

**URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY:
HISTORY, LANDSCAPE & ETHNOGRAPHY
(ANG 6286)**

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Fall 2017; M | Period 7 - 9 (1:55 PM - 4:55 PM); CBD 0238

Office: Turlington B360; Contact Hours: by scheduled apt. M-11:45-1:45; T-1:45-2:45.

Minor changes and additions to syllabus can be expected after first week based on actual student composition in the seminar.

Summary: Urban Anthropology focuses on diverse questions related to urbanism and urban life through time, notably tied to space, built environment and landscape, and the practices and experiences of real people in urban settings. It explores variation between forms of urbanism, including non-Western forms, and between elite, middle class, and marginal groups in urban society. The course is broken into three primary segments: (1) pre-modern and non-Western urbanism (week 2-3) and early industrial urbanism in historical context; (2) urban landscapes and impacts across globe over 20th century, including early approaches to urban society and culture; (3) turn of the 21st century urban ethnography, focusing on USA and Brazilian examples. The latter segment, ethnography, takes up roughly half of course materials, as the hallmark of urban anthropology, however, while the class focuses on urban studies as practiced in anthropology, materials are drawn from sociology, geography, urban studies and planning, history, critical theory and cultural studies. Final content and subject matter will be subject to change based on seminar composition and interests of participants.

Overview: What is the city, or urbanism? What variation in urban form, content, or history can be delineated across time and space? What differences can be inferred between cities and urbanized populations - lived worlds, built environments, and representations of urban life – in the contemporary world. The course reviews materials from pre-modern (pre-colonial and early colonial, to 1700), modern (early industrial to late 20th century) and post- or neo-modern urban contexts. Case materials are drawn from across the globe. It contrasts public urban life

from the top down view of planners, politicians and patricians, elite social groups and institutions with the bottom up view, representing diverse subaltern urban groups and lived realities. It also considers the middle ground, where the two extremes of urban society meet and interact, often promoting novelty and creating hybrid institutions, norms, and practices, often in highly dynamic, even volatile and fragmented contexts where norms vary and are contested.

Urban revolutions: Early urban contexts are invariably tied to symbolic and ritual control of belief and propaganda, marked by explicit exclusion of elite groups and the politico-ritual engagements they control in spatial orientations, performance, and material culture. This is the “urban revolution,” coined by V. Gordon Childe (1936, 1950), with reference to the world’s oldest cities, in SW Asia and the Mediterranean. The trait list Childe proposed, e.g., full blown cities, writing, intensive state economies, armies, police, and the like, has to be radically revised to include diverse examples of early major cities, in Asia and nuclear America, as well as alternative forms of urbanism, that have been described across the globe (China, SE Asia and Pacific, Africa, and Native America), as explored here. The city, as it is known and theorized by Western scholars, morphs again in form, content, and representation during the transition from Medieval to modern cities, ultimately giving rise a second “urban revolution,” as discussed by Henri Lefebvre (1970). Today, a third urban revolution can be delineated, as the balance tipped from rural to urban (over 50% of world population lives in cities as of 2006), including regional, national, and global forces that integrate urban populations to other regions, other urban settings, and the rural and natural. Nonetheless, anthropological viewpoints on cities remain underdeveloped, particularly cases with histories that span the twentieth century or longer.

Urban populations and planning: The course focuses on the social and political construction of urban space, the control and orientation of human bodies, body movement, and bodily distributions, emphasizing the physicality and materiality of urban built environment and landscape. Urban space is a reflection of both integrated and contested groups and identities, and inclusionary and exclusionary practices in urban planning and development, and representations of cities and city-dwellers in popular media. We consider the nature and relationship of urban subgroups, with respect to key features of urbanism, such as central place and countryside (urban-rural/peasant), functional, social, and political economic organization, notably heterogeneity and segregation, as well as integration, and design and planning. The urban built environment of a reflection of this social anatomy is explored as a means of analyzing differences in space, practice, and experience of different social groups, including marginalized, middle, and elite groups.

Urban Place-Making & Knowledge: In addition to planned features of urbanism, self-organizing aspects of urban built environment, in terms of socio-economic and political

institutions, legal norms, performance and embodiment, and thought or knowledge systems are considered. The course takes a “perspectivist” theoretical approach, which is defined less by a theoretical or practical agenda than a lack of one, in other words it is non-paradigmatic. Case materials are historically situated within dynamic, interdisciplinary and dialogic knowledge production communities. The focus is on research context and the issues, perspectives, and dialogues that emerge from them in scientific, humanist, critical and popular discourse. Focus on specific contexts of application highlights the heuristic and highly varied nature of interdisciplinary empirical research, issues of scale, and the diversity of perspective and voice. It promotes a view that “robusticity” in planning and construction, meaning accessibility and engagement by diverse social groups within broader global contexts is an achievable goal of social scientific and humanistic studies. Urban socio-economic and political realities, and human rights, can be balanced with concerns across the globe with what scientists loosely call “ecological resiliency” and “sustainability.”

Urban Visions: the course considers utopian, heterotopian, and dystopian visions of urbanism, from the view of the development of world civilization and from futuristic visions of utopias in cultural production, from Thomas More to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. It emphasizes that heterotopian landscapes of actual urban life are “shot through” with utopian and dystopian perspectives, places, and practices, which are considered from the viewpoint of critical theory, particularly contemporary literary criticism and cultural studies.

Outcomes: Urbanism, urban revolutions and innovations, multi-vocality and scale, the disciplinary and public scope and reach of the topic, make urban anthropology hard to characterize as a thing, an entity or set of entities to be comprehensively measured or compared from one perspective, such as Western science, or at one scale or another, or place and time. This is part and parcel of the anthropological inquiry. Therefore, the only anticipated outcome is to provide students with an initial familiarity with this multiplicity and hybridity, particularly in three areas that anthropology excels, histories as broadly reflected in cultural things, materials residues, technologies and apparatus, as well as archives, the contextualization of these in landscapes, both human and natural, experienced and measurable, and ethnography, the hallmark and forte of general anthropology. Through actual ethnographies and case material developed by each participant, approaches to the urban, contextual, ethnographic and critical, are explored by each depending on their own interests, linking an urban place and people, with an urban problem, inspired by the real people reported from this place, and consideration of solutions, where this leads us, whether that be intellectual or practical, in other words, relevance.

Evaluation:

Class will convene on Mondays for roughly 1.0 hour of lecture, followed by 1.5 hour of moderated discussion organized around specific case material and key readings by instructor and student moderators. Recommended readings will be distributed as pdfs in three groups by the instructor (for weeks 1-5, 6-8, 9-14), with additional readings selected by students based on interests (weeks 9-14). Readings will introduce foundational materials in urban anthropology and also will be tailored to diverse backgrounds and interests of students. In addition to these, one or two readings are assigned each week to discuss different methods and objectives.

Students are responsible to attend and expected to participate in discussion and demonstrate basic command of assigned materials (35% of grade; one unexcused absence only will be allowed; excusable absences include demonstrable professional development activities, e.g., conferences).

Each student will be responsible to: (1) read primary ethnographies and select important readings from them for distribution to the group; (2) prepare a short review outline to guide discussion (500 words), distributed the week before each ethnography is discussed; and (3) moderate a 20-30 minute discussion of each works (two ethnographies per week in rotation beginning weeks 9-14), which is 35% of grade. Each student will design a study incorporating ethnographic and historical methods discussed in class in relation to their own studies, including virtual and other archives or primary personal experience locally or non-local (30% of grade). These will be presented to the group during weeks 11-14. The basic style or approach is open, but as a point of departure, treat your study as an actual proposed study. Think of this in these terms: I am a private foundation that offers you \$10,000 to do a pilot study, what is it?

Primary books: selected readings will be distributed each week, including from three readers; M. Miles, et al., eds. (2003), *The City Cultures Reader* (CCR); S. Low, ed. (2005), *Theorizing the City* (TC); and G. Gmelch and W. Zenner, eds. (2009), *Urban Life* (UL) and selected from the following works, and others, based on specific student interests:

1. *The City* (Robert Parks and Ernest Burgess, 1925)
2. *The Urban Revolution* and *The Architecture of Enjoyment* (Henri Lefebvre, 2003 [1970], 2014)
3. *Post-modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Edward Soja, 2011)
4. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests & the Politics of Memory* (Andreas Hyussen 2003)

5. *Noir Urbanisms* (Gyan Prakash, 2010)

Suggested ethnographies include: *Urban Outcasts* (Loïc Wacquant, 2007); *City of Walls* (Teresa Caldeira); *Travesti* (Don Kulick); *Vita* (João Biehl), *In Search of Respect* (Phillipe Bourgois), *Code of the Street* (Elijah Anderson), *Sidewalk* (Mitchell Duneier), *On the Plaza* (Setha Low), *Below the Equator* (Richard Parker), *Insurgent Citizenry* (James Holsten), *Outlaw* (Daniel Goldstein), *Death without Weeping* (Nancy Scheper-Hughes), and others, selected as a group.

Course Outline:

Week 1 (start 08/21): Introduction

2. (08/28). Ancient Cities, the Industrial City & the Global Urban Era: The Anthropocene (Method: Archaeologies, of the past, present and future)
3. (09/4). No class
5. (9/11). Chicago School (Parks and Burgess; Le Corbusier): Chicago (methods: the organic model and ground-based ethnography)
6. (09/18). City as/in Mind/Body: Walter Benjamin and Critical Theory: NYC & Paris (methods: deep hanging out and the intellectual flaneur; spatialized qualitative methods)
7. (09/25). Urban Society & Interaction (Whyte, Jacobs, Goffman): NYC (method: social life of small urban spaces and “face work’)
8. (10/02): Urban Socio-Cultural and Historical Development & Sustainability, USA & Latin America (Rapid Ethnographic Assessment, REAP; film: “Sustainability”)
9. (10/09): Alternative Urban Voices: Perspective, Scale and Translation: Brazil (method: networks; hard-to reach); presentations of topics to class
10. (10/16). Urbanism and its Malcontents (Global South): Africa (Chalfin and other) & China (Ong) (method: multi-sited ethnographic approaches)

Part II: Urban Ethnography

9. (10/23): Guest lecture: urban development in Brazil (prep for presentation of individual topics):

10. (10/30). Bright Lights, Big Cities: G-local trends (Parker; Sassan; Hecht)

11. (11/6). Modern Cityscapes (Soja; Caldeira; Holsten): LA, São Paulo (scales and networks; Smart Cities manual, the opposition)

12. (11/13). Subjectivities (Bourgois; Biehl; Duneier; Goldstein): NY, Porto Alegre, Cochabamba (person and place-based qualitative ethnographic studies)

13. (11/20). Bodies, Networks & Institutions (Low; Kulick, Anderson); San Jose, Salvador

Final presentations

14. (11/27). Networks, Archives and Built Environment (Hyussen; Scheper-Hughes):

Final presentations

15 (12/4). Conclusion & Prospects