

## **GEOG\*4200: Social Life of Cities**

### **Department of Geography University of Guelph**

Instructor: Dr. Bharat Punjabi

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Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30pm-3:50pm

Location: Online

Office hours: By appointment

TA: TBA

Prerequisites: GEOG\*2260 (GEOG\*3050 recommended)

### **Course Overview**

This course examines the socio-geographical dynamics of city life. Focusing primarily on cities in India and Canada, we consider ways in which economic and social transformation configures urban space and how the geography of the city, in turn, shapes social and economic life. Using examples of social inequality as well as processes like gentrification, renewal and eviction to understand the geography of urban spaces we ask a series of questions about: (1) how power relations are expressed in and through the built environment; and (2) how laws and their interpretation shape the geography of cities and 3) how economic and housing inequality shape class relations and the built form of cities. We will also examine the future of the post pandemic city and the prospective forms of urban governance in Canada and in the Global South. Several themes run through the course material and will be central to our discussions, including the role of finance capital in the world economy, the workings of law and public policy, housing speculation and the future of the post-pandemic city

### **Course Objectives**

- To develop students' knowledge of themes and topics in urban studies;
- To encourage a critical intellectual engagement with the physical forms and social functions that are found in modern urban environments in the Global North and Global South
- To investigate the causes and consequences of urban economic transformation and inequality
- To develop research, reading, and writing skills, as well as critical thinking.

### **Course Format**

This course is conceived of as a forum for facilitating critical enquiry into the dynamics of contemporary urban social geography in Canada and mega city regions in Asia. The course will be conducted as a seminar: we meet twice a week for three hours in total and will spend a significant amount of our time in seminar-style discussion of course materials. The purpose of our meetings will be to discuss, share, and develop our understandings of the readings, as well as to distil, and together build an understanding of course themes and concepts. Each meeting you will be expected to attend class

prepared to discuss the readings with your peers. This format requires close reading and significant preparation of texts before coming to classwork for which you will be evaluated on and rewarded for. I will begin the course by a treatment of the political economy of globalization of cities in the Global South and in Canada. Following that, I will start the course every week started by providing a contextual overview of the course content weekly topics at the beginning of each class, but a significant part of our class time will also be dedicated to student led presentation and discussion. All students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before the class meetings, and to come prepared with observations, reflections, and questions from the readings. Student participation will be assessed through multiple means, including written reflections, class participation, and the completion of class activities. The assignments will assume knowledge gained from both the texts, lectures and seminars, so class attendance is highly recommended. We will be using Course link as an electronic resource for announcements, accessing course materials, and submitting assignments.

### **A note on seminar participation**

This is your class and I want you to get as much out of these meetings as possible. Please feel free to raise questions and topics for discussion, and contribute your understanding of course themes, arguments, concepts and connections during the discussion. But participation also involves listening to other people's comments, thoughtfully engaging with their views, not interrupting, and letting other people express themselves. This does not mean that it is out of bounds to challenge a classmate on her/his views or to disagree about how to interpret an argument, but rather that you do so respectfully and politely and in a manner that helps us all learn. There is a distinction between contributing to discussion (where your comments build off others' comments, generate further discussion, and contribute overall to the class achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the topics) and making self-serving or arrogant comments that embarrass others and shut down lines of communication. The purpose of these discussions is that we learn from each other and come to a deeper understanding of the readings by reading and discussing together. In these meetings you have a responsibility to your classmates to be prepared, to actively contribute to discussions and to be courteous and respectful; you also have a right to expect the same of them.

### **Evaluation**

Class participation & seminar engagement (Weeks 2-11): 55%

- active participation & in class discussions and activities 15%
- written submissions & seminar preparation (40%)

Book review (due, April 15th): 45%

#### **Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> January: Course introduction, logistics and seminar roles assigned

No required reading

Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> January: Introduction to the Political Economy of Cities

- 1)Marxian, Weberian, Chicago School and post-colonial approaches to the city
- 2) Neoclassical economics and the city
- 3) Institutional approaches to the city

## **Week 2: Introduction to the urban form in a mega city in India**

Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January: Informality and illegality in urban India. Solomon Benjamin (2008)

Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> January (online submission due)

Required Readings for week 2: Introduction chapter "In the Public's interest"

## **Week 3: Legal geographies of the city**

Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January: Planning, the law and informality

Required Reading: Chapter 1 in "In the Public's interest"; Heller and Mukhopadhyay (2015)

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> January (contd)

## **Week 4 The Politics of Governance in Delhi**

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> February: Urban Governance,

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Required Reading: Chapter 2 "In the Public's interest"

Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February (contd)

## **Week 5 Citizenship in Indian cities**

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Required Reading: Chapter 3 in "The Public's interest"

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February: (contd)

## **Week 6 : Judiciary and social resistance in the Indian city**

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February:

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Required Reading: Chapter 4 in "The Public's interest"

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February (contd)

## **Week 7: Southern urban scholarship**

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March:

Required Readings: Chapter "Inquiries from the South" in the Public's interest

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March ( contd.)

## **Week 8: Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy**

Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March:

Seminar discussion, online submission due

Required Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1 in "Expulsions"

Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> March (contd.)

## **Week 9: Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy**

Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> March:

Seminar discussion, online submission due  
Required Reading: Chapter 2 and 3 in “Expulsions”  
Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> March: (contd)

#### **Week 10: Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy**

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March:  
Required Readings: Chapter 4 and Conclusion in “Expulsions”  
Seminar discussion, online submission due  
Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March: contd.

#### **Week 11: Frontiers in urban research: Housing inequality in Canada**

Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022: Visiting lecture by Professor Alan Walks (University of Toronto, read papers by Alan Walks in list of readings)

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March : Pandemic and the City. Edward Glaeser (2022) and Florida et al (2021) paper in list of Readings

#### **Week 12: Frontiers in urban research: Governance in Canadian and world cities**

Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Visiting lecture on urban politics and governance by Dr Richard Stren (Political Science, University of Toronto)  
Readings: Stren and Friendly (2019)

### **Readings (not in alphabetical order):**

Gautam Bhan 2016. In the Public’s interest: Evictions, Citizenship, and Inequality in contemporary Delhi. Athens: University of Georgia Press (available on the library website)

Saskia Sassen 2014. Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy. Harvard University Press (available on the library website)

Alan Walks 2014. Canada’s Housing Bubble Story: Mortgage Securitization, the State, and the Global Financial Crisis. International Journal of Urban and regional Research. Vol 38.1 January 2014. Pages 256-284

Alan Walks 2019. Affordability and housing policy in the world’s cities: Excavating the global housing bubble in Markus Moos eds. A Research Agenda for Housing. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019

Edward Glaeser 2022. Urban Resilience. Urban Studies. Vol 59, Issue 1, 2022 ( Article on the pandemic)  
Link: <https://journals-sagepub-com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/doi/full/10.1177/00420980211052230>

Richard Florida, Andres Rodriguez-Pose and Michael Storper 2021. Cities in a post-Covid World. Urban Studies. June 27, 2021

Link: <https://journals-sagepub-com.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/doi/full/10.1177/00420980211018072>

Patrick Heller and Partha Mukhopadhyay 2015 State produced inequality in an Indian city. Seminar Magazine: 672-August 2015

Link: [https://www.patrickheller.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15377686/state-produced\\_inequality\\_seminar\\_2015.pdf](https://www.patrickheller.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15377686/state-produced_inequality_seminar_2015.pdf)

Solomon Benjamin 2008 "Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy beyond Policy and Programs". International Journal of Urban and regional Research. Vol 32, Issue 3. Pages 719-729  
Richard Stren and Abigail Friendly 2019 . Big City Mayors: Still avatars of local politics. Cities 84 (2019) 172-177

### **POLICY ON USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:**

Reminder that cell phones and other communications devices should either be turned off or in silent mode. Do not answer your phone or text message during class. If you use a laptop for taking notes, please do so in a way that does not disturb other students or distract the instructor.

Taking photos, audio and video recordings are not permitted. Audio recording requires permission of the instructor. This holds especially for the lectures. Non-compliance with these rules on recording will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct

### Standard Statements

#### E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <mail.uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

#### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

#### Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is on the undergraduate calendar. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar.

#### Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

#### Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment.

Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email [csd@uoguelph.ca](mailto:csd@uoguelph.ca) or see the website: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The course will use Turnitin and all assignments must be submitted to Courselink and will be analyzed using Turnitin

**Recording of Materials:** Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate, or a guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

*Resources: The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/index.cfm?index>*