

Course proposal: Urban Sociology

We live in a world that currently faces multiple challenges of enormous magnitude, due to the effects of urbanization. 2007 is the landmark year when for the first time, urban population surpassed the rural population of the globe (World Urbanization Prospects 2007). With the rate, scale and shifting geographies of urbanization in the global South, it is important to map and analyse both challenges associated with and opportunities offered by cities. Both the challenges and opportunities are of immediate and direct relevance, with much of our urban biodiversity disappearing, increasing poverty and social inequities, damaging pollution levels and landscape transformations. Urban sociology is one of the most prominent branches within the larger domains of sociology which can capture these complexities and help unravel cities as engines of economic development and social optimism. Within this context, this course would offer a mix of research and practice to the students, on how new approaches to think about urbanization as sustainable and equitable can be framed using multiple levels of conceptual and epistemological categories.

Course contents

1. Urbanization as a process
 - 1.1 Overview
 - 1.2 Sociological theories of urbanization and key concepts
 - 1.3 Globalization, technology and the growth of cities
 - 1.4 Urban governance
2. A holistic urban understanding: key issues and challenges
 - 2.1 Urban environmental issues
 - 2.2 Structural transformations: gentrification, modernization and built environment
 - 2.3 Urban problems: conflicts, migration, poverty, inequality, urban social stratification
 - 2.4 Cities and cosmopolitanism: forms of assimilation and political mobilization
3. Contemporary urban India
 - 3.1 Urbanization in the global South: approaches of understanding
 - 3.2 Indian context: cities and slums
 - 3.3 Urban development and sustainability in India
 - 3.4 Recent developments and emerging theories in the South
4. Developing methodological skills
 - 4.1 Fieldwork in a city
 - 4.2 Qualitative methods and urban ethnography
 - 4.3 Applied empirical methods
 - 4.4 Urban research design

Reasons for offering a new subject

- Familiarizing students with challenges and opportunities of contemporary urbanization
- Exposing students to social realities inherent within urbanization processes
- Enabling students to devise, design and develop technical solutions in urban projects which will be sustainable and resilient.

Suggested readings

- Allen, Adriana. 2010. Neither rural nor urban: Service delivery options that work for the peri urban poor. In M. Khurian & P. McCarney (eds.), *Peri-urban water and sanitation services: Policy, planning and method*. New York: Springer.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2001. Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Environment and Urbanization*, 13(2), 23–43.
- Baviskar, Amita. 2011. Cows, cars and cycle rickshaws: bourgeoisie environmentalism and the battle for Delhi's streets. In A. Baviskar and R. Ray (eds.), *Elite and the everyman: the cultural politics of the Indian middle class* (pp. 391-418). London: Routledge.
- Chakrabarti, Poulomi. 2008. Inclusion or exclusion? Emerging effects of middle-class citizen participation on Delhi's urban poor. *IDS Bulletin*, 38(6), 96–104.
- Das, Veena. 1990. *Mirrors of violence: communities, riots and survivors in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Goldman, Michael. 2011. Speculating on the next world city. In Ananya Roy and Ong Aihwa (eds.) *World cities: Asian experiments and the art of being global*.
- Hempel, L. C. 1996. *Environmental governance: the global challenge*. New York: Island Press.
- Mukherjee, Jenia (ed.). 2018. *Sustainable urbanization in India: challenges and opportunities*. Singapore: Springer
- Nagendra, Harini. 2016. *Nature in the city: Bengaluru in the past, present and future*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, Ashish. 1997. The twilight of certitudes: secularism, Hindu nationalism and other masks of deculturation. *Alternatives*, 22, 157-176.
- Robert Redfield and Milton Singer. 1954. The Cultural Role of Cities, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 3 (1), 53-73.
- Roy, Ananya and Ong Aihwa (eds.). 2011. *Worlding cities: Asian experiments and the art of being global*. Malden, MA, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell
- Roy, Ananya. 2007. Urban informality: towards an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71 (2), 14-158
- Sassen, Saskia. 2000. *New frontiers facing urban sociology at the millennium*. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 51, (1), 143-159
- Sen, Amrita. and Pattanaik, Sarmistha. 2016. Politics of biodiversity conservation and socio ecological conflicts in a city: the case of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 29 (2), 305-326.
- Srinivas, M. N. 1996. *Social Change in Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Tonkiss, Fran. 2018. *Urban inequalities: divided cities in the twenty first century*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Lecture distribution

Themes/sub-themes	No. of lectures
1. Urbanization as a process	(TOTAL: 8)
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Sociological theories of urbanization and key concepts	2
1.3 Globalization, technology and the growth of cities	3
1.4 Urban governance	2
2. A holistic urban understanding: key issues and challenges	(TOTAL: 12)
2.1 Urban environmental issues	3
2.2 Structural transformations: gentrification, modernization and built environment	3
2.3 Urban problems: conflicts, migration, poverty, inequality, urban social stratification	4
2.4 Cities and cosmopolitanism: forms of assimilation and political mobilization	2
3. Contemporary urban India	(TOTAL: 11)
3.1 Urbanization in the global South: approaches of understanding	3
3.2 Indian context: cities and slums	2
3.3 Urban development and sustainability in India	3
3.4 Recent developments and emerging theories in the South	3
4. Developing methodological skills	(TOTAL: 6)
4.1 Fieldwork in a city	1
4.2 Qualitative methods and urban ethnography	2
4.3 Applied empirical methods	2
4.4 Urban research design	1
Total no. of lectures	37
