New Course

Program Affected? N

Program Change Form Submitted?

Subject/Course/Term GEOG 525
- one term

Credit Weight or CEU's 3 credits

Course Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Schedule Type</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
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<td>M - Seminar</td>
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Total Hours per Week: 3
Total Number of Weeks: 13

Course Title

Official Course Title: Asian Cities in the 21st Century
Course Title in Calendar: Asian Cities in the 21st Century

Rationale

Asian Cities in the 21st Century is designed for graduate students and select upper level undergraduate 'urban systems' majors. The course's Asia-focused critical urban content is not offered in any other upper level or graduate courses in geography and helps to meet the growing demand for urban-focused courses, particularly those focused outside of 'western' contexts. Please add this course to the following programs: a) BA Minor Concentration in Geography (Urban Systems), GEOGRAPHY complimentary courses list; b) BA Honours in Urban Systems, in section "Choose 4 courses from the following courses in Geography"; c) BA Minor Concentration in Geography (Urban Systems), in Group A "Complementary Courses".

Responsible Instructor

This course examines current themes relating to mass urbanization in Asia in a range of contexts and the forces that shape the built environment of Asian cities. Various approaches to understanding Asian cities and current theoretical debates will be investigated, including recent critiques of western-centric theorizations of urban change in the region. The course examines a variety of themes through which students will gain familiarity with some of the major strands relating to urban change in Asia: national identity, neoliberalism, social exclusions, migration, religion, ethnicity and sustainability.

Teaching Dept. 0288 : Geography
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administering Faculty/Unit</th>
<th>SC : Faculty of Science</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td>GEOG 325, or 9 credits of Geography courses in Urban Geography, or permission of the instructor. Web Registration Blocked?: N</td>
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<td>Corequisites</td>
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<td>Restrictions</td>
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<td>Supplementary Calendar Info</td>
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**Approvals Summary**

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<th>Departmental Curriculum Committee</th>
<th>Departmental Meeting</th>
<th>Departmental Chair</th>
<th>Other Faculty</th>
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<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Lea Berrang Ford</td>
<td>Meeting Date: Oct 21 2013</td>
<td>Approval Date: Oct 29 2013</td>
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GEOG 525: **Asian Cities in the 21st Century**  
Dr. Sarah Moser  
Email: sarah.moser@mcgill.ca  
Phone: 514-792-5476  
Office: Burnside 323  
Department of Geography | McGill University

Course code: GEOG 525  
Meeting times:  
Location: Burnside Hall

**Course Description**

Asia is a rapidly urbanizing region that is home to 16 of the world’s 25 largest cities. Between 1990 and 2010, the urban population of Asia increased by over 754 million people, equal to the combined population of the United States and the European Union. **Asian Cities in the 21st Century** examines this vibrant region and some of the current themes relating to mass urbanization in a range of contexts and how these themes affect the built environment of Asian cities. The course will explore various approaches to understanding Asian cities and current theoretical debates, including those that challenge western-centric approaches to understanding urban change in the region. A variety of themes will be investigated through which students will gain familiarity with some of the major strands relating to urban change in Asia: national identity, neoliberalism, social exclusions, migration, religion, ethnicity and sustainability. The regions covered include East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea), Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar / Burma), Arab states (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar), South Asia (India), and Central Asia (Kazakhstan).

Students interested in urban and cultural geography, cities, architecture, planning and contemporary urban change in Asian cultural contexts will enjoy this course.

**Goals for this course**

In this course I hope to:

- Encourage students to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary Asia through examining contemporary urban change
- Broaden students’ awareness of the wide variety of cities in Asia and some of the most pressing issues facing Asian cities today
- Encourage students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills and to gain familiarity with interdisciplinary urban studies methods
- Increase students’ understanding of the various scholarly approaches to understanding contemporary Asian cities and to gain familiarity with some of the major areas of enquiry relating to urban change in Asia
Academic integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

In accordance with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or French any written work that is to be graded.

Assignments
This course will be graded based on written assignments, a presentation and participation.

5% Participation – While each class begins with a lecture, each class is dominated by class discussion guided by assigned readings and current events. Students must attend each class and will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of their comments in class.

30% - Weekly critical reflection papers – Students will write 2 page critical reflections on the readings and submit them at the start of each class.

15% Discussion leader – Students will each sign up for one class in which to act as discussion leader for one assigned reading. Students must also find several current newspaper / magazine articles about the topic of the week in order to enrich the discussion and ground the topic in contemporary events and changes in Asian cities. Several students (maximum 3) may sign up for one week. Each student will lead a 30 minute discussion on a theme found in the assigned reading and in the newspaper articles they find and provide a set of discussion questions for the class in order to structure the discussion. Students are encouraged to find outside visual material (e.g. marketing material, images, photos, film clips, etc) to supplement the discussion. (see detailed assignment sheet)

10% Paper outline, abstract and bibliography - Students will prepare a detailed outline as well as an abstract and list of references for their final paper.

40% Final paper – This final research paper should be around 12-15 pages. Students can examine a theme examined in this course in depth, either using one case study or several for a more comparative approach (e.g. If a student selects the theme of ‘green’ cities, s/he may wish to examine one city’s ‘green’ efforts or do a comparative paper critically examining several contrasting examples of ‘green’ initiatives). (see detailed assignment sheet)

*late assignments will be penalized 10% per day

Class schedule and readings (*readings in bold are required, the others are supplementary)

Class 1
Introduction – Asian cities in an age of change
In this class we will discuss ‘Asian Cities’ as a topic deserving of academic study as well as some of the problems with this category. We will examine several of the main theoretical approaches to understanding urban change in Asia.
Class 2

Readings for discussion in Class 2:

- View YouTube videos on Masdar: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovly1dQGKH4 and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3Wtze716QY
- View YouTube video about Dongtan Eco-City, China: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ej5IVXI-Jyc&feature=related and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-nCBFeTcMk

Discussion: 1) How are different ‘green’ ideas manifested in the built environment in Asian cities? 2) Discuss the spectrum of interpretations of ‘green’ cities. How are these interpretations culturally dependent? 3) Discuss some practical ‘green’ solutions that have been successful and how they could potentially be applied to various Asian contexts. 4) Is the concept of ‘green city’ an oxymoron?

Class 3

Religion shaping cities: Naypyidaw (Myanmar / Burma), Putrajaya (Malaysia), Masdar (United Arab Emirates), Mecca (Saudia Arabia), Israel

Readings for discussion in class 3:


Discussion: 1) In what ways is religious ideology integrated into the physical design of the city, its architecture and its symbolic spaces? Examples. 2) Why does the ruling elite in many Asian cities increasingly use religion in city planning and architecture? 3) Can you think of any other contemporary examples from other Asian cities that integrate religion into the design or layout of the city? (see newspaper articles)

Class 4

New master-planned cities in Asia: Cyberabad (India), Dompak (Indonesia); Putrajaya, Cyberjaya, Nusajaya (Malaysia), Astana (Kazakhstan), Rawabi (Palestine), Lavasa (India)

Readings for discussion in class 4:

• Watch Youtube clip of Rawabi: [http://www.rawabi.ps/](http://www.rawabi.ps/)
• Watch YouTube clip of Putrajaya: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRWTsOqltE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRWTsOqltE)

**Discussion:** 1) What are some of the official reasons Asian leaders have provided for the creation of new cities? What do you think are some of the unspoken reasons? 2) What ideas or values are being conveyed through the design of the cities to different users of the cities? 3) What conceptual categories could you create to organize the rash of new cities in Asia?

**Class 5**
**Heritage, cultural revivalism and the city:**

Readings for discussion in class 5:


**Discussion:** 1) Why are many Asian cities rejecting modern styles in favor of pseudo-traditional urban spaces and architecture? Is this shift primarily an Asian phenomenon or is it part of a broader pattern? Examples. 2) To what extent is this movement state-driven? To what extent is it a grass roots movement? Examples. 3) What are the cultural politics behind heritage/cultural preservation?

**Class 6**
**Knowledge economy: from manufacturing to biotech, knowledge economies and ‘creative clusters’**

Readings for discussion in class 6:

- Watch YouTube clip of Cyberjaya: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gwgF57FyUg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gwgF57FyUg)
- Watch YouTube clip of Singapore’s one-north: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsUtYbzczyY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsUtYbzczyY) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbplWmAzxI&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbplWmAzxI&feature=related)

**Discussion:** 1) How have some Asian cities been innovators in encouraging ‘creative cities’? 2) In what ways have governments facilitated the growth of creative cities and in what ways are governments obstacles?

**Class 7**
**Circulating urban policy: Asians rejecting the West in favor of emulating other Asian cities**
Readings for discussion in class 7:


**Discussion:** 1) How do the authors argue that ‘the west’ is no longer the source of inspiration for Asian cities? 2) How to the authors argue that Asia is a course of urban innovation? 3) What are some other examples of ‘urban policy transfer’? (see newspaper articles) 4) How does urban policy transfer relate to ‘Dubaization’?

**Class 8**

**Shopping and the city: Malls, markets, money**

Singapore, Jakarta (Indonesia), Dubai

Readings for discussion in class 8:


**Discussion:** 1) Discuss some of what you perceive to be some of the successes and failures of shopping developments/districts in contemporary Asian cities. What is the yardstick for assessing success and failure of commercial areas? 2) What are some of the successful aspects of Asian commercial life that cities outside of Asia can emulate? 3) How are mega malls contributing to a ‘splintered urbanism’ and increased socio-economic divide in Jakarta and other large Asian cities? How can splintered urbanism be avoided through design?

**Class 9**

**Urban migration: Cultural collisions, the city as cultural laboratory**

Readings for discussion in class 9:


**Discussion:** 1) What are some of the new urban forms and innovative cultural products of mass urban migration? (see newspaper articles) 2) What are some strategies minorities take to make a portion of a city their own?

**Class 10**

**Accommodating the masses: Emerging housing patterns in Asian cities**

Readings for discussion in class 10:

Discussion: 1) What are some of the creative solutions people have come up with to accommodate massive population growth in Asia? Are there lessons for ‘the west’ to be learned? 2) How has neoliberalism shaped cities in Asia?

Class 11
Perpetuating and innovating social exclusions

Readings for discussion in class 11:

Discussion: 1) How are new urban developments exacerbating existing social exclusions and hierarchies? 2) To what extent are social exclusions imposed from ‘imported’ urban policy and to what extent are social exclusions local in derivation? What does this say about where urban policy originates?

Class 12
Ethnicity and the city: Ethnic districts, ethnic branding, ethnic tourism

Readings for discussion in class 12:

Discussion: 1) How do ethnic districts in Asia differ from those in the United States? To what extent are ethnic districts copying the American Chinatown model? 2) How have ‘ethnic’ districts in Asia evolved since WW1? 3) Based on the readings and newspaper articles, where do you see ethnic districts in Asia heading in the coming decades? How is this different based on the context? (e.g. Indonesia vs. Singapore)

Class 13
Emerging ‘global’ cities in Asia

Readings for discussion in class 13:

Discussion: 1) Why is there so much focus, both within academia and in elite political circles, on ‘global cities’? What benefits can ‘global cities’ yield? 2) What are some attempts of Asian cities to go ‘global”? To what extent have these attempts been successful? 3) What are some examples of various local interpretations of ‘global cities’?