**Subaltern Urbanism: South Asia**

HIST BC3842 (SUMMER (A ) Spring 2021

(This syllabus is tentative, a work in progress)

**Instructor:**

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**Course Description**

This course asks how spatial politics intersect with economic inequality and social difference.

The course draws on the convergent yet distinct urban trajectories of cities in the global South (Bangalore; Bombay/Mumbai; Lahore; New Delhi; Dhaka) as an enabling location for exploring broader questions of comparative and global urbanism from an explicitly South-South perspective.

That is, we ask how distinct yet connected urban forms might force us to alter our approaches to the city; approaches that are largely drawn from modular Euro-American paradigms for understanding urbanization as coeval with modernity, as well as industrialization. We do so in this seminar by focusing on people and practices—subaltern urbanity (and on those whose labor produced the modern city), as well as on spatial orders—the informal or unintended city—to ask the question: “what makes and unmakes a city?”

How might questions about built form, industrialization, capital flows, and social life and inhabitation that takes the perspective of “city theory from the Global South” shed new understanding on the history of the city, the extranational frames of colonial modernity, and the ongoing impact of neoliberalism? How can we rethink critical concepts in urban studies (precarity, spatial segregation, subalternity, economies of eviction, urban dispossession) through embedded studies of locality and lifemaking?

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Think globally about the complex histories of urbanization
2. Think spatially as well as temporally about social change
3. Learn to work collaboratively to frame and present arguments in class, i.e., public speaking
4. Exposure to the digital humanities and skill development at the interface of data and history
5. Thinking visually, spatially, and discursively
6. Exposure to the archive and archiving as ongoing practices of organizing information

**About the Structure and Expectations of the Course**

We will start with readings in urban theory and introduction to data visualization during the first three weeks of the course.

Thereafter, the course will follow a broad chronology by tracing the effect of planning, policy, colonialism, and labor-capital relations in shaping South Asian cities.

The course is thus essentially divided into a study of the colonial and industrial city, with relevant themes such as planning, the organization of social difference, public health, housing and the slum, political violence, and forms of cultural production and consumption that developed in response to, and as a result of the effects of both planning and “unplanning.”

**Assignments**

All students registered for the course will be responsible for ten brief critical responses across this intensive summer course. This will count for 30% of your course grade.

Students will also facilitate 2 collaborative class discussions. This will count for 30% of your course grade.

**Discussion posts (30%)** Over the course of the semester each student will post at least ten (10) critical responses (one to two paragraphs) on the week’s assigned readings to Canvas by 6:00 PM the evening before our class meets. The weekly critical response should include comments on issues raised by one or more of the assigned readings as well as questions you want to address in class. You are strongly encouraged to read the responses of your colleagues prior to class. You are also encouraged to post media, images, or links, etc. that relate to themes from that days readings or previous discussions.

**Facilitation (30%):** Each week, two students will present for 10 minutes on a reading in our syllabus for the given week. The presenters will also facilitate the first 20 minutes of discussion, laying out some connecting points between the readings.

Students may then choose between doing a mapping project, which involves collaborative team-work, or writing a seminar paper. This will count towards **40% of their grade.**

Both groups of students will grapple with the challenges of using map-based representations to visualize and discuss subaltern issues albeit in a slightly different manner depending on the mode of representation (which is also always a mode of visualization).

**Mapping Project Team (40%)**

Students who choose to work on the mapping project will work individually on a series of mini projects during the semester that will then be compiled on a course website with narrative links between them. Here, the focus will be to create spatial datasets from archival materials (as a means to spatialize these histories).

a) First, students will work individually on mini projects to create spatial datasets from archival materials. For example, they might chose to track the development of railroad route constructions; the development of medical facilities or public health institutes, and their relation to public health crises; map legal regulation of coastlines as a way to address environmental urbanism; track sites of pleasure and publicity (art houses, movie theaters, protests), and so forth.

b) Each student will research and compile data relevant to their layers and visualize their data on the digital mapping platform that best suits their data. c) Projects will then be compiled on the course website, with students working collaboratively to chart narrative links between individual projects.

d) In the process, students will experience how the order of narration transforms the story one wishes to tell about the relationship between past and present, the many lives of infrastructure, the impress of social difference on the politics of space, the relation between land and water, and so forth.

Students who choose this option will be required to enroll in the course “Questions in Spatial Research,” a half semester course that meets **6 times.**

The workshops are run by the Center for Spatial Research and they are designed to introduce students to basic fluency with open-source mapping software, QGIS, methods of data collection and creation, and approaches and concepts in critical spatial analysis and map design. Details will follow.

**Seminar Paper (40%)**

Students who choose this option will write a **20-page seminar paper (20%)** that addresses the major theoretical concerns of the course, including the challenges of doing interdisciplinary work that brings together the concerns of urban studies with humanities studies’ concerns about culture and aesthetics.

In addition, students who choose this option will submit a **book review** **(10%)** and a **5- page prospectus** **(10%)** with a working bibliography mid-semester for feedback.

**Academic integrity**

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars’ work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others’ ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism or dishonesty and unethical behavior is unacceptable and you will face punitive measures. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Barnard, or Columbia.

**Classroom Etiquette**constitutes best practices of your academic and social lives: be considerate in class; listen well; interact with respect and compassion; turn off your phone; and turn off your computing devices.

**Disability-Related Accommodations**:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS)Faculty must be notified of registered students’ accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion.

Relevant Emails:

<http://barnard.edu/disabilityservices>

OR

[disability@columbia.edu](mailto:disability@columbia.edu)

Wellness Statement

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, oracademic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness-your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in severalsectors of your life, and we encourage you tomake use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

 http://barnard.edu/primarycare

 https://barnard.edu/about-counseling

 http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about

 Stressbusters Support Network

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Affordable Access to Course Texts & Materials Statement

All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. Barnard librarians have partnered with students, faculty, and staff to find ways to increasestudent access to textbooks. By the first day of advance registration for each term, faculty willhave provided information about required texts for each course on CourseWorks (including ISBN or author, title, publisher, copyright date, and price), which can be viewed by students. A numberof cost-free or low-cost methods for accessing some types of courses texts are detailed on theBarnard Library Textbook Affordability guide (library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability).

Undergraduate students who identify as first-generation and/or low-income students may check out items from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library (library.barnard.edu/flip) and in Butler Library for an entire semester. Students may also consult with their professors, the Dean of Studies, and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for having access tocourse texts. Visit the guide and talk to your professors and your librarian for more details.

**Class Attendance Policy**

You are allowed to miss two class sessions across the course

**Class Laptop Policy**

Do bring your laptops. We will be using them for spatial mapping exercises.

**SYLLABUS**

**WEEK ONE**

**Meetings #1 and #2: Introduction, City Theory from the South**

Denise Ferreira da Silva, (2015) “*Globality*.” *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 1(1): 33-38, Spring*.*

Abou Maliq Simone, “The Urban Poor and Their Ambivalent Exceptionalities: Some Notes from Jakarta.” *Current Anthropology,* 56, no. 11, October 2015

Ananya Roy, “Slumdog Cities: The Politics of Subaltern Urbanism,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35:2, March 2011

**Meeting #3: Urban Dispossessions**

David Harvey, “Right to the City.” *New Left Review* 53, September-October, 2008.<http://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>

Saskia Sassen, “The Return of Primitive Accumulation.”

http://saskiasassen.com/PDFs/SS\_return\_of\_primitive\_accumulation.pdf

Keisha-Khan Perry, 2013. *Black Women against the Land Grab.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Recommended:

*The Art of Inequality:  Architecture, Housing and Real Estate*

<https://cdn.filepicker.io/api/file/tlZMjdISfKKlPLo5trCw>?

**Meeting #4: Visualization**

Presentation by Digital Intern/Preceptor for the course

Recommended:

Kurgan, Laura. “Million Dollar Blocks.” In *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology and Politics*, 187-206. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2013

Solnit, Rebecca. Introduction: Centers and Edges. In *Non Stop Metropolis*, University of California Press, 2016: 1-20

Weizman, Eyal. Introduction: Forensis. *Forensis. The Architecture of Public Truth*: 9-32, 2014

**WEEK TWO**

**Meeting #1, and Meeting #2: Critical Fabulation**

Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives*

**Meetings #3, and Meeting #4: The Colonial Slum**

On the Bombay Improvement Trust, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd8CpjR0lak>

Sheetal Chhabria, *The Making of the Modern Slum*, Seattle: U Washington Press, 2019

G. R. Pradhan, *Untouchable Workers of Bombay City* (1938)

*Sociological Bulletin*, May-June 2013, special issue on Bombay School of Sociology

Recommended:

Vanessa Caru, “The Worli BDD Chawls: A Case Study (1922-1947),” in *The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life*, ed. Neera Adarkar (Gurgaon: ImprintOne, 2011)

Radha Kumar, “City Lives: Workers’ Rent and Housing in Bombay 1911-1947, *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 22, Issue No. 30, 25 Jul, 1987 [find via CLIO, journal search]

How Wide is the “Sink of Localism” in India? By Naveen Bharathi, Deepak Malghan, and Andaleeb Rahman [caste and segregation]

**WEEK 3: URBAN LAND**

**Meeting #1, Meeting #2: Urban Land Market in Colonial Calcutta and delhi**

Debjani Bhatacharya

Raghav Kishore, and others on Partition/housing

**Meeting #3: Speculation**

Michael Levien, *Dispossession Without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India* [excerpts]

**Meeting #4: Slumification**

Arjun Appadurai, “Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millenial Mumbai,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2000), 627-51

Nikhil Anand, “Leaky States: Water Audits, Ignorance, and the Politics of Infrastructure,” *Public Culture* 27, issue 2\_76 (2015): 305-330

Shirish B. Patel, “Dharavi: Makeover or Takeover?,” *Economic and Political*

*Weekly* 45, issue 24 (2010): 47-54.

Recommended:

“Planet of Slums,” *NLR* 26, March-April 2006

*Challenge of Slums*, UN Human Settlements Programme

<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/Challenge%20of%20Slums.pdf>

N. R. Phatak, *Developing and Real Estate Markets: The Case of MMR* [World Bank Institute]

WB Policy Research Working Paper 5475, Annez, Bertaud, Patel, Phatak, “Working with the Market: Approach to Reducing Urban Slums in India,” WB Sustainable Development Network

**WEEK 5: URBAN POLITICS**

**Meeting #1 and Meeting #2: Lahore**

Discussion with LUMS historians Ali Raza and Ali Qasmi, with Faizan Khan on the making of #Walking in the History on the political, Hindu, and Shia histories of Lahore

Ali Qasmi, “Symbolic Redemptoion Retributive Justice”

<https://www.radicalhistoryreview.org/abusablepast/symbolic-redemption-retributive-justice-the-significance-of-anti-colonial-iconoclasm-as-radical-politics/>

Chris Moffat, “An Encounter with Bhagat Singh’s Ghosts”

https://nayadaur.tv/2019/05/an-encounter-with-bhagat-singhs-ghost-at-lahores-bradlaugh-hall/

**Meeting #3: Dhaka and Karachi**

Chris Moffat, “Baroque Urbanism: Telling stories with buildings in Dhaka and Karachi,” *Caravan*, June 1, 2020

Discussion with filmmaker Naeem Mohaimeen on political utopia and nostalgia

**Meeting #4: Word and the World**

Colloquy curated by Benjamin Bateman and Elizabeth Adan, “Precariousness and Aesthetics.”<https://arcade.stanford.edu/colloquies/precariousness-and-aesthetics>

Namdeo Dhasal, “Namdeo on Namdeo,” trans. Dilip Chitre, *Indian Literature* 58, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2014): 34-44.

Anand Patwardhan, *Jai Bhim Comrade* (excerpts from the film)

**WEEK SIX: Urban Segregation and Urban Violence**

**Meeting #1, Meeting #2: Urban Segregation**

Nile Green, *Bombay Islam* [selections]

Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot eds. *Muslims in Indian Cities*

Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* [excerpts]

Material on Shaheen Bagh and the protests against the Citizenship Amendmant Act, 2020 (TBD)

**Meeting #3: Labor**

Neera Adarkar and Meena Menon, *One Hundred Years, One Hundred Voices* [excerpts]

Dina Siddiqi, “Before Rana Plaza; A History of Labor Organizing in Bangaldesh’s Garment Industry”

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323428651\_Before\_Rana\_Plaza\_Toward\_a\_History\_of\_Labor\_Organizing\_in\_Bangladesh's\_Garment\_Industry

“Concept Histories of the Urban,” a dossier edited by Casey Primel and Anupama Rao. *CSSAAME*, May 1, 2020

**Meeting #4: Self-Housing**

Discussion with Rahul Srivastava and Matias Echenove, URBZ: <http://urbanology.org/>

**WEEK 7**

**Student presentations**

Mapping projects and Seminar Paper presentations