Course description

About 80 percent of the Latin American population lives in cities today, a doubling the share of what it was in the 1950s. Latin America’s dramatic shift from mostly rural to highly-urbanized region was the first wave or urbanization in the developing world and has important economic, political and social ramifications. In many ways, the future of Latin America depends on how its cities will respond to current challenges in urban planning, economic development, and democratization. As the pioneer urbanized region, the lessons of Latin America’s urbanization can give us a better understanding of our urban futures.

Using a sociological perspective, this course surveys the urbanization experience of Latin America, exploring its consequences and challenges. The first half of the course will provide an historical overview of the evolution of Latin American cities. This overview will help us contextualize the contemporary trends that lead to Latin America’s fast urbanization since the mid-twentieth century and explore different theoretical city models (e.g. colonial, pre-industrial, industrial, global, etc.). Then, we will explore the factors that shaped the structure of Latin American cities and gave birth to many of its most-known urban forms (e.g. favelas, squatter settlements, and plazas, as well as gated communities). Finally, we will discuss current challenges, learn from recent policy innovations, and problematize how they meet the current challenges of global urbanization.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this class, students should be able to:
1. Be familiar with basic concepts of urban sociology
2. Have experience in exploring social issues comparatively.
3. Understand and distinguish Latin American urbanization and its connections to the global economy
4. Have a basic knowledge on contemporary issues of Latin America’s urban development.

Last but not least, I hope that through your exploration of Latin American cities, you get some takeaways, lessons or questions that can help you reflect about your urban experience in the United States.

Required Texts

For your convenience, all texts will be available through Canvas under the module section for every week. Some course materials will be available to read online through the E-book library.

Course Format, Requirements and Evaluation

The course format will be a combination of lectures, student presentations, class activities and discussions. Set aside enough time to read about 50 pages each week. You are expected to complete all required readings and write posts/summaries prior to class meetings. During class time, your input is crucial. Each student will be given a different set of readings. Your readings will complement those of your classmates and will help the class work through our discussions and activities.
The final grade will be based on:

- **Weekly Responses (15 @ 5 pts each)** 75 points
  
  *Every Wednesday before midnight*, students will write a 150-300-words post on Canvas. Check the discussion board a week in advance to familiarize with those questions before reading the assigned course material. No late reading posts will be accepted.

- **Participation** 75 points
  
  Regular attendance, punctuality and engagement with the readings are key for the successful completion of this course. You will earn a point per day of attendance (15 pts total) and will be evaluated on the quality of participation in class (3 pts per class session for 45 pts total). Keep in mind that even if excusing an absence, students will not be able to reinstate neither attendance nor participation points.

  Each student will also have an opportunity to lead discussions for the third part section of the course (15 pts total). To lead the discussions, students will need to be responsible for developing discussion questions based on the interpretation of the readings. You will need to pick the dates no later than *Thursday, March 5th*. Additional guidelines will be posted on Canvas.

- **Analytic Papers (3 @ 100 pts each)** 300 points
  
  **First paper: Historic city profile**
  
  During the first part semester, you will analyze the evolution of a Latin American city of your choice from a suggested list of cities that have not been covered in enough detail in class. For this city, you will explore the social, economic, and political context that shaped its development. You need to notify your instructor about your city choice no later than Thursday January 30th.

  **Second paper: Film Analysis**
  
  You will analyze a Latin American film using your knowledge on Latin American urbanization and the intersections of space and place, by integrating the materials discussed in class in the second part of the course. The list of options and specific instructions will be available on Canvas.

  **Third paper: Urban Problem Analysis**
  
  Students will analyze urban issue about the Latin American city. You will compile a literature review on the issue to evaluate different perspectives on how to handle that particular urban problem. Specific instructions will be available in Canvas.

**Final grades** will be based upon a standard grading scale: A+= 97-100, A=94-96%, A-=90-93%, B+=87-89%, B=84-86%, B-=80-83%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=59% and below. For students taking the course on a credit/non-credit basis, a grade of C- (70% or better) is passing for undergraduate credit. As part of the grading criteria, keep in mind that A is reserved for outstanding work. Assignments that only meet the minimum requirements but are not particularly clear or lack depth will be granted a C.

**Class Policies**

**Attendance policy:** For the successful completion of the course, attendance is mandatory for every class and for the full class period. If you are having trouble in completing the requirements for this course or attending regularly, I strongly recommend that you schedule an appointment and discuss your situation with me in advance.

**Late policy:** For any project component, a late assignment penalty of a 10% grade reduction will be assessed for every day beyond a given deadline, after five days submission links on Canvas will be deactivated.
Resubmission Policy: You can resubmit your assignments to improve your grade. To request a resubmission, schedule an appointment with Prof. Aliaga. Once approved, the assignment link will reopen and stay active for one week. Be aware that revised exercises will be accepted only if the comments and suggestions from the instructor were substantially addressed.

Email policy: I do not regularly check email on the weekends, late after working hours, or during university holidays. If you have questions about an upcoming assignment, exam, class reading, or otherwise need to contact me, please plan accordingly.

Weather Policy: Classes will be canceled if OPS closes due to severe weather conditions. To be able to move with the class schedule, during those days, I will provide an additional discussion forum or other type of activity on Canvas. Those additional activities will be either due on the same day of class before midnight or on another date during the week as announced by the instructor. These assignment will be counted as class participation points.

University Policies

Academic Integrity: The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community at UNO. Any student found responsible for violating the policy on Academic Integrity is subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Please read carefully what those actions are and could entail at http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/academic-integrity.php

Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Disability Services and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact Disability Services (MBSC 111, Phone: 554-2872, TTY: 554-3799) or go to the website: www.unomaha.edu/disability

Sexual Misconduct: UNO seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of harassment, misconduct, or assault, we encourage you to report this. If you report sexual assault, sexual misconduct or sexual harassment to a UNO faculty or staff member, by law she or he must notify UNO's Title IX Coordinator, Charlotte Russell (402-554-3490) about the basic facts of the incident. Students wishing to have a confidential conversation with a designated campus representative may contact UNO Counseling Services (402-554-2409) or UNO Ombudsperson, Dr. Shereen Bingham (402-554-4857). For more information about campus resources at UNO, please go to the UNO Student Safety Website at: http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/student-safety/index.php

Additional University Resources

You will find useful some resources on campus to complete your class project. Please take your time to familiarize with:

1) Omer Farooq, Social Science Librarian, at Criss Library, can help you find some research resources about your city. His contact information is listed on Canvas under Library Resources.

2) The Interdisciplinary Research Commons offers open lab hours with consultants that could help you drafting research questions, exploring appropriate methods, and assessing your literature review. The Lab is located in ASH 304. For open lab hours check schedule at https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/research/interdisciplinary-research-commons.php

3) The Writing Center, located in ASH 150 (www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter),

Disclaimer: This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.
COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I FOUNDATIONS AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Week 1| 01/16: Introduction and Overview

Assigned readings:


Post on Canvas no later than 5:00 pm on Sunday, January 19th.

Week 2| 01/23: Pre-Columbian Cities (from 2500 B.C. to late 1500s)

Assigned Readings

One of the following articles:


In-class documentary: The Lost Pyramids of Caral

Week 3| 01/30: Colonial Cities (from 1500s to early 1800s)

Assigned Readings


AND, one of the following case studies from Gilbert, Joseph and Mark D. Szuchman.1998. I Saw a City Invincible (Available through E-Book Library): Chapter 2 (Mexico City), Chapter 3 (Lima), Chapter 4 (Buenos Aires), Chapter 5 (Salvador de Bahia).

Due. Email instructor your city selection.

Week 4| 02/06: The Republic City (from 1840 to late 1930s)

Assigned Readings


AND, One of the following case studies from Pinoe, Ronn and James A. Baer.1995. Cities of Hope (Available on Canvas): Chapter 1 (Bogotá), Chapter 2 (Montevideo), Chapter 5 (Buenos Aires), Chapter 8 (Rio de Janeiro), and Chapter 9 (Panamá). OR Chapter 9 (Sao Paulo) from Gilbert, Joseph and Mark D. Szuchman.1995. I Saw a City Invincible (Available through E-Book Library).

In-class exercise: basic indicators of urbanization
Week 5 | 02/13: The Industrial City (from 1940s to 1980s)

Assigned readings:

AND
One of the following: Chapter 11 (Mexico), Chapter 10 (Sao Paulo) In: *I Saw a City Invincible* (Available through E-Book Library), Guayana-Venezuela, and Brasilia by Holston (these latter two on Canvas).

In-class documentary: Brasilia Life After Design

Week 6 | 02/20 Towards the Free Market City (1980 to the present)

Assigned Readings:

AND
One of the following country case studies from Portes, Alejandro, José Itzigsohn and Carlos Dore Cabral. 1994. *The Urban Caribbean Transition to the New Global Economy*: Chapter 3 (Costa Rica), Chapter 4 (Haiti), Chapter 5 (Guatemala), Chapter 6 (Dominican Republic), OR
One of the following city case studies from Gilbert, Alan (Ed.) *The Mega-City in Latin America*: Chapter 6 (Buenos Aires), Chapter 7 (Lima), Chapter 8 (Mexico City), Chapter 9 (Rio de Janeiro), Chapter 10 (Sao Paulo), Chapter 11 (Bogotá). Book available online: http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu23me/uu23me00.htm

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**PART II THE URBAN FORMS**

Week 7 | 02/27: The Socio-spatial Structure of Latin American Cities

Assigned readings:


AND, one of the following:


ALSO Watch one of this video case studies (Links on Canvas): Mexico & Peru; Brazil; Haiti/Dominican Republic, Cuba from Black in Latin America or “Choleando: Racism in Peru”.

**First paper due** Historic city profiles.
Week 8|03/05: The Squatter Settlements
Assigned readings/Materials:


In class documentary: *The Forgotten Americans*

Week 9|03/12: Fortified Enclaves, Commercial Gentrification, and Contested Public Spaces
Assigned readings
One of the following:


AND, one of the following:


SOC 4800/8806|LLS 4910/8916| INST 4140 | Aliaga-Linares | Page 6 of 11


Dávila, Arlene. “Shopping Malls and the Fight for Public Space” From her book *El Mall*

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**PART III: A CLOSER LOOK TO THE URBAN CHALLENGES & SOCIAL INNOVATIONS**

**Week 10|03/19: Affordable Housing**

**Assigned readings**


**AND**

Select one city case study from Ward, Peter, Edith Jimenez and Mercedes Di Virgilio. 2015. Housing Policy in Latin American cities: A New Generation of Strategies and Approaches for 2016 UN Habitat III: Chapter 4 (Mexico city and Monterrey), Chapter 5 (Santo Domingo), Chapter 6 (Guatemala city), Chapter 7 (Bogotá), Chapter 8 (Lima), Chapter 9 (Santiago de Chile), Chapter 10 (Montevideo), Chapter 11 (Buenos Aires).

**In-class documentary: The Property Ladder**

**Week 11|04/02: Environmental Sustainability**

**Assigned readings**


**AND**, one of the following environmental research case studies: Curitiba, Quito and Buenos Aires (on Canvas)

**In-Class Documentary: A convenient truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil**

**Second paper due.** Film Analysis.

*** SEMESTER BREAK 03/22-03/29***
**Week 12|04/09: Crime and Social Cohesion**  
**Assigned readings**  
**AND**  
**AND** One of the following case studies from “Violence and Resilience in Latin American Cities” : Caracas, San Salvador, Bogota OR,  
**In-class documentary:** *Ya Basta: Kidnapped in Mexico/ The Miracle of Medellín*

**Week 13|04/16: Informal Livelihoods**  
**Assigned readings**  
**OR**  
**AND** one of the following:  
**In-class documentary:** *City Rising: The Informal Economy*
**Week 14|04/23: Urban Planning Innovations**

**Assigned readings/materials**

One city case study from Mc Guirk, Justin. 2014. *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search for a New Architecture*: Chapter 2 (Lima and Santiago), Chapter 2 (Rio de Janeiro), Chapter 6 (Bogotá), Chapter 7 (Medellín), Chapter 8 (Tijuana). **OR**

One of the following from the NACLA Report on the Americas “Radical Cities” on either Bolivia, Venezuela, Buenos Aires, or Recife, OR **ALSO**, watch one TED talk from: Jaime Aravena (Santiago de Chile), Enrique Peñaloza (Bogotá), Jaime Lerner (Curitiba-Brazil), and Teddy Cruz (Border innovations)

**In-Class Documentary: Extracts from Beyond Elections & Urbanized**

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**Week 15|04/30: Urban Governance**

**Assigned readings**


**AND** One of the case studies from “Capital City Politics in Latin America”: Buenos Aires, Caracas, Guatemala City, Havana, Lima, Mexico City, Santiago **OR**


**In-Class Documentary: Public Money/ Bogota Improving Civic Behavior**

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**Third Paper due: Monday 05/04:** No class. Submit online before midnight