Class details
Globalizing Social Activism: Sustainable Development in Urban Areas (UPADM-GP 9217/POL-UA 9717)

Spring 2013, Wednesdays, 9:00 am – 12 noon
NYU-DC classroom to be confirmed.

Instructor Details
Victoria Kiechel  AIA  LEED AP+
Email: vk37@nyu.edu
Office hours: after class and upon request

Prerequisites
N/A

Class Description
For the first time in world history, the number of people living in urban areas exceeds the number of people living in rural areas. In acknowledging the urgent demands of our urban present and future, this course examines the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of contemporary cities. Because projections show that most population growth will continue to take place in and around cities, this course makes the case for sustainable development as a way to mitigate the impacts of human growth. We will explore what is, and what could be, by discussing these themes: urban sprawl, slums and slum typology, green urban planning, air and water quality, new paradigms for energy/water/waste infrastructure, green building, sustainable materials, and whole systems design. We will consider how to measure sustainability and discuss the effectiveness of sustainability indicators. We will examine governance structures, social entrepreneurship, and the power of information technology and social networks in promoting sustainable development and the diffusion of ideas. We will also highlight the transformative role of art and culture in our sustainable urban future.

Desired Outcomes
To describe the impact of cities on their regional ecologies and the global ecology;
To analyze the components of and barriers to urban sustainability and sustainable design;
To be able to apply this understanding to the development of solutions to real-world urban problems;
To be able to quantify or measure progress towards solutions.
YOUR GRADE DEPENDS ON THE FOLLOWING:

**Class participation:** 20%

Three assignments in support of collaborative projects: 45% total. Assignment one is three pages and is 5% of the total grade; Assignments two and three are five-to eight page papers or research projects, each counting for 20% of your total grade.

**Mid term examination:** 15%

**Final class collaborative project results and oral presentation:** 20%

Failure to complete or submit any of these required components results in failure in the class.

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her 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.

**NYU Washington, DC** uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
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<td>86-84</td>
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<td>83-80</td>
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<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>76-74</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-66</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>below 65</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Attendance Policy

Students are permitted one unexcused absence across the course of the semester.
To seek an excused absence for medical reasons, students must email or discuss with Lauren in advance of their missed class. For an excused absence, students must produce a doctor’s note dated with the exact dates of the missed class and/or exam.
Non-medical absences must be discussed with Lauren prior to the date(s) in question. Lauren will communicate the absence to all relevant faculty. If you have not received notification from Lauren, the student has not procured an excused absence.

If students have more than one unexcused absence they will be penalized by deducting 50% of the class participation grade (e.g.: If the class participation grade is 20% of the final grade, the final participation grade would be reduced by 50%. 80%---> 40%)

If students have more than two unexcused absences they will fail the course. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. This means they should initiate email and/or office hour discussions to discuss any missed lectures and assignments and arrange a timeline for submitting missed work.

NYU Washington, DC expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or earlier departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion. Staff members may always be reached by cell phone for advice regarding public transportation.
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 emailed to the faculty as soon as it is completed. If the assignment must be submitted in person, Lauren Sinclair can collect on behalf of the faculty between the hours of 10-6, M-F.

3) Late work will be reduced for a fraction of a letter grade (e.g: A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for every day it is late, including weekends.

4) Written work during the semester that is submitted 5 days after the submission date (including weekends) without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

5) Students who arrive to class late for an exam do not have automatic approval to take extra time to complete the exam.

6) Students who miss an exam (including the final) without previously arranged permission will receive a zero on that exam.

7) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.

Students with Disabilities

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.

NYU Washington, DC takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor may check for plagiarism or 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 guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html
http://gls.nyu.edu/page/gls.academicintegrity
http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity
Required Text(s)  We will have one required hard copy text:  **The Sustainable Urban Development Reader**, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2008), edited by Stephen Wheeler and Timothy Beatley. If you would like to own it, I recommend its purchase as a used book through amazon.com, which has many copies available from various booksellers for a reasonable price; otherwise, you may access it through the NYU reading room. All other reading will be available online or in PDF format as posted to our NYU Classes site.

Supplemental Texts(s) (not required for purchase)  The instructor will issue and discuss the supplemental bibliography during the second class.

Internet Research Guidelines  Open source internet research resources, while helpful, are not entirely reliable; this includes sources such as Wikipedia. Quotes or attributions from these sources will result in a reduced grade on written work.

Additional Required Equipment  Please purchase a small notebook or sketchbook for taking notes and sketching during class. We will engage in occasional mapping and diagramming exercises. Utrecht Art Supply, a good source, is a few blocks away, near 13th and I Streets, NW.

Session 1  Wednesday, February 6

**What is sustainability?** Components and challenges in urban development. Measurement systems and indicators. Concepts: whole systems thinking; adaptation; governance.

Discussion and brainstorming: Proposals for a student-run urban agricultural initiative at NYU Washington, DC, the basis for your short assignment due next week.

Session 2  Wednesday, February 13

**Theory and practice in urban design and planning.** Sprawl and SmartGrowth; existing cities, new towns, and visionary development and innovation.

Case studies: lower Manhattan; Washington, DC. Introduction to our class projects.

*First assignment due.*

Readings:

*The Sustainable Urban Development Reader,* pp. 87-111 (“Land Use and Urban Design”); pp. 425-455 (“Urban Sustainability at the City and Regional Scale”)

### Session 3
**Wednesday, February 20**


**Readings:** The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, pp. 32-37 (Jane Jacobs: “Orthodox Planning and the North End”); pp. 197-208 (“Fighting Poverty and Environmental Injustice in Cities”)

Garrett Hardin’s “Tragedy of the Commons” available through http://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full

Mike Davis, Planet of Slums, portions online through http://digmybook.com/preview/1844670228/Planet-of-Slums

Visit: http://www.ashoka.org/fellows and read and review the profiles for
- Ravi Agarwal [http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/2604](http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/2604)
- Anna Zucchetti [http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/3721](http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/3721)
- Antonio Luiz Batista de Macedo [http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/3250](http://www.ashoka.org/fellow/3250)
- Mathias Craig [http://www.ashoka.org/mcraig](http://www.ashoka.org/mcraig)
- Radoslaw Gawlik [http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/radoslaw_gawlik](http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/radoslaw_gawlik)
- Andy Lipkis [http://www.ashoka.org/alipkis](http://www.ashoka.org/alipkis)

Come to class prepared to talk about them with respect to the descriptive approach Ashoka adopts: The Problem, The Idea, The Strategy.

### Session 4
**Wednesday, February 27**

**Transportation and movement.** Systems, costs and benefits. Case studies: Curitiba, Brazil; Medellin, Colombia.

**Second assignment due.**


### Session 5
**Wednesday, March 6**

**Green buildings and sustainable housing.** Climate-responsive design in urban areas. Green building rating systems and mandates. Case studies.

**Readings:** The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, pp. 255-278 (“Green Architecture and Building”); pp. 397-426 (“Urban Sustainability at the Building and Site Scale”)

Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor, excerpts on NYU classes.


Download and read the Living Building Challenge Standard at [https://ilbi.org/lbc/standard](https://ilbi.org/lbc/standard)


### Session 6
**Wednesday, March 13**

Mid-term examination and preview of coming attractions.
Session 7

**NOTE: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS MEETING**

Wednesday, March 20

Session 8

**Water and water infrastructure.** The effect of cities on their regional ecologies and watersheds. The concept of low impact development (LID). The new water paradigm. Guest speaker Leah Lemoine from the District of Columbia Department of the Environment.

**Readings:**
- On the new water paradigm: from the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF), “Integration Report” on NYU Classes
- The Cascadia Green Building Council, “Towards Net Zero Water” on NYU Classes
- Center for Neighborhood Technology, “The Value of Green Infrastructure” on NYU Classes

Session 9

**Field trip,** the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The NCPC ecoDistrict and the influence of the Portland, Oregon ecoDistrict model.

**Readings:**
  - Tools
  - Framework
  - Overview
  - Training + Consulting Services
  - Pilot EcoDistrict Reports (2011)
    - Foster Green
    - Gateway
    - Lloyd
    - South of Market
    - South Waterfront
  - Toolkits (version 1.1)
    - Table of Contents
    - Action Guide
    - EcoDistrict Organization
    - Financing an EcoDistrict
    - EcoDistrict Policy Support
    - Assessment
  - Making EcoDistricts (Academic Publication with Insight into the EcoDistrict approach)
  - District Utility Analysis (Prepared by Compass Resource Management in partnership with PoSI)

Session 10

**Energy and energy infrastructure.** Sources, extraction, and impacts. Energy efficiency and renewable energy systems. Shared energy systems. Case studies.

**Readings:** The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, pp. 157-164 (“The Metabolism of Cities”).

Other readings in “Energy” folder on NYU Classes.
**Session 11**

**Wednesday, April 17**

**Materials and waste.** What is a green material? Hassan Fathy's Egyptian experiment. Life cycle assessment. Waste management case studies: Cairo, Kibera, and Mumbai.

**Readings:** The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, pp. 165-172 (“Waste as a Resource”). Other readings in “Materials” folder on NYU Classes.

**Session 12**

**Wednesday, April 24**

**The role of green space,** urban agriculture, parks. Biodiversity. Carbon sinks and global climate change. Food security in urban areas. Guest speaker Maisie Hughes of the Casey Tree Foundation.


**Session 13**

**Wednesday, May 1**

**Field trip** to discuss the role of green jobs/economy in the sustainable city. DC Deputy Mayor’s Office for Economic Development, Brandon Mitchell

**Readings:** The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, pp. 211-251 (“Economic Development”). Other readings TBD.

**Session 14**

**Wednesday, May 8**

**Internet technology** and the power of information to motivate change. Global activism and IT infrastructure.

**Readings:** As posted on NYU Classes, from Marcus Roth’s Handbook of Research on Urban Informatics: The Practice and Promise of the Real-Time City.

**Session 15**

**Wednesday, May 15**


**Final Presentation**

**Wednesday, May 22**

**Classroom Etiquette**

Attention, engagement, respect.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

See the week-by-week schedule, above.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

TBD.

**Your Instructor**
Vicky Kiechel, AIA and LEED AP+, is a practicing architect, native Washingtonian, and the mother of two teenaged native Washingtonians. She works for the Cadmus Group, Inc., an environmental consultancy, on the development and implementation of green building policy for clients in the public (federal, state, and local) and private sectors. Her clients have included the US Green Building Council, US EPA, the states of Wisconsin and Arkansas, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Vicky’s design work includes small-to-medium scale residential and institutional projects such as the Washington, DC offices of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Maury Public Elementary School Library for the DC Capitol Hill Libraries Project, a public-private partnership. Vicky also teaches in the Global Environmental Politics Program at American University, where she was named Most Innovative Green Teacher of the Year in 2010. She holds degrees from Yale College; Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar; and the Harvard Graduate School of Design.