ANTH-UA 81
Global Cities: Anthropological Perspectives
Spring 2015

19W4 Room 102

Instructor: Anne Rademacher
Office: 285 Mercer Street 905
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-3 and by appointment. Please check with me before dropping in, as some weeks will involve slight changes in the office hour schedule.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores urban processes in transnational and cross-cultural perspective. Drawing on theories of globalization, development, and migration, we will consider how the global context shapes debates about cities, and complicates our understanding of sociocultural life in urban places.

As arenas of complex political and economic processes, twenty-first century cities host economic growth as well as economic disparity; they function in ways both politically liberating and politically limiting. In global context, cities may be seen as centers of commerce and cultural production, as places where social and spatial order are administered, and as sites of hope, struggle, creativity, and ingenuity. Anchoring our examination in ethnographies set in specific cities, we will analyze local, regional/national, and global perspectives on questions of urban equity, migration, violence, ecology, and citizenship.

Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to the urban networks across which capital, labor, and ideas travel. We will explore how these networks can provide particular kinds of access, and how they can reproduce sociocultural boundaries and inequalities.

Three broad analytical questions will guide our inquiry:

- How have contemporary urban places developed in relation to historical, economic, social, and global influences?
- How, and by whom, are various urban problems and solutions articulated?
- What, and where, are the social, political, and economic cleavages around which people mobilize (race/ethnicity, caste/class, gender, geography, etc.) in twenty-first century cities?
REQUIREMENTS

This course covers a wide range of topics and case studies. To do well, it is essential that you attend all class sessions, and complete all the required readings before coming to class. The lectures will assume that you have read the readings thoroughly, and will often introduce additional material that does not appear in the readings.

Due to the structure and content of the course, attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at every class.

Five 2-page commentaries are due over the course of the semester. These essays provide a chance to integrate at least three readings from the syllabus in support of a thesis of your choice. These essays allow you to describe how specific readings support or contradict one another, and to compare and contrast the forms of evidence on which they depend. In grading these assignments, I pay equal attention to clarity in composition and to the degree to which the essay substantiates its thesis. We will discuss the commentary format at length in class. In fairness to your colleagues in the course, late commentaries cannot be accepted under any circumstances.

A final take-home essay exam completes the requirements for the course. You will receive a set of eight possible final essay questions; from this list you will choose six and compose your responses in the commentary format that we have used throughout the semester. You will have one week to complete the final exam.

Your final grade will be computed based on the following distribution:

- Participation in discussions (20%)
- Five Commentaries, each 10% (50%)
- Final essay exam (30%)

READINGS

*Required Books, were available at Shakespeare & Company, 716 Broadway @ Washington Place:


**LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE**

**Week One, Session One**

Course Introduction

**Week One, Session Two**

Scale and History in the Urban Age


Follow Links to:


**Week Two, Session One**

Social Structure, Social Transformation, and Urban Spaces


Week Two, Session Two
Social Structure, Social Transformation, and Urban Spaces


Recommended:
Mumford, Lewis. 1937. What is a City?

Week Three, Sessions One and Two
The Problem of Cities (+ Introduction to Writing a Commentary)


Week Four, Session One (Wednesday, Feb. 18)
Cities and Global Capitalism


Commodities and the Politics of Value. Pp. 9-60 in The Future as Cultural Fact

Commentary #1 Due on Wednesday, Feb. 18

Week Five, Sessions One and Two
Commodities, Consumption, Aspiration


Week Six, Session One
Invisible Labor, Contested Citizenship


Watch on your own before the class period:
Dirty Pretty Things

Week Six, Session Two
Visible, Proximate, Unequal

*Review news coverage of the case of Devyani Khobragade, starting with:*

*Watch on your own before the class period:*
*Laxmi and Me*

**Week Seven, Sessions One and Two**

**Migration and Mobility**


*Watch on your own:*
*My Migrant Soul*

**Week Eight, Sessions One and Two**

**The Problem of Shelter**


*Recommended*

BBC “interactive tour” of Dharavi
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi_slum/html/dharavi_slum_intro.stm


*Commentary #2 Due on Friday, March 27*

**Week Nine, Session One**

**Visibility, Class, and Violence I**

Part Two of *The Future as Cultural Fact* (excluding "Deep Democracy")

**Week Nine, Session Two**

**Visibility, Class, and Violence II**

**Week Ten, Session One**


Watch on your own: *News from a Personal War* (featured video in the DVD for *City of God*), on reserve

**Recommended:**

**Week Ten, Session Two**

**Catching Up Session**

Commentary #3 Due on Friday, May 10

Your chance to get up-to-date on all readings.

**Week Eleven, Sessions One and Two**

**Ecology, Identity, and Defining Urban Nature**


**Week Twelve, Sessions One and Two**

**“Ecological Urbanization”**


Review the Featured Solutions on “Design for the Other 90%”
Access at [http://www.designother90.org/](http://www.designother90.org/)

**Week Thirteen, Sessions One and Two**

**Political Transformation and Urban Change**
Commentary #4 Due on Friday, May 1


Week Fourteen
Review Sessions, Final Exam Prep

Watch on your own: Garbage Dreams, on reserve

Commentary #5 Due on Monday, May 11

Final Exam will be handed out in class on May 14 and will be due to my office by 5pm on May 20.