



GEOGRAPHY 9117

Urban Geography of the Developing World

Winter 2024

1. Course Information

1.1. Classroom Location: CONTACT INSTRUCTOR FOR LOCATION

1.2 Meeting Time: Mondays 1-3pm

1.3 Course Instructor: Dr Godwin Arku

2. Course Evaluation

Course assessments and grades based on:

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Due Date
Term Paper(s)	80%	TBD
Summary of weekly readings	20%	Weekly

Course Description

Cities are very heterogenous, dynamic and confusing geographies. In the developing world, urban geographies are characterised by rapidly expanding slums and informal settlements, mega urban projects, western style shopping malls, and other forms of urban transformation. Cities in the developing world are also rapidly urbanizing and it is projected that most of the future “mega cities” will be in developing countries. These processes are transforming cities physically, socially, and economically with significant implications on the quality of life of urban residents. We will examine physical, economic, and social characteristics of cities in the developing world in global and historical context. The course will involve a critical examination of planning ideologies, principles, and recent global processes that have shaped and continues to shape the character of cities in developing countries as well as their outcomes. *Although the course focuses on urban geography in developing regions, we will also explore broader issues that are applicable in an international context, providing a platform for north-south and south-north knowledge transfer.*

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Critically engage with different theoretical debates underpinning urban dynamics in cities.
2. Examine the different social, economic, political, and environmental factors shaping the character of cities in the developing world.
3. Interrogate scholarly debates on planetary urbanization.
4. Analyze the potential impacts of globalization and technological advancements on urbanization processes in developing world cities, considering both opportunities and challenges presented by these trends.
5. Debate on how cities in developing regions are managing and responding to the challenges of urban informality.
6. Examine how cities of the developing world are planning for and managing the impacts of the climate crisis and the implications for building resilience to shocks and stresses.
7. Discuss the planning, policy, and governance implications of urban development processes in cities of the developing world.

Course Content

Week 1: Theorizing urban geography.

In Week 1 of the course, we will delve into the foundational aspects of urban geography with a focus on developing a broader perspective. The week aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding urban dynamics, exploring key concepts and debates that shape the field. Students will critically engage with various theories that underpin urban geography, gaining insights into how these theoretical perspectives contribute to our comprehension of the complexities inherent in urban spaces. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the week sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of urban geography, encouraging participants to consider the broader socio-economic, political, and environmental contexts that influence the development and character of cities.

Suggested readings.

1. Storper, M., & Scott, A. J. (2016). Current debates in urban theory: A critical assessment. *Urban studies*, 53(6), 1114-1136.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098016634002>
2. Robinson, J., & Roy, A. (2016). Debate on global urbanisms and the nature of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(1), 181-186.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12272>
3. Derickson, K. D. (2015). Urban geography I: Locating urban theory in the 'urban age'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(5), 647-657.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0309132514560961>

4. Leitner, H., & Sheppard, E. (2016). Provincializing critical urban theory: Extending the ecosystem of possibilities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(1), 228-235. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12277>
5. Randolph, G. F., & Storper, M. (2022). Is urbanisation in the Global South fundamentally different? Comparative global urban analysis for the 21st century. *Urban Studies*, 00420980211067926. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211067926>

Week 2: Planetary Urbanization

The concept of planetary urbanization has generated significant debate among scholars over the years. This multifaceted and dynamic discourse revolves around the profound transformations occurring in the global urban landscape, transcending traditional notions of urbanization. As a conceptual framework, planetary urbanization challenges conventional perspectives by emphasizing the interconnectedness of urban processes on a planetary scale. What are the key debates on planetary urbanization? What are the theoretical and practical implications of planetary urbanization in cities of developing regions?

Suggested readings.

1. Ruddick, S., Peake, L., Tanyildiz, G. S., & Patrick, D. (2018). Planetary urbanization: An urban theory for our time?. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(3), 387-404. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0263775817721489>
2. Schmid, C. (2018). Journeys through planetary urbanization: Decentering perspectives on the urban. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(3), 591-610. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0263775818765476>
3. Angelo, H., & Goh, K. (2021). Out in space: Difference and abstraction in planetary urbanization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 45(4), 732-744. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.12911>
4. Vegliò, S. (2021). Postcolonizing planetary urbanization: Aníbal Quijano and an alternative genealogy of the urban. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 45(4), 663-678. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.13024>
5. Galindez, K. (2023). Planetary Urbanization and Imperialism: A View from Guåhan/Guam. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 47(1), 5-21. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-2427.13157>
6. Khatam, A., & Haas, O. (2018). Interrupting planetary urbanization: A view from Middle Eastern cities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(3), 439-455.

Week 3: Globalization and cities of the developing countries.

As today's world continues to globalize at an ever-rapid speed, with more cities becoming increasingly interdependent, we have seen an intensification of linkages and flows of products, ideas, and culture among and between places and regions. Over the last two decades or so, both the pace and the nature of globalization have brought a great deal of change to the economic,

cultural, and political geography of places and regions. Much of the world's economic and cultural activities, transnational in scope, are linked together through complex and rapidly changing global connections. As globalization forces continue to shape cities around the world, such as the case of cities in South and Southeast Asia, we will see local and regional economic development much more open to external influences than ever before. For example, several cities in South and Southeast Asia have been more than willing to forgo pro-poor urban agendas in the pursuit of luring global capital to their cities. In what ways is globalization shaping urban processes and urban changes in the developing world? What key global forces are influencing the urban development trajectory of cities in the developing world. In this seminar, we will discuss how the process of globalization is shaping cities in the global south, using case studies from different regions such as Latin America, Africa, Asia etc.

Suggested readings:

1. Balbo, M (2014). Beyond the city of developing countries. The new urban order of the 'emerging city'. *Planning Theory*, 13(3): 269-287.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213496098>
2. Robinson J (2002). Global and world cities: A view from off the map. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(3): 531-555. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00397>
3. Lane, M. (2021). Policy Mobility and Postcolonialism: The Geographical Production of Urban Policy Territories in Lusaka and Sacramento. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2021.1960791>
4. Montero, S. (2020). Leveraging Bogotá: Sustainable development, global philanthropy, and the rise of urban solutionism. *Urban Studies*, 57(11), 2263-2281.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018798555>

Week 4: Smart urbanism and urban innovation

In the rapidly evolving landscape of urban development, cities around the world are embracing the transformative potential of smart urbanism and technological innovations to confront the multifaceted challenges inherent in urban living. This paradigm shift represents a concerted effort to harness the power of advanced technologies and data-driven solutions to create more efficient, sustainable, and livable urban environments. In this seminar, we will delve into the appropriateness and effectiveness of several of these initiatives, particularly in the context of cities in the developing world. The unique socio-economic, infrastructural, and environmental challenges faced by these urban centers necessitate a nuanced examination of how smart urban solutions can be tailored and implemented to address their specific needs.

Suggested readings.

1. Bandaiko, E., & Arku, R. N (2023). A critical analysis of 'smart cities' as an urban development strategy in Africa. *International Planning Studies*, 28(1), 69-86.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13563475.2022.2137112>

2. Odendaal, N. (2021). Everyday urbanisms and the importance of place: Exploring the elements of the emancipatory smart city. *Urban Studies*, 58(3), 639-654. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098020970970>
3. Kuecker, G. D., & Hartley, K. (2020). How smart cities became the urban norm: Power and knowledge in New Songdo City. *Annals of the American association of Geographers*, 110(2), 516-524. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2019.1617102>
4. Mouton, M. (2021). Worlding infrastructure in the global South: Philippine experiments and the art of being 'smart'. *Urban Studies*, 58(3), 621-638. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0042098019891011>
5. Datta, A. (2018). The digital turn in postcolonial urbanism: Smart citizenship in the making of India's 100 smart cities. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 43(3), 405-419. <https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tran.12225>
6. Guma, P. K. (2023). Smart cities and their settings in the Global South: Informality as a marker. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 20438206231206751. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20438206231206751>

Week 5: Urban Transformation in cities of the developing world

Cities in the developing world are experiencing significant spatial transformations. The process of urban transformation in developing country cities is multifaceted. These transformations take different forms such as the emergence of western style shopping malls, gated communities, mega urban projects, and new cities as well as 'other' spatial transformations of urban spaces. In some cases, urban spaces are produced and transformed by residents themselves through what is known as "peripheral urbanization". These processes have altered the geographies of cities in developing countries in many ways and their implications are huge. The purpose of this seminar is to discuss the different physical, social, economic, and political factors that shape urban transformation in cities of the developing world. We will also discuss the different forms of urban transformation that are taking place in cities of the developing world, including gated communities, shopping malls, new cities, etc. The focus is not just to describe the phenomena, but to explain the underlying factors behind this kind of transformation on cities. We will also discuss the planning and urban governance implications of these urban transformations in global south cities.

Suggested readings:

1. Goodfellow, T (2017). Urban fortunes and skeleton cityscapes: real estate and late urbanization in Kigali and Addis Ababa. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(5): 786-803. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12550>
2. Ian E. A. Yeboah, John K. Maingi, and Godwin Arku (2020): 'World Trade Center, Accra': production of urban space for the continued peripheral linkage of Ghana under globalization, *African Geographical Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2020.1755323>

3. Bandaiko, E., & Arku, R. N. (2023). Prefigurative urbanization: housing cooperatives, social movements, and the urban transformation question in Harare (Zimbabwe). *Urban Research & Practice*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2023.2272911>
4. Grant, R (2015). Sustainable African urban futures. Stocktaking and critical reflection on proposed urban projects. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 59(3), 294-310. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0002764214550301>
5. Caldeira, T, P, R (2017). Peripheral urbanization: Auto construction, transversal logics, and politics in cities of the global south. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(1): 3-20. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0263775816658479>
6. Zhigang Li, Yanyan Chen & Rong Wu (2020) The assemblage and making of suburbs in post-reform China: the case of Guangzhou, *Urban Geography*, 41 (7), 990-1009. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2019.1598732>

Week 6: Urban Informality

Urban informality has become an omnipresent feature of cities in developing countries. Urban economies are increasingly becoming informalized as evidenced by sprouting slums and informal settlements, highly dynamic street vending, informal transport systems etc. These processes have led to some scholars like Roy (2005) to conclude that urban informality is a mode of urbanization that has become so embed in everyday urban life in developing cities. In this seminar, we engage with the following questions: How is urban informality conceptualized/theorized in cities of the developing world? What factors contribute to the development of urban informality? Is urban informality a good or bad thing in the developing world? How do city governments in developing countries manage urban informality? What are the implications of urban informality on the planning and management of cities in the developing world?

Suggested readings:

1. Roy, A. (2005). Urban informality: Toward an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71(2): 147-158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360508976689>
2. Banks, N, Lombard, M and Mitlin, D (2020). Urban Informality as a Site of Critical Analysis, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 56 (2), 223-238 Recio, R, B, Mateo-Babiano, I and Roitman, S (2017). Revisiting policy epistemologies on urban informality: Towards a post-dualist view. *Cities*, 61, 136-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2016.08.018>
3. Lindell, I (2019). Introduction: re-spatialising urban informality: reconsidering the spatial politics of street work in the global south. *International Development Policy Review*, 41 (1): 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2019.2>
4. Hosseini, A., Finn, B. M., & Momeni, A. (2023). The complexities of urban informality: A multi-dimensional analysis of residents' perceptions of life, inequality, and access in an Iranian informal settlement. *Cities*, 132, 104099. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.104099>

5. Azunre, G. A., Amponsah, O., Takyi, S. A., & Mensah, H. (2021). Informality-sustainable city nexus: The place of informality in advancing sustainable Ghanaian cities. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 67, 102707.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210670721000020>
6. Cobbinah, P. B. (2023). The oddity of desiring informality. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 20438206231191737.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20438206231191737>

Week 7: Urban Governance in cities of the Developing world

Urban governance includes laws, policies, regulations, and administrative practices that cities use to manage their everyday affairs. Urban governance also involves informal mechanisms/structures of power and decision making that operate outside the 'formal' institutions. The processes and institutions of urban governance have significant implications for everyday urban life and livelihoods in cities of the developing world. This seminar will cover issues related to how cities in developing countries are governed, including the different implications of governing modes.

Suggested readings:

1. Obeng-Odoom, F (2012). On the origin, meaning, and evaluation of urban governance, *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 66 (4), 204-212
2. Lindell, I (2008). The Multiple Sites of Urban Governance: Insights from an African City. *Urban Studies*, 45 (9): 1879-1901
3. Obeng-Odoom, F (2017). Urban governance in Africa today: Reframing, experiences, and lessons. *Growth and Change*, 48(1): 4-21.
4. Resnick, D (2021). The Politics of Urban Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Regional and Federal Studies*. 31 (1), 139-161
5. Fuseini, I and Kemp, J (2016). Characterising urban growth in Tamale, Ghana: An analysis of urban governance response in infrastructure and service provision. *Habitat International*, 56, 109-123.
6. Aina, Y. A., Wafer, A., Ahmed, F., & Alshuwaikhat, H. M. (2019). Top-down sustainable urban development? Urban governance transformation in Saudi Arabia. *Cities*, 90, 272-281.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.03.003>
7. Ahluwalia, I. J. (2019). Urban governance in India. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41(1), 83-102.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2016.1271614>

Week 8: Urban infrastructure dynamics in developing regions.

Urban infrastructures play a central role in the functioning of cities globally. The provision of urban infrastructure is not a just a technical process; it is also political and marked by different

contestations and entanglements. In this seminar, we engage with these dynamics and draw from experiences from different cities in developing countries.

Suggested readings.

1. Baptista, I. (2019). Electricity services always in the making: Informality and the work of infrastructure maintenance and repair in an African city. *Urban Studies*, 56(3), 510-525.
2. Guma, P. K., Akallah, J. A., & Odeo, J. O. I. (2023). Plug-in urbanism: City building and the parodic guise of new infrastructure in Africa. *Urban Studies*, 00420980231158013. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00420980231158013>
3. Minuchin, L. (2021). "Prefigurative Urbanization: Politics Through Infrastructural Repertoires in Guayaquil." *Political Geography* 85:102316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102316>.
4. Silver, J. (2014). "Incremental Infrastructures: Material Improvisation and Social Collaboration Across Post-Colonial Accra." *Urban Geography* 35 (6): 788–804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2014.933605>.
5. McFarlane, C., Desai, R., & Graham, S. (2014). Informal urban sanitation: Everyday life, poverty, and comparison. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(5), 989-1011. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.923718>
6. Bremer, J., & Bhuiyan, S. H. (2014). Community-led infrastructure development in informal areas in urban Egypt: A case study. *Habitat International*, 44, 258-267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2014.07.004>

Week 9: The Right to the City and Urban Citizenship

Geographers and urban scholars have extensively discussed different ways of understanding the right to the city in relation to urban processes of gentrification, citizenship, social exclusion, and the production of public space (Harvey, 2008; Mitchell, 2003; Purcell, 2002). The right to the city theory raises several questions that puts space at the centre of urban politics and conflict including who has the right to the city and how the right is determined and contested (Mitchell, 2003). Lefebvre conceptualizes the right to the city as the ability of inhabitants to produce their spaces without conforming to the dominant modes of spatial production, and to participate in reshaping the existing norms and forces in which space is being produced within the neoliberal order (Fawaz, 2009). In this seminar, we will discuss the concept of the Right to the City, its theoretical roots and applicability in cities of the developing world.

Suggested readings:

1. Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning theory*, 8(1), 32-50.
2. Lata, L, N (2020): To Whom Does the City Belong? Obstacles to Right to the City for the Urban Poor in Bangladesh, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, <https://doi.10.1080/00472336.2020.1791934>

3. Attoh, K. A. (2011). What kind of right is the right to the city?. *Progress in human geography*, 35(5), 669-685.
4. Friendly, A (2013). The right to the city: theory and practice in Brazil. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 14(2): 158-179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2013.783098>
5. Fawaz, M. (2009). 'Neoliberal urbanity and the right to the city: a view from Beirut's periphery', *Development and Change*, 40(5): 827-852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2009.01585.x>

Week 10: Gender and urban space

Gender is increasingly becoming a topical issue in cities of developing countries, given the differentiated experiences of women and men in urban environments. In this seminar, we will engage with questions relating to the gendered experiences of urban life, including issues such as access to urban infrastructure and services, housing, and participation in the urban economy, among others.

Suggested readings.

1. Butcher, M., & Maclean, K. (2018). Gendering the city: The lived experience of transforming cities, urban cultures and spaces of belonging. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 25(5), 686-694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1462773>
2. Bastia, T. (2018). Transnational migration and the gendered right to the city in Buenos Aires. *Cities*, 76, 18-22. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264275116301834>
3. Cowan, T. (2021). Rooted flexibility: social reproduction, violence, and gendered work in the Indian city. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 28(1), 66-87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1708276>
4. Bandauko, E., Baruah, B. & Arku, G. (2023): Gender and appropriation of public space in Harare's contested central city area, *Gender, Place & Culture*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2023.2294258>
5. Sultana, F. (2020). Embodied intersectionalities of urban citizenship: Water, infrastructure, and gender in the global south. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(5), 1407-1424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1715193>
6. Harris, L., Kleiber, L., Goldin, J., Darkwah, A. & Morinville, C. (2017) Intersections of gender and water: comparative approaches to everyday gendered negotiations of water access in underserved areas of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 26:5, 561-582. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2016.1150819>

Week 11: Climate Change and Resilience

The catastrophic effects of the climate crisis have placed sustainability and urban resilience at the centre of planning and policy issues in developing countries. Building resilience in urban areas of developing countries is an urgent task figuring at the top of global development agendas. Resilience has been critiqued as an instrument to maintain structural conditions that reproduce the vulnerability of marginal urban dwellers. This is particularly critical in the context of rapidly growing slums and informal settlements where majority of the urban poor

reside. These settlements do not have resilient urban infrastructure and their populations are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts such as floods. In this seminar, we will engage with questions such as: what does resilience mean in the context of global south cities? Resilience to what? Resilience of what? And Resilience for who? How is resilience in global south cities interpreted and operationalised in both urban research and practice? How are cities in developing countries mainstreaming sustainability and resilience in their plans and policy frameworks? What are the implications of these interventions for the urban poor?

Suggested readings:

1. Maud Borie Mark Pelling Gina Ziervogel and Keith Hyams (2019). Mapping narratives of urban resilience in the global south. *Global Environmental Change*, 54, 203-213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2019.01.001>
2. Gina Ziervogel (2021) Climate urbanism through the lens of informal settlements, *Urban Geography*, 42:6, 733-737. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1850629>
3. Finn, B. M., & Cobbinah, P. B. (2022). African urbanisation at the confluence of informality and climate change. *Urban Studies*, 00420980221098946. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980221098946>
4. Rhoda Mensah Darkwaha, Patrick Brandful Cobbinah, Prince Aboagye Anokye (2018). Contextualising urban resilience in Ghana: Local perspectives and experiences. *Geoforum*, 94, 12-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.05.023>
5. Rizzo, A (2020). Megaprojects and the limits of 'green resilience' in the global South: Two cases from Malaysia and Qatar. *Urban Studies*, 57(7) 1520–1535.
6. Alejandro Rivero-Villar (2021). Longitudinal resilience building in self-help settlements: Achieving transformations to unlock adaptations. *Geoforum*, 122, 152-163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.04.005>
7. Ramyar, R., Ackerman, A., & Johnston, D. M. (2021). Adapting cities for climate change through urban green infrastructure planning. *Cities*, 117, 103316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103316>

Week 12: Special Topics in urban geography

This seminar is dedicated to special topics in urban geography based on the students' interests. Students could make a presentation on a contemporary urban theme based on their specific interests in urban geography of the developing world.

Additional resources:

In urban geography, there are several leading academic journals that publish cutting research on urban issues of developing countries. You can also find recent publications in the following journals:

- a. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*
- b. *Antipode*
- c. *Cities*

- d. *Geoforum*
- e. *Progress in Human Geography*
- f. *Dialogues in Human Geography*
- g. *Urban Geography*
- h. *The Professional Geographer*
- i. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*
- j. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space (including the different series)*
- k. *Geography Compass*
- l. *Journal of Urban Affairs*
- m. *Habitat International*
- n. *Urban Affairs Review*
- o. *many more...*