

URP 552: HEALTHY CITIES

Fall 2023

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The physical and social forms of cities have significant public health consequences. Infrastructure shapes people's exposure to environmental toxins, natural disasters, and infectious disease. Land use patterns and zoning laws determine whether people have access to healthy food and spaces for physical activity. The design details of streets, buildings, and plazas influence mobility patterns, mental wellbeing, chronic illness, and violent crime. In this graduate-level seminar, students will prepare for their professional careers by learning how to design healthier cities. With this knowledge, students will have a foundation for effectively assessing the health risks and wellness opportunities associated with various urban forms, as well as for designing built environment interventions that improve health and wellness in urban contexts.

Learning Goals:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Explain the key planning techniques in history that brought health improvements to cities, such as sanitation services, green spaces, and protections against unsafe living and working conditions.
- Understand how land use and transportation patterns contribute to a wide range of chronic health problems among urban residents, and identify a range of promising design and policy reforms for mitigating these concerns.
- Recognize how past environmental health concerns related to things like nutrition, pollution, and infectious disease are re-emerging today in unexpected forms in the Global North, as well as be able to describe the new urban public health risks appearing in mega-cities in the Global South.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to review all readings and assignments for the day prior to attending/viewing the lectures and activities for the day. Grades are based on informal learning activities—such as quick quizzes and video blogs—as well as formal assignments—such as exams, case study assignments, and municipal plan evaluations.