

**PUBPOL 290S.08/POLSCI 390S-4:
Urban Poverty and Informal Politics in Developing Countries**

Instructor: Emily Rains (emily.rains@duke.edu)

Class times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05am-11:20am, Sanford 102

Office hours: By appointment

Overview:

Nearly *one billion people* around the world live in urban “slums” — neighborhoods that lack housing rights and basic services. With Africa and South Asia projected to become majority urban by 2050, the world’s urban population is increasing on an unprecedented scale. Most growth will be in slums in developing countries, posing substantial challenges to sustainable development.

This course provides an introduction to comparative urban politics and policies in developing countries. Our discussions will be motivated by the following questions: What do we know about lived experiences in slums? How do residents cope with the challenges associated with life in these neighborhoods? How do politics operate in these informal spaces and what are the implications for urban governance in developing countries? How can policies be designed to promote inclusive urban development?

Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will be able to

- Describe current urbanization trends in a globalized world
- Describe policy problems unique to slums and categorize the range of sustainable development challenges in a particular city
- Summarize the important role of informal politics for problem solving in slums
- Analyze barriers to designing policy solutions to urban sustainable development
- Analyze barriers to policy implementation

Grading:

Attending and being prepared for class is mandatory and will account for 20% of the final grade. Students are expected to complete the readings *before* each class meeting. As part of the attendance grade, you will post 2 to 3 discussion questions based on the readings to Sakai by **2 hours before the start of class**. Students will be granted two passes on discussion questions. Failure to post discussion questions for more than two classes will result in penalties in the participation grade.

We will also complete one computer lab during the course to provide insights into how to map and visualize urbanization and poverty trends. You will submit a brief write up on this lab, which will count for 5% of the grade.

For the remaining 75% of the grade, you will develop a case study for a country of your choosing over the duration of the course. You will pick a country to focus on this semester by **Monday, January 20th**.

For the first assignment, you will summarize urbanization trends over time in your selected country to describe how, where, and why we observe urban population growth in that country.

The second assignment will build off of the first. You will describe urban poverty trends in a particular city within your selected country, summarizing existing literature on the range of conditions and policy challenges present in the slums in that city.

In the third assignment, you will describe the functions of various levels of government in that country with respect to which entities are responsible for different aspects of urban development and will describe the existing (if any) slum policies at these various levels.

In the fourth memo, you will briefly summarize existing literature on politics in slums in this country.

In the fifth memo, which will be due on the last day of class, you will build on the skills developed in the computer lab to map urbanization and poverty trends in your selected country and particular city.

These assignments will culminate in a final presentation, where you will present the full case study for your country. After all presentations, we will compare and contrast the case studies and synthesize the takeaways as a class.

- Attendance and participation (including submitting reading questions): 20%
- Computer lab write up (2-3 pages): 5%
- Memo 1 (2-3 pages) - Urbanization trends in a country: 5%
- Memo 2 (2-3 pages) - Poverty trends/living conditions in slums in that country: 5%
- Memo 3 (3 pages) - Slum policies/ responsibilities of different levels of govt.: 15%
- Memo 4 (2-4 pages) - Review of literature on politics in slums for that country 15%
- Memo 5 (3 pages): Mapping urbanization and poverty trends: 15%
- Final presentation: 20%

Absences:

Students who miss class for a university-approved purpose (other than illness) must complete the required documentation and contact the instructor prior to missing class.

Students who miss class for other purposes, such as minor illnesses, do **not** need to complete STINFs. Instead, all students will be granted **two excused absences**. More than two absences will result in decreases in the attendance grade.

Late assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized by 2/3 of a letter grade per day.

Duke Community Standard:

Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community

commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and nonacademic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity.

To uphold the Duke Community Standard:

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

SCHEDULE:

Unit 1: Introduction

Week 1: Why study urban policy and politics in developing countries?

- **January 14:** Introduction to topic and course
- **January 16:** Urbanization trends in developing countries

Readings:

United Nations. (2014). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/352)*. (Introduction, pages 1-3)

Montgomery, Mark R. 2008. "The Urban Transformation of the Developing World ." *Science*. United States : American Association for the Advancement of Science . doi:10.1126/science.1153012.

Week 2: "Urbanization of poverty"

- **January 21:** How does urbanization in developing countries challenge traditional theories of urbanization and development?

Readings:

Beard, V. A., Mahendra, A., & Westphal, M. I. (2016). *Towards a More Equal City: Framing the Challenges and Opportunities*. Washington, DC. Pages 1-22.

Ravallion, Martin, Shaohua Chen, and Prem Sangraula. 2007. "New Evidence on the Urbanization of Global Poverty ." *Population and Development Review* . Oxford, UK : Blackwell Publishing . doi:10.1111/j.1728-4457.2007.00193.

- **January 23:** What are the implications of current urbanization trends for policy?

Readings:

Krishna, A. (2017). *The Broken Ladder: The Paradox and Potential of India's One-Billion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3, "Up and Down in the City."

Unit 2: Understanding urban poverty and policy challenges

Week 3: What is a “slum”?

Memo 1 due at start of class on January 28

- **January 28:** How do we define “slums”? Should we use the term “slum”?

Readings:

Gulyani, Sumila, and Ellen M Bassett. 2010. “The Living Conditions Diamond: An Analytical and Theoretical Framework for Understanding Slums.” *Environment and Planning A*. London, England : SAGE Publications . doi:10.1068/a42520.

Gilbert, A. (2007). The Return of the Slum: Does Language Matter? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2007.00754.x>

- **January 30:** Are there “slums” in developed countries?

Readings:

“*Life in the new shanty town taking root on Paris’s abandoned railway.*” The Guardian. 2016.

“*Among the World’s Most Dire Places: This California Homeless Camp.*” The New York Times. 2019.

“*Colonias on the border struggle with decades-old water issues.*” The Texas Tribune. 2017.

Week 4: Life in a slum — understanding challenges and policy needs

- **February 4:** Environment and health challenges

Readings:

Boo, Katherine. 2014. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks. (*first half*)

- **February 6:** Property rights and evictions

Readings:

Boo, Katherine. 2014. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks. (*first half*)

Week 5: Life in a slum — understanding challenges and policy needs (continued)

- **February 11:** Informal employment

Readings:

Boo, Katherine. 2014. *Behind the Beautiful Forever*s. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks. (second half)

- **February 13:** Barriers to accessing documents and social policies

Readings:

Boo, Katherine. 2014. *Behind the Beautiful Forever*s. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks. (second half)

Week 6: How do we study slums?

Memo 2 due at start of class on February 18

- **February 18:** Challenges to studying slums and urban poverty

Readings:

Bhan, G., & Jana, A. (2013). Of Slums or Poverty; Notes of Caution from Census 2011. *Economic & Political Weekly*.

- **February 20:** Innovative ways to study slums

Readings:

Rains, Emily, Anirudh Krishna, and Erik Wibbels. 2018. "Combining Satellite and Survey Data to Study Indian Slums: Evidence on the Range of Conditions and Implications for Urban Policy." *Environment & Urbanization* 31(1): 267-292.

Week 7: Mapping urbanization and poverty trends

No readings this week. We will meet in the computer lab for both sessions.

Unit 3: Governance challenges and local informal politics

Week 8: Governance challenges

Computer lab due at start of class on March 3

- **March 3:** What is the relationship between the strength of governance and the presence of slums?

Readings:

Fox, S. (2014). The Political Economy of Slums: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa . *World Development* . Oxford : Elsevier Science Publishers .
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.08.005>

Bhan, G. (2009). "This is no longer the city I once knew". Evictions, the urban poor and the right to the city in millennial Delhi . *Environment & Urbanization* . London, England : SAGE Publications . <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247809103009>

- **March 5:** What are the multiple levels of government responsible for urban policies?

Readings:

L. Romeo and P. Smoke, "The Political Economy of Local Infrastructure Planning." In. J. Frank and J. Martinez-Vazquez, eds. *Decentralization and Infrastructure*. (London: Routledge, 2016).

Week 9: Informal politics 1: when politics diverges from policy

- **March 17:** De jure versus de facto realities

Readings:

Pritchett, Lant. 2009. "Is India a Flailing State?: Detours on the Four Lane Highway to Modernization. *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP09-013*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Krishna, A., Emily Rains and Erik Wibbels. 2020. "Negotiating Informality – ambiguity, intermediation, and a patchwork of outcomes in slums of Bengaluru" *Forthcoming in Journal of Development Studies*.

- **March 19:** Political incentives for maintaining informality

Readings:

Roy, A. 2009. "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanization." *Planning Theory* 8(1).

Holland, A. 2016. "Forbearance." *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 232-246.

Week 10: Informal politics 2: slum leaders

Memo 3 due at start of class on March 24

- **March 24:** Who are informal leaders and what do they do?

Readings:

Jha, S., Rao, V., & Woolcock, M. (2007). Governance in the Gullies: Democratic Responsiveness and Leadership in Delhi's Slums . *World Development* . Oxford : Elsevier . <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.10.018>

Paller, Jeffrey W. 2015. "Informal Networks and Access to Power to Obtain Housing in Urban Slums in Ghana ." *Africa Today* . USA : Indiana University Press . doi:10.2979/africatoday.62.1.31.

- **March 26:** Variation in leader effectiveness

Readings:

Auerbach, Adam. 2016. "Clients and Communities: The Political Economy of Party Network Organization and Development in India's Urban Slums ." *World Politics* . Princeton : Cambridge University Press . doi:10.1017/S0043887115000313

Auerbach, Adam, & Thachil, T. (2018). How Clients Select Brokers: Competition and Choice in India's Slums . *American Political Science Review* . Washington : Cambridge University Press . <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541800028X>

Week 11: Informal politics 3: clientelism and vote banks

- **March 31:** What is clientelism and why is it relevant to this context?

Readings:

Auyero, J. (2000). The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account . *Latin American Research Review* . Pittsburgh : Latin American Studies Association .

Murillo, M., Oliveros, V., & Zarazaga, R. (2019). *The Most Vulnerable Poor: Clientelism among Slum Dwellers*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.26295.68008>

- **April 2:** Clientelism and neighborhood-level strategies

Readings:

Spatar, J., & Wibbels, E. (2020). *Social Density, Clientelism and Vote Banking*. Working paper.

Unit 4: Case studies and possible solutions

Memo 4 due at start of class on April 7

Week 12: Case studies

- **April 7:** Examples of city-wide reforms

Readings:

Beard, V.A., A. Mahendra, and M.I. Westphal. 2016. "Towards a More Equal City: Framing the Challenges and Opportunities." Washington, DC. (*excerpts*)

- **April 9:** Examples of specific interventions

Readings:

Das, A., and R. King. 2019. "Surabaya: The Legacy of Participatory Upgrading of Informal Settlements." World Resources Report Case Study. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

Week 13: Possible solutions

- **April 14:** Participatory governance

Readings:

Speer, J. (2012). "Participatory governance reform: A good strategy for increasing government responsiveness and improving public services?". *World Development*, 40(12), 2379-2398.

McGranahan, G., & Mitlin, D. (2016). Learning from Sustained Success: How Community-Driven Initiatives to Improve Urban Sanitation Can Meet the Challenges. *World Development*, 87, 307-317.

- **April 16:** Planning for inclusive development

Readings:

UN-Habitat, State of the World's Cities 2008/2009, "Part 4: Planning for Harmonious Cities"

King, R., M. Orloff, T. Virsilas, and T. Pande. 2017. "Confronting the Urban Housing Crisis in the Global South: Adequate, Secure, and Affordable Housing." Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

Week 14: Final presentations and concluding discussion

Memo 5 due at start of class on April 21

Final presentations during class on April 21