

Spring 2024

**GEOG/ASIA 320**  
**Asian Cities**

Class Meeting Time: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1:10-2:10pm  
Class Meeting Location: Carnegie 105

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### Course Introduction

Since the last century, Asia has experienced rapid urbanization. It is now home to over half of the world's most populated cities. By 2010, the urban population in the Asia-Pacific region has surpassed the population of the United States and the European Union combined. In this course, we will focus on cities in East, Southeast and South Asia. We will first contextualize the rapid urbanization in the region's changing political economy, and identify urban issues that are unique to this region. We will further explore different theoretical approaches to understand Asian cities; several of them challenge mainstream urban theories rooted in the experiences of West European and North American cities. Upon the completion of this course, students will acquire substantive knowledge on contemporary trends of urban development in Asia and develop familiarity with related ongoing theoretical debates. In addition, students will conduct individual research projects to develop a deeper and more concrete understanding of the contemporary urbanization processes in Asia.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Identify the significance of Asian cities in contemporary urban research;
- Describe and appreciate the complexity and diversity of Asian urbanism;
- Apply geographical approaches and concepts to examine the uneven development in Asian cities;
- Analyze how urban development in Asia interacts with the local social, cultural, and political contexts;
- Critically discuss problems pertaining to contemporary Asian cities, and analytically assess the merits of proposed solutions.
- Complete an independent research paper and present it at a professional setting.

## Attendance and Participation

*Attendance and participation are required.* This course is a research-oriented seminar, and you will learn through in-class discussions, workshops, and various activities designed to help you improve your independent research project. Handouts will be distributed from time to time in class. *If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up with the course materials. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts for students who are absent from class.*

I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. In such situation, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance via email. Students with special needs should discuss their accommodations with me early in the semester to work out a plan that aligns with maintaining course expectations and learning goals.

## Producing a Positive Learning Environment

To give students the opportunity to think about Asian cities from new perspectives, we need to work together to create a positive learning environment. For this to happen, I expect your cooperation in at least three ways:

- Respect the rights of other students to learn.
- Acknowledge and respect the diversity of participants in this class. Discussion of controversial issues is encouraged. Even if you don't agree with the points of view of others, as citizens of this class we all share a responsibility for respecting all individuals as fair-minded persons. Diversity is a strength in our society at large and here at Macalester College. In this class you will be asked to maintain an open mind to the differences around you, and place positive value on that diversity.
- Your regular attendance and participation. You are expected to be present at the beginning of class and stay until the end, and to fully participate in class discussions and activities. You are asked to turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom and not to use electronic devices for activities not related to the course.

In return, the TA and I promise to be on time, to address your questions and concerns, to give you feedback on your performance, and to return graded materials in a timely manner. You can expect the TA and me to reply to your emails within 48 hours. You are encouraged to meet with the TA and/or me to discuss your questions and concerns during office hours.

*Students with special needs:* All of us learn in different ways and with varying degrees of success. If you know of any factors in your life that may hinder your abilities to learn up to your potential in this course, please notify me as soon as possible. You should also contact Center for Disability Resources (website: <https://www.macalester.edu/disability-resources/>; phone: 651-696-6748; email: [disabilityresources@macalester.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@macalester.edu)), who have more expertise than I do in determining what special steps need to be taken to enable you to participate fully.

*Mental health and wellbeing:* All of us may feel anxious and stressed from time to time during the semester. If you need support for mental health and wellbeing, visit the Laurie Hamre Center for Health and Wellness in the Leonard Center (website: <https://www.macalester.edu/health-and->

[wellness/](#); phone: 651-696-6275; email: [health@macalester.edu](mailto:health@macalester.edu)).

## The Organization and Expectation of the Seminar, Student Work and Evaluation

The class will meet three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for three hours in total. The three hours of class meeting time each week usually comprise two parts. The first part includes the mini lectures and seminar discussions, focusing on the key concepts and literatures of Asian urbanism; the second part devotes to the research workshops, focusing on research methods and your independent research projects.

The readings for the seminar discussion of each week will be posted on the course Moodle site. For the research workshop, we will use the following book:

Ward, Kevin (ed.) 2014. *Researching the City*. London: Sage.

Students are expected to have completed the required readings prior to each class, and will be responsible for formulating questions as the basis for in-class discussions and analysis of these materials. All students are expected to fully participate in all class activities.



### Short lectures on the urbanization patterns in three sub-regions

This course is a research semester intended for junior and senior students, or students with prior knowledge of urban theories and/or Asia. Since students of this course may come with different levels of background knowledge, on 01/22, 01/24, 01/26 we will go over the basics about Asian Cities in class together. *Students are expected to develop tentative research question during this time.*

### Seminar discussion

Starting from 01/29, all students, including discussion leaders, are required to formulate three questions for discussion each week based on the readings of the week. Discussion questions may seek for clarification, but it would be more meaningful if they can facilitate substantive and theoretical debates. Good discussion questions generally come from comparative analysis across the readings and tend to allow for different opinions to be introduced. *Discussion questions should be posted to the Moodle site no later than 10 am on the Sunday prior to the class meeting.*

*Each student will be designated as discussion leader at least three times over the semester.* The discussion leaders will work together to develop a discussion agenda with a set of written questions for discussion based on the questions submitted by all students. *The leaders should email the discussion agenda to the instructor and all the participants by 10 am on the Monday prior to the class meeting.* The discussion leaders will also be responsible for leading discussions in class around those topics.

### Response papers to seminar readings

*Each student will also prepare two short response papers to the readings for two of the three weeks when you are the discussion leader. The response paper should not exceed 1,000 words. It should include a summary of the main points of the readings as you perceive them, comparisons across the different readings, a critical assessment of the merits and clarity of the readings, and any questions that might have arisen. The response paper is due a week after the selected discussion. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day.*

### Research workshop discussion

We will read and discuss eight major urban research methods in our research workshops: archival research, interviews, urban ethnography, questionnaires, discourse analysis, diaries, GIS, and photography and videos. Each student will sign up for two methods over the semester. For each method, the students who sign up for it will: 1) do a brief presentation about the method, 2) lead the discussion about the method, focusing on its merits and limitations, and 3) if applicable, use their own independent research as an example to explain how they may employ that method and seek the class' feedback.

### Research Paper

A major component of this seminar is to undertake a research paper. This will entail posing an interesting problem or question related to studies of Asian urbanism, and setting out to answer this question through library research, first- and second- hand data collection, and the analysis of relevant archives and data. For example, a research paper can analyze a series of case studies (that other authors have already published) in order to answer a question from a perspective that had yet to be examined in this manner. The research paper can also reinterpret a situation by analyzing a set of data (either quantitative or qualitative, or both) or relevant literature from a different angle. Primary data collected during a study abroad experience is acceptable for the use in this paper. If you plan on interviewing persons during the term of this paper, you are required to get clearance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Information about the IRB review application and process at Macalester can be found here: <https://www.macalester.edu/irb/> The deadlines for applications this semester are Jan 24, Feb 14, Mar 6, Apr 10, and May 22. If your research needs IRB clearance, you would like to aim for the first deadline because you will not be able to start your research until your IRB application is approved.

Your paper will be graded for content and ideas as well as effectiveness of writing (organization, clarity, citations, spelling, punctuation). In order to facilitate the research and writing process, and limit the possibility of last minute effort, a number of intermediary due dates are scheduled for the submission of: 1) the research topic and description, 2) the preliminary bibliography, 3) the annotated bibliography and paper outline, 4) a research paper draft, 5) a peer review exercise, and 6) the final research paper. All written assignments must be printed out and turned in on time. Deadlines for the assignments are specified in the following sections. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Your final research paper is expected to be a paper between 3,500 to 4,000 words and comply with an academic format (APA style preferred).

### Peer review exercise

In addition to receiving feedback on your draft paper from the course instructor, each of you will provide feedback for and receive comments from at least two other class members. Peer review will take place in class during the research workshop on 04/05. *The peer review written feedback is due on 04/10 in class, the Wednesday following the in-class peer review exercise.*

### Research presentation

You are required to present your research paper findings on one of the following days: April 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26. You will have 15 minutes to make your presentation, followed by a 5 minute Q&A period. We will help you prepare for your presentation in class on April 15. In addition to the presentation in class, you are encouraged to also give a presentation at the Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium on Saturday, April 27 at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls.

### Academic Honesty

It is necessary to remind everyone that academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Honesty and integrity are expected at all times. Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to the College's guidelines. You are responsible for learning about these policies (<http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>), so that you can meet the responsibility. By participating in this course, *you agree to submit your assignments in digital form if requested*, enabling the instructor to ensure they are not plagiarized from other materials available on the Internet and elsewhere.

### Grading

Students taking the course on an A-F basis will be graded as follows:

- A – achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B – achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C – achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
- D – achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
- S – achievement that is satisfactory (equivalent to a letter grade of at least C-).
- F – NC, signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit, or (2) is incomplete and with no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an "I".
- I – Incomplete. A grade of incomplete may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor, if requested by the student, under the following conditions: (1) at least three-quarters of the required work for the course has been completed, (2) unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control (usually restricted to illness or family emergency) preclude completion of the remaining work for the course by the semester deadline, (3) the student is not on strict academic probation. Note that poor planning or having a lot of work to complete at the end of the term are not, in fairness to other students, considered circumstances beyond a student's control.

Grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

A 93-100%	B+ 87-89.9%	C+ 77-79.9%	D+ 67-69.9%	F 0-59%
A- 90-92.9%	B 83-86.9%	C 73-76.9%	D 63-66.9%	
	B- 80-82.9%	C- 70-72.9%	D- 60-62.9%	

### Grade Allocation and Deadlines

Participation and attendance	15%	
Discussion leadership	15%	Assigned
Two response papers	15%	1 week after selected discussion
Topic and brief description	2%	02/02
Preliminary bibliography	3%	02/16
Annotated bibliography and paper outline	5%	03/22
Draft	10%	04/05
Written peer review feedback	5%	04/10
Paper presentation	5%	04/17, 19, 22, 24, 26
Final paper	25%	04/29

## Course Outline and Readings

*Any suggestions that will enhance learning are welcome.*

*Please note that the class schedule and readings may be subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.*

[\*Optional reading]

### 01/19: Course overview

Syllabus, discussion assignments.

### 01/22, 01/24, 01/26: The basics

Chatterjee, I., G. Pomeroy and A. Dutt. 2012. Cities of South Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 381-424. (chapter 9)

Chan, K. W. and A. Boland. 2012. Cities of East Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 471-522 (chapter 11)

Tyner, J. and A. Ortega. 2012. Cities of Southeast Asia, in Brunn, S., Hays-Mitchell, M., and Ziegler, D. (eds) *Cities of the World*, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 425-470. (chapter 10)

*Research workshop 01/22, 01/24, 01/26: explore potential research topics & questions*

### 01/29, 01/31, 02/02: Cities in the global South

Sheppard, E. 2014. Globalizing capitalism and southern urbanization, in S. Parnell and S. Oldfield (eds) *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*. New York: Routledge, pp. 143-154.

Parnell, S. and J. Robinson. 2012. (Re)theorizing cities from the global South: looking beyond Neoliberalism, *Urban Geography*, 33(4): 593-671.

Sheppard, E., Leitner, H., and Maringanti, A. 2013. Provincializing global urbanism: a manifesto, *Urban Geography*, 34(7): 893-900.

University College London, Thinking across boundaries videos

- Part 1: Why call it the “urban global south”?
- Part 3: What kind of theory is required for the urban global south?
- Part 2: What kind of planning practices does it call for?

*Research workshop 02/02: Formulating research question*

Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 1 & 2).

*Assignment due in class 02/02:*

A paragraph describing your research project that includes answers to the following questions:

- What is your planned topic? Why do you think this topic is important and worth your time to conduct research?
- What is your research question?
- What kinds of first- and second-hand materials do you plan to use?

- What kinds of research methods will you apply?
- At the end of the paragraph, please list three key words for your research.

02/05, 02/07, 02/09: Significance and theorization of Asian Cities

Bunnell, T., D. P. S. Goh, C. K. Lai and C. P. Pow. 2012. Introduction: Global urban frontiers? Asian cities in theory, practice and imagination, *Urban Studies* 49 (13): 2785-2793.

Kong, L. and L. Law. 2002. Contested landscapes, Asian Cities, *Urban Studies* 29 (9): 1503-1512.

Roy, A. and A. Ong. 2011. Introduction, in *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of being Global*, Wiley Blackwell, 1-26.

*Research workshop 02/07, 02/09: Library research*

02/12, 02/14, 02/16: Living in the city

Roy, A. 2011. Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35 (2): 223-38.

Datta, A. 2020. The “Smart Safe City”: Gendered Time, Speed, and Violence in the Margins of India’s Urban Age, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, DOI: 10.1080/24694452.2019.1687279

Wang, J. 2012. The developmental state in the global hegemony of neoliberalism: A new strategy for public housing in Singapore, *Cities* 29 (6): 369-378.

Pow, C. P. 2007. Securing the ‘civilised’ enclaves: Gated communities and the moral geographies of exclusion in (post-)socialist Shanghai, *Urban Studies*, 44 (8): 1539-1558.

\*Nakamura, S. 2014 Impact of slum formalization on self-help housing construction: A case of slum notification in India, *Urban Studies*, 51(16): 3420-3444.

*Research workshop 02/16: research methods (archival research, interviews)*  
Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 3 & 4).

*Assignment due in class 02/16:*

Revised Research Questions, Description, data collection plan  
Preliminary bibliography

02/19, 02/21, 02/23: Gentrification

Shin, H.B., L. Lees and E. López-Molrales. 2016. Introduction: Locating gentrification in the Global East, *Urban Studies*, 53(3): 455-470.

Shin, H.B. 2016. Economic transition and speculative urbanisation in China: Gentrification versus dispossession, *Urban Studies*, 53(3): 471-489.

Shin, H.B. and S. H. Kim. 2015. The developmental state, speculative urbanisation and the politics of displacement in gentrifying Seoul, *Urban Studies*, 53(3): 540-559.

\*Waley, P. 2015. Speaking gentrification in the languages of the Global East, *Urban Studies*, 53(3): 609-614.

\*Forrest, R. 2015. Commentary: Variegated gentrification? *Urban Studies*, 53(3): 615-625.



*Research workshop 02/23: research methods (urban ethnography, questionnaires)*  
Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 5 & 6).

02/26, 02/28, 03/01: Beyond dispossession

- Chang, I. C. 2019. Livelihood Transitions During China's Ecological Urbanization: An Ethnographic Observation, in X. Zhang (ed.) *Remaking Sustainable Urbanism: Space, Scale, Governance in the New Era*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 161-183.
- Doshi, S. 2013. The politics of the evicted: redevelopment, subjectivity, and difference in Mumbai's slum frontier, *Antipode*, 45(4), 844-865.
- Ghertner, D. A. 2014. India's urban revolution: geographies of displacement beyond gentrification, *Environment and Planning A*, 46(7), 1554-1571.
- Sarkar, S. 2015. Beyond dispossession: the politics of commodification of land under speculative conditions, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 35(3), 438-450.

*Research workshop 03/01: research methods (discourse analysis, diaries)*  
Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 7 & 8).

03/04, 03/06, 03/08: Urban mega projects/events

- Shin, H. B. 2012. Unequal cities of spectacle and mega-events in China, *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 6 (6): 728-744.
- Ren, X. and W. Liza. 2013. Urban governance, mega-projects and scalar transformations in China and India, in *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*, Routledge.
- Whitson, D., J. Horne and W. Manzenreiter. 2006. Underestimated costs and overestimated benefits? Comparing the outcomes of sports mega-events in Canada and Japan, *Sociological Review*, 54 (2): 71-89.
- Sun, J., and L. Ye. 2010. Mega-events, local economies, and global status: What happened before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 39(2): 133-165.

*Research workshop 03/08: research methods (GIS, photography, and video)*  
Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 9, 10).

03/11, 03/13, 03/15: Spring Break

03/18, 03/20, 03/22: Urban sustainability

- Chang, I.C. and E. Sheppard. 2013. China's eco-cities as variegated urban sustainability: Dongtan eco-city and Chongming eco-island, *Journal of Urban Technology*, 20(1), 57-75.
- Low, M. 2013. Eco-cities in Japan: past and future, *Journal of Urban Technology*, 20(1), 7-22
- Shwayri, S. 2013. A model korean ubiquitous eco-city? The politics of making Songdo, *Journal of Urban Technology*, 20(1), 39-55.

*Research workshop 03/22: write a research paper*

Ward, K. (ed) 2014. *Researching the City*, London: Sage. (Chapter 11).

*Assignment due in class 03/22:*

Paper outline and annotated bibliography (with at least 12 academic papers)

03/25, 03/27, 03/29: Policy mobilities

Phelps, N. A., T. Bunnell, M. A. Miller and J. Taylor. 2014. Urban inter-referencing within and beyond a decentralized Indonesia. *Cities*, 39: 37-49.

Pow, C. P. 2014. License to travel: Policy assemblage and the “Singapore model, *City*, 18 (3): 287-306.

Chang, I. C. 2017. Failure matters: reassembling eco-urbanism in a globalizing China, *Environment and Planning A*, 49(8): 1719-1742.

*Research workshop 03/29: individual research day*

04/01, 04/03, 04/05: Developing research project

Individual meetings and research days

*Assignment due in class 04/05: Research paper draft*

*Research workshop: Peer review research paper draft*

04/08, 04/10, 04/12: Cities in the Covid-19 pandemic

Ayona, D, A. Aditi, A. Ghoshal, A. Thomas and Y. Mishra. 2021. Apps, maps and war rooms: on the modes of existence of “COVtech” in India, *Urban Geography*, 42(3): 382-390.

Recio, R. B., L. N. Lata and I. Chatterjee. 2021. Rising inequalities, deepening divides: Urban citizenship in the time of COVID-19, *Geographical Research*, 59(4), 500-513.

Sonn, J. W. and J. K. Lee. 2020. The smart city as time-space cartographer in COVID-19 control: the South Korean strategy and democratic control of surveillance technology, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 61(4-5): 482-492.

Sonn, J. W., M. Kang and Y. Choi. 2020. Smart city technologies for pandemic control without lockdown, *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 24(2), 149-151.

Das, D., and Zhang, J. J. 2021. Pandemic in a smart city: Singapore’s COVID-19 management through technology & society. *Urban Geography*, 42(3): 408-416.

Bunnell, T. and N. Sambamurthy. 2022). Re-evaluating the ‘good city’ from (post) pandemic Southeast Asia, *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability*, 9(2-2), 1-4.

Tan, S. B., C. Chiu-Shee and F. Duarte. 2022. From SARS to COVID-19: Digital infrastructures of surveillance and segregation in exceptional times, *Cities*, 120, 103486.

\*Mishra, A. K., Mandadi, M., Misra, A. K., & Kesharwani, A. (2022). Emergency responses of Indian smart cities during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1-27.

*Assignment due in class 04/10: written peer review feedback*

*Research workshop 04/12: Individual meetings*

04/15: Prepare for research presentation

*Research workshop: research presentation*

*Assignment due in class 04/15: draft presentation slides*

04/17, 04/19, 04/22, 04/24, 04/26: Research paper presentation

**04/29: Concluding the course**

*Assignment due in class: final research paper.*

Date	Seminar discussion topic	Research Workshop	Assignment due	
01/19	Course overview			
01/22	The basics	Explore potential research topic & question		
01/24				
01/26				
01/29	Cities in the global South			
01/31				
02/02		Formulating research question	Research topic & description	
02/05	Significance and theorization of Asian Cities			
02/07		Library research session		
02/09		Library research day		
02/12	Living in the city			
02/14				
02/16		Research methods: archival research, interviews	Revised research questions, description, data collection plan; preliminary bibliography	
02/19	Gentrification			
02/21				
02/23		Research methods: urban ethnography, questionnaires		
02/26	Beyond dispossession			
02/28				
03/01		Research methods: discourse analysis, diaries		
03/04	Urban mega projects/events			
03/06				
03/08		Research methods: GIS, photography, and video		
03/11-15	Spring break			
03/18	Urban sustainability			
03/20				
03/22		Write a research paper	Paper outline and annotated bibliography	
03/25	Policy mobilities			
03/27				
03/29		Individual research day		
04/01	Developing research project	Individual research day		
04/03		Individual research day		
04/05		Peer review paper draft	Paper draft	
04/08				
04/10	Cities in the Covid-19 pandemic		Written peer review feedback	
04/12		Individual research day		
04/15	Research paper presentation	Prepare for presentation	Draft presentation slides	
04/17				
04/19		Presentation	Presentation	Presentation
04/22				
04/24				
04/26				
04/29	Concluding the course		Final paper	