Cities on the move: migration and urban landscapes

Course Title

Course Number
ENVST-UA 9450001

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Lecturer Contact Information
Salman Qureshi
Email: salman.qureshi@nyu.edu

Course Details
Thursday: 3:00pm to 5:45 pm
Location of class: NYUB Academic Center, Room "Spandau"

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
The rapid expansion of urban areas is the major driving force of global environmental change. As most urban landscapes expand in number and size, their inhabitants place increasing demands on resources and energy. These demands pose great challenges for ensuring the human welfare and protecting biodiversity. Urban land use change has always been a question for urban planners and researchers, but understanding contemporary competition for urban land and associated resources is perhaps more urgent than ever. The inflow of large numbers of migrants, not only from the rural counterparts of larger cities but also from all over the world, poses new challenges to environmental processes and the functioning of urban systems. A critical question emerges: how can we sustainably integrate new migrants into large urban areas without compromising the environmental wellbeing and livelihood of existing local populations? Urban development concepts like smart growth, eco-cities and sponge cities have previously grappled with this question; through them, researchers, urban planners, architects, and other professionals have imagined new forms and functions for buildings, material infrastructure, and open or vegetated spaces. The central challenge is to improve the resilience capacity of urban landscapes. Here, the notion that cities themselves may be reinvented in more ecologically vital ways portends to offer solutions to the dire environmental stresses that climate change, natural resource scarcity, and geopolitical instability promise. There is an important interdisciplinary dimension to this challenge: different stakeholders speak different scientific and functional languages. This course emphasizes inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches in an effort to highlight the multiple and distinct knowledge forms and data types relevant to understanding linkages between landscape structure, landscape function, and urban socio-natural transformation.

Course Objective
This introductory course will provide a chronological and thematic exploration of the issues that define the evolving field of urban landscape studies. We will explore how migration affects the patterns and processes essential to urban systems. While we will use a systems perspective to understand urban landscapes, we will also employ comparative case studies to encourage students to apply other perspectives for understanding urban ecosystems. Our primary aim of the course is to use urban ecology knowledge and methods to better understand cities under the stress of large-scale human migration. Group project and case study components of the course will provide a chance to focus on local issues and to operationalize the principles presented in lectures. Topics will range from ancient to contemporary, scientific to artistic, cultural to political, and theoretical to practical aspects of urban ecology, a rapidly developing science. The course includes discussions of current ecological and environmental initiatives, such as landscape sustainability and permaculture, and the importance of understanding cultural landscapes which produce economic, political, and social constructs that foster understanding. These topics will guide our exploration of a series of case studies that look at urban parks, cemeteries, shopping malls and other urban amenities. By the end of the course, the student will understand what makes a place a socialized landscape, and why this is important. Students will also gain a better understanding of:
- changing urban forms as a result of rapid urbanization
- resource use and land use demands under the facet of migration
- use and perception of urban space among different social/ethnic groups
- Social conflicts, political ecology and management of urban ecosystems
- comparative case studies that include Berlin as a European hotspot of refugee movement, and Asian and Latin American case studies that illustrate the importance of understanding socio-political conflict

Assessment Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper/essay (ca. 4000 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Mid-term exam
The instructor will hand out a take-home examination. This will consist of five (5) essay questions, from which students will select two (2). Students will write between 3 to 4 (type-written) pages per essay, citing in-class materials and other sources to bolster their answers. This exam encourages students to synthesize the materials in the first part of the course in preparation for writing their final paper.

Final research paper
This course requires one paper (ca. 4000 words) near the end of the term. This paper may resemble the structure of a journal article (introduction to the problem, literature review and synthesis, hypotheses, study design, and methods), or an article minus the data analysis and conclusions. Students will first select a topic and a case study area to instructor's approval. Next, they will conduct a literature review to conceive questions and hypotheses that are testable. After consulting with the instructor, students will design a study to answer one or more questions about urban dynamics, stating in the body of the paper what type of data you would need to actually conduct the analysis.

Presentation
The research carried out in the context of the research paper and the case study will be presented in the class. Students will be given 20 mins to present their ideas followed by a 10 mins session for feedback and Q/A. The feedback received during the presentation should be used to improve the final research paper.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays/answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

**Grade Conversion**

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- \( B^+ = 87-89 \)  \( C^+ = 77-79 \)  \( D^+ = 67-69 \)  \( F = \text{below 65} \)
- \( A = 94-100 \)  \( B = 84-86 \)  \( C = 74-76 \)  \( D = 65-66 \)
- \( A^- = 90-93 \)  \( B^- = 80-83 \)  \( C^- = 70-73 \)

Alternatively:

- \( A = 4.0 \)  \( A^- = 3.7 \)
- \( B^+ = 3.3 \)  \( B = 3.0 \)  \( B^- = 2.7 \)
- \( C^+ = 2.3 \)  \( C = 2.0 \)  \( C^- = 1.7 \)
- \( D^+ = 1.3 \)  \( D = 1.0 \)  \( F = 0.0 \).

**Attendance Policy**

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp.
If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html](http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html)

**Late Submission of Work**

(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work, and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.
(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global's academic policies please see: www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies

Required Text(s)
Unless otherwise specified, all the texts required for the class will be available online on NYU Classes.

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)

Additional Required Equipment
None

Session 1 – 31 August 2017
Course introduction
This first introductory session will primarily focus on answering the question what are urban landscapes and how are they disturbed by large scale migration? Chapter 1 of the text book by Forman (2014) will be used to explain the fundamentals of the urban ecology and need of this science to study changing urban landscapes. The paper by Schiller et al. (2009) will also be discussed to emphasize on the importance of studying migration in the context of urban systems and how it challenges the resources within.

Session 2 – 7 September 2017
Cities as ecosystems and urban ecology
This session includes group discussions regarding the positive and negative aspects of urban development. What are urban ecosystems, and how has urban ecology evolved in recent years? What is meant by “structure” and “function” in urban ecosystems, and how does ecological theory apply to urban ecosystems? How do we study urban areas from historical, spatial, sustainable and systems perspectives?


Other readings

Session 3 – 14 September 2017
Urban ecosystem processes: biophysical and social dimensions
This section will explore the structural (biological, physical, social) components and functional processes of urban ecosystems. In urban ecosystems, each biological and physical component is dependent on other components. Each contributes to the local, regional and global environment through primary production, ecosystem respiration, biogeochemical transformation, information transfer and material transport. These relationships positively and negatively impact the human quality of life, biological life and ecological processes. Topics for this session will include biological components, physical structures (that is, land use and the built environment) and how these relate to the human quality of life in cities.

Session 4 – 21 September 2017
Urban resource deterioration and management practices
This section will examine the management issues and approaches that have evolved in cities as the result of land use change, natural resource use, and waste creation. Topics include urban land conversion (loss of prime agricultural land and natural ecosystems), urban waste (solid waste and waste water), and the human impacts that bring about these changes. Our primary aim is to use an integrated approach to understanding these issues.


Other readings

Session 5 – 28 September 2017
Urban ecology in a global society: developing urban regions
In this session, we will draw examples from Asian and Latin American cities to develop a comparative understanding of urban ecosystems. Poverty issues, slum area development, and other consequences of large scale migration in these contexts will be included in this session.


Other readings

Session 6 – 5 October 2017
Student project discussion: Case study preparation for final project
Student groups will be formed so that each group may select a city, undertake a literature review of that city, and apply some of the methodological approaches we discussed in order to design and present the case of that city. The instructor will explain the structure of the project and procedure to conduct the whole project including the expected outcome.
Cities and migration
This session starts by asking: who immigrates and why? What kind of social, environmental, and administrative challenges does an immigrant face? How do urban forms react and dynamics respond to large scale migrant movement? We will consider how urban ecosystems transform as they incorporate new migrants, and look at immigrant settlement patterns that demonstrate residential segregation or integration.


Other readings

Mid-term exam: Essay due by this day; questions to answer will be handed out after session 6.

19 October – Fall break – No class

Session 8 – 26 October 2017
Social conflicts and urban political ecology
This session discusses the social conflicts that emerge when human competition for resources intensifies. We will look at how political movements and scientific efforts might help to address these conflicts.


Other readings

Session 9 – 2 November 2017
World Cities – Case 1: Berlin (Gust lecturer - Dr. Nadja Kabisch)
Berlin has become a hub of the immigrant population in Germany presumably leading to a potential conflict of resources in the longer run. This session outlines the land use pattern, population structure and the present status of the immigrant population in Berlin. How and where are they located? What are their problems and how heterogeneous the distribution of population across space is?


Other readings

Session 10 – 9 November 2017
Dr. Neele Larondelle (TBC) from the Humboldt University of Berlin will lead the class on a field survey to selected sites in Berlin. Specific sites to be announced later.

Session 11 – 16 November 2017
World Cities – Case 2: Karachi as the fastest growing megacity in the world
This session will consider a case study that provides contrast and comparison for Berlin. We will engage the case of Karachi, one of Pakistan’s most important and populous cities, and a longstanding center for transnational trade patterns worldwide. Our study will focus on Karachi’s post-independence development, and we will focus specifically on the significant inflow of Afghan and Bangladeshi refugees there. The example of Pakistan gives us a closer look at a city in which ethnic conflicts, illegal occupation of urban open spaces, and resource competition have demonstrable ecological impacts.

Session 12 – 23 November 2017
Final project: Consultation and feedback
In this session, student groups will discuss the status and design of their project/presentation with the instructor before presenting it as their final output. Students will be required to send their drafts to the instructor at least three days prior to this meeting.

Session 13 – 30 November 2017
Student seminar: project presentations (day 1/2)
These sessions are the culmination of the course. Student teams will select a case study and use the course tools and content to undertake an urban ecology analysis of their case. Each team will present their case to the rest of the class, allowing a collective experience of global urban ecology critique. Students may choose from the following cities: Berlin, New York, Karachi, Detroit, Beijing, Shanghai, Birmingham and fast growing cities in Latin America. These are the cities for which the instructor can provide literature and data. Students with a particular interest in a city not listed here are nevertheless, free to select the city of their choice.
Session 14 – 7 December 2017
Student seminar: project presentations (day 2/2)

Session 15 – 14 December 2017 (10:00 am - 12:45 pm)
General summary
All course material discussed in class and presented by the students will be discussed and a thorough feedback will be provided by the instructors on the work done by the students.

Your Lecturer
Salman Qureshi is working as a Senior Scientist and Project Coordinator at the Humboldt University of Berlin. He is also affiliated with the School of Architecture, Birmingham City University as Honorary Research Fellow. Earlier, he served as Guest Chair Professor of Sports Ecology at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. His research orbit is distinctly interdisciplinary and focuses on the human dimensions of the effects of landscape pattern on urban ecosystem processes, urbanization and its ecological consequences on ecosystem services. His research addresses a wide range of questions investigating the social processes driving urban vegetation change (land change science in general) and the structure-function relationships of ecological systems in urban and peri-urban environments. He is interested in the comparative ecology of cities having case studies Asia, Europe, South and North America.