*
- Chronopoulos, T. 2016. “African Americans, Gentrification, and Neoliberal Urbanization: the case of Fort Greene, Brooklyn, *Journal of African American Studies*. 20: 294-322.
- Buntin, J. 2015. “The Myth of Gentrification.” *Slate Magazine*.
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/01/the_gentrification_myth_it_s_r_are_and_not_as_bad_for_the_poor_as_people.html

Further readings:

- Sugrue, T. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Derickson, K. D. 2016. “Urban geography II: Urban geography in the Age of Ferguson”. *Progress in Human Geography*.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2014. “The Case for Reparations”, *The Atlantic*
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- A resource for redlining maps: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=4/36.71/-96.93&opacity=0.8&text=intro>
- Smith, N. 1982. “Gentrification and Uneven Development”. *Economic Geography*, 58 (2): 139-155.
- A resource for gentrification maps: <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/washington-dc-gentrification-maps-demographic-data.html>
- Desmond, M. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers

Feb 16 – Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice

The rise of environmental justice as an activist movement and, subsequently, as a field of policy and scholarly analysis, was contemporaneous 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 with urban political ecology, particularly in the former’s “liberal” conception of justice (what exactly does this mean?), its overarching goals strongly overlap with those of urban political ecology. In this lecture, we embark on a comparative analysis of environmental injustices in cities of the Global North and South. ***Weekly prompt 4: What is the difference between environmental racism and environmental justice? What is the difference between environmental justice and urban political ecology? Why does the history of racial segregation matter so much to the contemporary urban environment?***

- Holifield, R. 2001. Defining Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism. *Urban Geography* 22 (1): 78-90.
- Heynen, N. 2015. “Urban Political Ecology II: The abolitionist century”: *Progress in Human Geography* 40 (6): 839: 845.
- Pulido, L. 2015. “Geographies of race and ethnicity 1: White supremacy vs. white privilege in environmental racism research”. *Progress in Human Geography* 39 (6) 809–817.
- Ranganathan, M. 2016. “Thinking with Flint: Racial Liberalism and the Roots of an American Water Tragedy”. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27 (3): 17-33.
- Bolin, B et al. 2005. The Geography of Despair: Environmental Racism and the Making of South Phoenix, Arizona, USA. *Research in Human Ecology*, 12 (2): 156-168.
- Williams, B. 2001. “A River Runs Through Us”. *American Anthropologist* 103 (2).

Further readings:

- 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.
- Pulido, L. 2000. “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern

CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

Feb 23 – Urban Informality: Land and Housing in an Age of Inequality

In cities around the world, people live under conditions of precarious and not entirely legal land tenure. Land laws and regulations are flexibly and differentially interpreted, and various groups are involved in everyday negotiations and political practices to claim basic services, such as water, land, and housing. We call this “urban informality”. Arguably, “urban informality” can be posited as the new normal since this condition does not simply refer to slums, but also lower middle class settlements (as my work in Bangalore, India has shown). And furthermore, informality is not necessarily synonymous with poverty—i.e. even the wealthy engage in informality. So what, then, is urban informality? How is it related to heightening global inequality and dispossession? This lecture takes a hard look at these questions, tracing key debates from the early 1970s to the current moment. **Weekly prompt 5: Why is it important to problematize (i.e. not just take for granted) ‘chaos’ narratives of the megacity? How does the theory of urban informality help us better understand the city in all its complexity? Why is land dispossession such an important arena of struggle today?**

- Packer, G. 2006. “The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos”, *The New Yorker* 13 November: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/11/13/the-megacity>
- Roy, A. 2011. “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35 (2): 223-238.
- Harvey, D. 2008. “The Right to the City”. *New Left Review*, <https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city> [FINISH THE ESSAY, FOCUSING ON ‘DISPOSSESSION’]
- Doshi, S and M Ranganathan. 2017. “Contesting the Unethical City: Land Dispossession and Corruption Narratives in Urban India”. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107 (1): 183-199.

Further readings:

- Davis, M. 2004. “Planet of Slums”, *New Left Review* 26 (March-April)
- Roy, A. 2008. *Calcutta Requiem: Gender and the Politics of Poverty*. Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.
- Collins, E. 2016. “Postsocialist informality: The making of owners, squatters and state rule in Phnom Penh, Cambodia” 1989-1993, *Environment and Planning: A* 48 (12): 2367–2382
- Ghertner, DA. 2015. *Rule By Aesthetics: World-class City Making in Delhi*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bhan, G. 2016. *In the Public’s Interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in Contemporary Delhi*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Hsing, You-tien. 2010. *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Mar 2 – The “Sustainable City” against/in Late Capitalism

Over the last three decades, there has been a steady transformation in urban governance that Harvey broadly characterizes as a shift from “managerialism” (i.e. more emphasis on welfare and state provision) to “entrepreneurialism” (i.e. more emphasis on attracting private capital). Among urban scholars, there is considerable interest in theorizing the move towards “neoliberal” environmental governance and implications for the role of the state vs. that of the market in what is known as “late capitalism” (how does late capitalism differ from industrial capitalism?). Accompanying this shift has been an increasing emphasis on making cities “green” and “sustainable”. **Weekly prompt 6: What does the hopeful vocabulary of “sustainable city” entail in practice? How does the “sustainable city”**

vision run up against the consumer-, finance- and capital-oriented “entrepreneurial” or “world-class city”?

- 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.
- 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.
- Pow, CP and H Neo. 2013. “Seeing Red Over Green: Contesting Urban Sustainabilities in China”, *Urban Studies* 50 (11): 2256-2274.
- Checker, M. 2011. “Wiped out by the “Greenwave”: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Sustainability”, *City & Society* 23 (2): 210-229.
- REVISIT THIS PIECE: Wachsmuth, D, DA Cohen, and H Angelo. 2016. “Expand the Frontiers of Urban Sustainability”, *Nature*, 23 August. <http://www.nature.com/news/expand-the-frontiers-of-urban-sustainability-1.20459>

Mar 9 – Climate Change Risk and the City

Cities are increasingly susceptible to the negative effects of climate change, including storm surges, flooding from even moderate rainfall, heat waves, and health epidemics. In many of these cities, the informal poor, women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups have been shown to bear a disproportionate burden of climate risks. We will read Zeiderman’s ethnographic work on how the politics of risk (climate and otherwise) provide a subtext for urban citizens in Bogota, Colombia, while also discussing some of the more practical dimensions of climate change adaptation governance in cities.

Weekly prompt 7: What is the most interesting insight you learned from Zeiderman’s book? Why might a framework of “risk” be a double-edged sword?

Zeiderman, Austin. 2016. *Endangered City: The Politics of Security and Risk in Bogota*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mar 16 – Spring Break – no class

INFRASTRUCTURAL AND RESOURCE POLITICS

Mar 23 – Urban Water and Sanitation Politics

Water is perhaps the most studied resource in urban political ecology given the inextricable relationship between the harnessing of water and urbanization. In this lecture, we will look at formative works that theorize that relationship, including work that is increasingly looking at water poverty and failing technology and infrastructure in the global North, and move on to contemporary debates on urban water privatization. Of particular interest to scholars and policy analysts have been the implications of water privatization and market-based reform on access and sustainability, as well as the forms of political struggle that take root at sites of water policy change. **Weekly prompt 8: What does a feminist political ecology lens bring to the study of urban water access? What does a transnational (i.e. across the North and South) lens bring to the study of urban water access?**

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

Bakker, K. 2010. *Governance Failure and the World’s Urban Water Crisis*. Cornell University Press, New York (selections).

- Truelove, Y. 2011. "(Re-)Conceptualizing water inequality in Delhi, India through a feminist political ecology framework". *Geoforum* 32: 143-152.
- Ahmed, B. 2016. 'They're Not Going to Be Able to Ignore This Entire City Standing Together', *Atlantic City Lab* 30 December: <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2016/12/theyre-not-going-to-be-able-to-ignore-this-entire-city-standing-together/511883/>

Further readings

- Gandy, M. 2004. "Rethinking urban metabolism: Water, space and the modern city", *City* 8 (3): 363-369.
- Ranganathan, M and C Balazs. 2015. "Water Marginalization at the Urban Periphery: Environmental Justice and Urban Political Ecology Across the North-South Divide". *Urban Geography* 36 (3): 403-423.
- Ranganathan, M. 2014. "Mafias in the Waterscape: Urban Informality and Everyday Public Authority in Bangalore". *Water Alternatives* 7 (1): 89-105.
- Schwartz, K., M. T. Luque, M. Rusca & R. Ahlers. 2015. "(In)formality: the meshwork of water service provisioning". *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water* 2 (January/February): 31-36.

Mar 30 – Urban Transit Politics

People and things in cities are constantly on the move. A surging middle class in Latin America, 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 food options (as is the case in many cities in the US). In this lecture, we look at uneven geographies of mobility and accessibility in developing and developed cities and debates around sustainable transit, including the cycling and gentrification debate in DC. ***Weekly prompt 9: The goals of sustainable transit seem to be incompatible with upward economic mobility, since the latter moves people towards owning cars. Debate this proposition.***

- Paletta, A. 2016. "Story of cities #32: Jane Jacobs v Robert Moses, battle of New York's urban titans". *The Guardian* 28 April <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/28/story-cities-32-new-york-jane-jacobs-robert-moses>

Also, see these before and after maps of how freeways transformed America's cities:

<http://www.vox.com/2014/12/29/7460557/urban-freeway-slider-maps>

- Grengs, J. 2007. "Community-Based Planning as a Source of Political Change: The Transit Equity Movement of Los Angeles' Bus Riders Union" *Journal of the American Planning Association*
- Cervero, R. 2005. "Progressive Transport and the Poor: Bogotá's Bold Steps Forward". *Access Magazine* 27 <http://www.accessmagazine.org/articles/fall-2005/progressive-transport-poor-bogotas-bold-steps-forward/>
- Stein, P. 2015. "Why are bike lanes such heated symbols of gentrification?" *Washington Post* 12 November https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/11/12/why-are-bike-lanes-such-heated-symbols-of-gentrification/?utm_term=.8c8d4df83295

Apr 6 – In-class film. No readings due

Apr 13 – Urban Waste Politics

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 journalist Katherine Boo's heart-wrenching account of trashwork in a Mumbai slum. While this is not an "academic" book per se, several

themes about the structural causes of poverty, environmental inequalities, class, and globalization resonate with the themes of this class. **Weekly prompt 10: Why is waste such a powerful resource through which to examine contemporary urban politics? Yet, why is waste so neglected in academic and policy work?**

Boo, K. 2012. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random House.

Apr 20 – What Kind of Urban Politics?

Political struggle against unjust environmental conditions implicating racial, economic, and other oppression takes many forms, from outright resistance and protest, to what Asef Bayat has called “quiet encroachment of the ordinary”, to even strategic complicity. 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. **Weekly prompt 11: What kind of politics do we need for creating cities that are both sustainable and inclusive?**

Pieterse, E. Chapter 1 in *City Futures: Confronting the Crisis of Urban Development*. Zed, London

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

Purdy, J. 2016. Environmentalism Was Once a Social-Justice Movement, *The Atlantic* 7 December <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/12/how-the-environmental-movement-can-recover-its-soul/509831/>

Further Readings:

Benjamin, S. 2008. “Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy beyond Policy and Programs”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32 (3): 719-29.’

Ranganathan, M. 2014. “Paying for Pipes, Claiming Citizenship: Political Agency and Water Reforms at the Urban Periphery”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38 (2): 590-608.

Matlon, J. 2016. “Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity”. *American Sociological Review* 81 (5): 1014-1038.

Simone, AM. 2008. “The politics of the possible: Making urban life in Phnom Penh” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 29: 186-204.

Holston, J. 2008. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Apr 27 – Wrap-up Discussion – No readings due. Come prepared to discuss your favorite quotes, theories, and concepts from the readings and any last-minute questions about your final papers.
