

URP 580: METROPOLITAN GROWTH AND GOVERNANCE

Winter 2025

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This class explores the political, economic, and social forces shaping cities around the world at the present moment. Students will become familiar with the structural dynamics underpinning urban economic growth and shrinkage. They will learn about a variety of urban governance structures and will discuss emerging trends in innovative governing. Students will read and discuss political economic theories of urban growth. They will explore the opportunities for local political decision-making within the constraints of international market systems. Students will explore the tensions between planning for economic growth and planning for social justice. They will also explore cities and neighborhoods as nodes within international networks of global urban infrastructure. These themes explain why cities are the way they are—why some areas are growing, others are shrinking, and the benefits are unevenly distributed. Exploring these themes prepares students to engage with the broad forces shaping cities. Through this understanding, students will gain the foundational knowledge needed for other courses to craft meaningful, effective planning interventions responding to the constraints and leveraging the opportunities inherent within urban structuring processes.

Learning Goals:

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

- Conceptualize the city as a set of interconnected economic, political, and infrastructural systems in motion shaping potential patterns of economic development.
- Explain several approaches to urban governing and assess their relative capacities, strengths, and weakness as it relates to economic growth, infrastructure provisioning, and social justice.
- Understand the market dynamics shaping urban growth, redevelopment, uneven development, and neighborhood decline.
- Critically assess emerging trends regarding the changing role of government and non-government entities, as well as local and nonlocal actors, in city planning and development processes.
- Evaluate the practical and political effect globalization trends have on the underlying systems shaping urban development.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class sessions having reviewed the assigned material in advance, as well as to participate in classroom discussions and learning activities. Student grades are assigned based on participation, assignments, and exams.