

CourseNo: PLANA6605_001_2013_3

Meeting Location: AVERY HALL 115

Meeting Time: M 09:00A-11:00A

Instructor Information: Alejandro De Castro Mazarro

The Development of Urban Informality

Paradigms and Paradoxes from Urban Planning and Design

Seminar Mondays 9-11am, 115 Avery Hall

Tuesdays, 9am-12pm 208 Buell Hall (Office Hours)

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Description

Slums, as considered by United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, are the physical manifestation of urban problems related to poverty and/or inequality. Yet, little effort has been placed on the historical sequence of urban planning programs and design practices that emerged in the 19th Century and have since evolved in methods and practices to address the challenges of informality. This lack of emphasis in historical precedents - in their success and failures - has weakened the consistency of some contemporary urban programs, which are often viewed as epitomes of the Modernist Project's aim to House the Masses. Furthermore, the very controversies around the characterization of slums and informal settlements question how spatial practices can address social problems.

This seminar will portray a historical sequence of urban planning and design programs, and architectural projects developed at precarious settlements. Policies and programs include eviction laws; Poor Laws in (Ireland and UK); Housing Acts (US), Social Housing (Brazil, Germany, Mexico, and Spain); Land titling (Latin America); Incremental Housing (Peru and Chile); urban upgrading (Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Venezuela); and building rehabilitation (Spain, Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Canada.) The seminar will propose the aforementioned sequence as suitable to encompass the physical and social nature of informal settlements. Also, it will link the history of urban planning with real estate, politics, and migration events to question the characterization of definitions such as “informality,” “housing deficit,” “sub-standard living,” or “slums.” The seminar aims to build a thread of historical precedents that link urban informality with mainstream urban planning and design history; and seeks defining the role of spatial strategies in proposing accurate solutions to urban poverty and inequality.