GLOBAL URBANISM

Fall 2010

Instructor: Prof. Saskia Sassen, sis2@columbia.edu
Class Time & Location: Monday & Wednesday 2:40pm-3:55pm, Hamilton 702
Professor Sassen’s Office Hours: Mostly Mon 12:30-2:00. SOME will be Wed 1:00-2:30. HOURS WILL BE POSTED ON THE OFFICE DOOR AND ON COURSEWORKS. Please check schedule.
Teaching Assistant: Natan Dotan, Rajiv Nunna

The course will cover some of the major urban conditions in the world today that point to global systemics, globally linked processes, and instantiation of the global in cities. Cities are at the forefront of a range of global governance challenges, the application of technological innovations in complex settings, and novel types of politics, both formal and informal. Many of today’s major global governance challenges become concrete, urgent and practical in major cities worldwide. Urban leaderships and urban activists have had to deal with some of these issues (air quality, flooding, the growth of gang warfare, a proliferation of racisms, human insecurity, new kinds of inequality) long before national governments and inter-state treaties do so. Cities emerge as a frontier space in a growing range of domains/challenges. The mediations offered by national states and protectionist policies have become weaker. Firms can engage localities directly (through WTO law) without going through the national state. And citizens can access formal global jurisdictions (e.g. through the ICC) and informal ones (e.g. electronic global civil society spaces) directly without having to be represented by national states.

Among these global governance challenges we will focus particularly on those concerning the environment, decaying and new types of urban infrastructures, human security (as distinct from national state security), racisms of all sorts, new types of inequalities, new types of formal and informal political actors and initiatives, and emerging inter-city networks involving a broad range of actors (NGOs, formal urban governments, informal activists, global firms, immigrants). It is also in cities that these challenges can be studied empirically and that policy design and implementation can become more feasible than at national levels. Cities are the sites for new types of formal and informal political actors and initiatives, and for emerging inter-city networks involving a broad range of actors, from NGOs to TNCs. Formal networks of urban governments have multiplied sharply since the 1990s.

The course draws both on classical texts about cities (do they still work for us, what do they fail to account for) and on the diverse new literatures on cities and larger subjects with direct urban implications. We will use a variety of data sets to get at detailed empirical information, and draw on two large ongoing research projects involving major and minor global cities around the world (a total of over 60 cities are covered in detail as of 2008). We will also deal with some of the new theoretical questions that arise out of our current urban age, ranging from the urbanizing of a whole range of dynamics and conditions that are not urban per se, to the possibly foundational transformation in the civic features of cities, and in the meaning of urbanity itself.

Course Assignments:

1. You are asked to come to class well-prepared to discuss the required readings of the session.

2. A mid-term take-home essay that will cover the first half of the course (50%). The format: a) three essay questions, b) you must use the required readings for the first half of the class –it is one way in which I can standardize your answers, c) do not use other materials. The questions will not be easy: you will have to work with the readings and figure out what the essay question asks. Having the material handy is not going to give you the answer. But all the key issues will be discussed at length in the lectures. Each of the three answers should be 4 double spaced typed pages. You will have to be quite analytical to ensure you address the key issues for each question in just 4 pages. Counts for 50% of grade.

3. A choice of either a final project/paper, or an essay that will cover the second half of the course’s required readings. If you chose the essay, the format will be exactly the same as for the midterm –by then you will have developed your talents at this type of writing. If you chose a project/paper, please come and see me to discuss it. Counts for 50% of grade.

4. Quality of participation (not how much you talk but what you say!) in the weekly discussion sessions: this matters as the small sub-groups allows us to get to know you, the particular angles you bring to the discussion, and your type of knowledge (which can vary sharply, depending on your academic background and your major).
Books and Readings:

We will read articles, reports; we will work with various websites that have up to date information. We will read some classic texts about cities, both by urbanists and by non-urbanists, on subjects that are pertinent to understanding current urban conditions, from pertinent global governance questions to pertinent technological advances.

All required readings (articles, book extracts, online publications, data sets, visual materials) will be available on CourseWorks (www.courseworks.columbia.edu). I am asking students to get one book, which will work as a basic text, insofar as it covers most of the key subjects:


COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

**I. Introduction**

Week 1 (9/8/2010)

Review of the main subjects to be covered in the class.

Introduction of some of the theoretical and methodological issues we confront when one studies cities in the context of globalization, changed relationships between national and local governments, the new environmental challenges, and the new military asymmetries that tend to urbanize war.

**II. Theorizing the City: Classical & Contemporary Reflections**

Week 2 (9/13/2009)

**Required Readings**


**Suggested Reading**

Max Weber: “Concepts and Categories of the City” and “The Occidental City”, in *Economy and Society (Volume 2)*, pp. 1212-1231, and pp. 1236-1251


Saskia Sassen, “Cities are the center of our environmental future”, *S.A.P.I.E.N.S* 2:3 2010 p1-8


**III. Territorializing Capital: Cross-Border Circuits & the Political Economy of Place**

Week 3 (9/20/2010)

**Required Reading**


**Interactive, Visual, or Web-Related Materials**

Global Migration:

World Oil Consumption (must have the GoogleEarth plugin installed):

Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Vermont:
3.) [http://www.uvm.edu/giee/](http://www.uvm.edu/giee/)

**Suggested Reading**


**IV. Penalizing the Poor: Neoliberal Enclosure & the Production of Advanced Marginality**

**Required Reading**


Suggested Readings


** SPECIAL EVENT – PLEASE NOTE **

CONFERENCE: Cities and Eco-Crises
Friday, October 1
Wood Auditorium in Avery Hall, New York City
Additional information will be posted on course website.

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V. Deciphering the Global Slum: Networked Subjects & the Negotiation of Illegible Claims

Required Readings

Week 5 (10/4/2010)

Mike Davis, Planet of Slums, (Verso: London and New York, 2006), pp. 20-50


Rachel Morello-Frosch, Manuel Pastor, James Sadd, and Seth B. Shonkoff: “The Climate Gap: Inequalities in How Climate Change Hurts Americans & How to Close the Gap”, Program for Environmental & Regional Equity, University of Southern California (May 2009), pp. 1-32


Frances Moore Lappé “Seeing Hunger through New Eyes: From Lack to Possibility” Project on Food and Development April 2009 p1-8

**Interactive, Visual, or Web-Related Materials**

The Places We Live – Interactive Photo-Essay


WSJ Interactive - Raising Walls:

2.) [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124501964322813585.html#project%3DWALLS0906%26articleTabs%3Dinteractive](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124501964322813585.html#project%3DWALLS0906%26articleTabs%3Dinteractive)

**Suggested Readings**


**VI. Sustainable Development: Ecological Footprints & the Limits to Urban Growth**

**Required Readings**


Richard A. Matthew and Anne Hammill “Sustainable Development and Climate Change” International Affairs 85:6 2009 p1117-1128


Christine Outram, et al. “The Copenhagen Wheel: An innovative electric bicycle system that harnesses the power of real-time information and crowd sourcing”

Shiv Someshwar “Adaptation as ‘Climate-Smart’ Development” *Development*, 51, 2008 p366-374

**Interactive, Visual, or Web-Related Materials:**

National Resource Defense Council Maps of the US

1.) [http://smartercities.nrdc.org/maps/large](http://smartercities.nrdc.org/maps/large)

Sea Level Scenarios

2.) [https://www.cresis.ku.edu/research/data/sea_level_rise/index.html](https://www.cresis.ku.edu/research/data/sea_level_rise/index.html)


IIED Web Resources on Climate Change and Urban Development


**Suggested Readings**


**VII. Infrastructural Violence, Urban Insecurity & the New Geographies of War**

**Week 7 (10/18/2010)**

**Required Readings**


Arthur H. Westing “Environmental Protection from Wartime Damage: The Role of International Law” in N.P. Gleditsch et al. (eds.) *Conflict and the Environment* 1997  p535-553

*Suggested Readings*


*Interactive, Visual, or Web-Related Materials:*

UNHCR Maps

1.) http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Wd.nsf/luFullMap/D0C659C22199274E852574880070DB73/$File/unhcr_IDP_wrl0805.pdf?OpenElement

Comprehensive Map of Iraq IDPs

2.) http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/httpCountry_Maps?ReadForm&country=Iraq&count=10000

**VIII. The Territorial Moment of Global Capital**

*Week 8 (10/25/2010)*

*Required Readings*

Suggested Readings


IX. Week 9 (11/3/2010): Review Session and Mid-Term Writing Assignment

Before and during the class period, the TA for the class will hold office hours. Students can go in groups or individually with questions about the readings and class lectures. Besides the class time-slot, we will inform you about other times for extra office hours.

We Will Email Three Essay Assignments After Class on November 3rd after discussion session

Due on NOV 10th
(Please Email Your Completed Assignment to TA)

This writing assignment is a take home essay. I will give you three essay questions—each to be addresses in maximum 4 double spaced pages. The questions will not be easy, but you can do it. They will be based on a thorough understanding of the readings and class lectures up to now, as per the syllabus. You are not to bring in other readings—just the ones in the syllabus (this is the only way I can have a bit of closure on the materials, which helps me grade you!). Even more detailed instructions will be written into the assignment when we email it to you. No need to come to class (though the class will be a review session).

X. Neoliberal Urbanization: Flexible Employment Regimes & the Privatization of Risk

Week 10 (11/8/2010)

Required Reading


Suggested Reading


**XI. Migratory & Monetary Flows: Refugees, Remitters & Internally Displaced Persons**

**Week 11 (11/15/2010)**

**Required Readings**


Frank Biermann and Ingrid Boas “Preparing for a Warmer World: Towards a Global Governance System to Protect Climate Refugees” *Global Environmental Politics* 10:1 2010 p60-88

**Suggested Readings**


**Interactive, Visual, or Web-Related Materials**

Remittances Maps: World Bank & International Fund for Agricultural Development


**XII. Scalar Linkages: Novel Assemblages of Territory, Authority & Rights**

**Week 12 (11/22/2010)**
Required Readings


Suggested Readings


XIII. Transformative Technologies: Digitization & the Possibility of New Urban Politics

Required Readings


Carolyn Cartier, Manuel Castells, and Jack Linchuan Qiu, “The Information Have-Less: Inequality, Mobility, and Translocal Networks in Chinese Cities”, Studies in Comparative International Development, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Sum 2005), pp. 9-34


Noah J Toly “Transnational Municipal Networks in Climate Politics: From Global Governance to Global Politics” Globalizations 5:3 Sept. 2008 p341-156

Michael Pelken “Vertical Axis Wind Turbines integrated in High-Rise Structures”
**Suggested Readings**


**FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT OR PROJECT – ASSIGNED AFTER CLASS DECEMBER 6th, 2010**

Will follow the same format as the mid-term writing assignment, except you will only cover the required readings for the second half of the course.

Students who wish to do a final paper in lieu of a final ASSIGNMENT should discuss it with me.

DUE: TBD