URBS 010 Homelessness & Urban Inequality
This freshman seminar examines the homelessness problem from a variety of scientific and policy perspectives. Contemporary homelessness differs significantly from related conditions of destitute poverty during other eras of our nation's history. Advocates, researchers and policymakers have all played key roles in defining the current problem, measuring its prevalence, and designing interventions to reduce it. The first section of this course examines the definitional and measurement issues, and how they affect our understanding of the scale and composition of the problem. Explanations for homelessness have also been varied, and the second part of the course focuses on examining the merits of some of those explanations, and in particular, the role of the affordable housing crisis. The third section of the course focuses on the dynamics of homelessness, combining evidence from ethnographic studies of how people become homeless and experience homelessness, with quantitative research on the patterns of entry and exit from the condition. The final section of the course turns to the approaches taken by policymakers and advocates to address the problem, and considers the efficacy and quandaries associated with various policy strategies. The course concludes by contemplating the future of homelessness research and public policy.
Taught by: Culhane
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: AFRC 041, SOCI 013
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 018 Freshman Seminar
The primary goal of the freshman seminar program is to provide every freshman the opportunity for a direct personal encounter with a faculty member in a small sitting devoted to a significant intellectual endeavor. Specific topics be posted at the beginning of each academic year. Please see the College Freshman seminar website for information on course offerings: http://www.college.upenn.edu/requirements-courses.
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: MUSC 018
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 050 Womanism and Identity Politics in the Realm of Hip-Hop
This course centers on the intersections of womanism, woman of color identity development, and agency within hip-hop culture. We will touch on several topics that uncover the condition of minoritized women in hip-hop media, including creating/owning space, lyrical assault, defining womanhood, sexuality, and fetishes. In exploring music, literature, advertisements, film, and television, we will discuss the ways women of color construct understandings of self, while navigating and reimagining reality within hip-hop contexts.
Taught by: Patterson
Also Offered As: GSWS 040
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 103 Industrial Metropolis
Although we no longer think of most U.S. cities as industrial cities, metropolitan areas today are all products of industrial economies, technologies, and social systems. This course explores the industrialization and deindustrialization of American cities within their evolving global context from the era of European colonization to the present. It includes weekly readings and discussion, regular response papers and walking tours, in-class exercises, and a research paper using primary sources. Themes include energy and ecology, labor and production, inner city and suburban development, globalization, and economic restructuring. Ultimately, the class aims to give students a broad knowledge of 1) the history of industrial capitalism, 2) its effects on cities and regions over the past three centuries, and 3) analytical tools for understanding the past, present, and future of metropolitan economies, geography, and society.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Vitiello
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: HIST 209
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Course is available to freshmen and sophomores

URBS 104 Transformations of Urban America: Making the Unequal Metropolis, 1945 to Today
The course traces the economic, social, and political history of American cities after World War II. It focuses on how the economic problems of the industrial city were compounded by the racial conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s and the fiscal crises of the 1970s. The last part of the course examines the forces that have led to the revitalization and stark inequality of cities in recent years.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Cebul
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: HIST 153
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 106 Freshman Seminar
The primary goal of the freshman seminar program is to provide every freshman the opportunity for a direct personal encounter with a faculty member in a small sitting devoted to a significant intellectual endeavor. Specific topics be posted at the beginning of each academic year. Please see the College Freshman seminar website for information on current course offerings http://www.college.upenn.edu/courses/seminars/freshman.php.
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ARTH 100, CIMS 016, ENGL 017
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: For Freshmen Only
URBS 112 Urban Sociology
This course is a comprehensive introduction to the sociological study of urban areas. This includes more general topics as the rise of cities and theories urbanism, as well as more specific areas of inquiry, including American urbanism, segregation, urban poverty, suburbanization and sprawl, neighborhoods and crime, and immigrant ghettos. The course will also devote significant attention to globalization and the process of urbanization in less developed counties.
Taught by: Zettler
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 121, NELC 103
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 120 Literature of the South Asian City: Space, Culture, Politics
The South Asian city as a way of organizing space and social relations, as a symbol, as a memory, is the subject of this course. Through primarily, though by no means exclusively, readings of literature in translation, we will gain a sense for the history of the city and the ways in which it is a setting for protest and nostalgia, social transformation and solitary flaneurie. We will see reflections of the city in poetry recited in its homes, detective novels sold in its train stations, stories scribbled in its cafes, plays staged in its theaters, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia, and will include works by writers such as Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Vijay Tendulkar. We will examine these works in the context of secondary readings, including histories and ethnological works that take up life in the modern city. Students will finish this course prepared to pursue projects dealing with the urban from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This course is suitable for anyone interested in the culture, society, or literature of South Asia, and assumes no background in South Asian languages.
Taught by: Goulding
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: COML 114, SAST 120
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 121 Origin and Culture of Cities
The UN estimates that 2.9 of the world's 6.1 billion people live in cities and that this percentage is rapidly increasing in many parts of the world. This course examines urban life and urban problems by providing anthropological perspectives on this distinctive form of human association and land use. First we will examine the "origin" of cities, focusing on several of the places where cities first developed, including Mesopotamia and the Valley of Mexico. We will then investigate the internal structure of non-industrial cities by looking at case studies from around the world and from connections between the cities of the past and the city in which we live and work today.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Mitchell
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: ANTH 121, NELC 103
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 122 The City in South Asia
This interdisciplinary social science course examines key topics, themes, and analytic methods in the study of South Asia by focusing on significant South Asian cities. With one-fifth of the world's population, South Asia and its urban centers are playing an increasingly important role in recent global economic transformations, resulting in fundamental changes within both the subcontinent and the larger world. Drawing primarily on ethnographic studies of South Asia in the context of rapid historical change, the course also incorporates research drawn from urban studies, architecture, political science, and history, as well as fiction and film. Topics include globalization and new economic dynamics in South Asia; the formation of a new urban middle class; consumption and consumer culture; urban political formations, democratic institutions, and practices; criminality & the underworld; population growth, changes in the built environment, and demographic shifts; everyday life in South Asia and ethnic, and ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities, differences, and violence in South Asia's urban environments. This is an introductory level course appropriate for students with no background in South Asia or for those seeking to better understand South Asia's urban environments in the context of recent globalization and rapid historical changes.
No prerequisites. Fulfills College sector requirement in Society and foundational approach in Cross-Cultural Analysis.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Mitchell
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ANTH 107, SAST 002
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 135 Creative Non-Fiction Writing
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 134, ENGL 135, GSWS 135
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 136 Urban Politics in the United States
This course focuses on political responses to urbanization in the United States. Topics include local government, national urban politics, and the changing nature of cities.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Reed
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: AFRC 136, PSCI 136
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 137 The Sociology of Media and Popular Culture
This course relies on a variety of sociological perspectives to examine the role of media and popular culture in society, with a particular emphasis on the power of the mass media industry, the relationship between cultural consumption and status, and the social organization of leisure activities from sports to shopping.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Grazian
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: SOCI 137
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 139 Ancient Civilizations of the World
This course explores the archaeology (material culture) of early complex societies or civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean. According to the traditional paradigm, civilization first emerged during the fourth millennium BCE in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In the Mediterranean, state-level societies first appeared in Crete and mainland Greece in the early second millennium BCE. This course investigates how and why these civilizations developed, as well as their appearance and structure in the early historic (or literate) phases of their existence. A comparative perspective will illustrate what these early civilizations have in common and the ways in which they are unique. This course will consist largely of lectures which will outline classic archaeological and anthropological theories on state formation, before turning to examine the available archaeological (and textual) data on emerging complexity in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean. This course does not presuppose any knowledge of archaeology or ancient languages; the instructor will provide any background necessary. Because this is a course on material culture, some of the class periods will be spent at the Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. These will consist of a guided tour of a relevant gallery, as well as a hands-on object-based lab with archaeological materials selected by the instructor. This course meets the General Education Curriculums Cross Cultural Analysis foundational approach, whose aim is to help students understand and interpret the cultures of peoples (even long-dead peoples) with histories different from their own; it also fulfills the History and Tradition Sector breadth requirement.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Zettler
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 139, NELC 182
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 140 Inequity and Empowerment: Urban Financial Literacy
This course provides students with a rich look at the historical and contemporary factors that have shaped America's wealth gaps. By studying the economic impacts of systemic forces such as discriminatory housing, predatory lending, and unbanking, students will develop a deep financial understanding of today's urban communities. Students will also explore their own financial awareness and exposure, creating personalized financial histories and empowerment plans. By breaking the silence on topics such as credit scores, auto purchases, renting vs. owning a home, insurance, retirement plans, and other purchases, students will learn the importance of financial literacy. Urban Financial Literacy will prepare students for a financially healthy life at Penn and beyond. The course will also explore larger financial examples and case studies, including endowment funds and major foundations, the promises and perils of sports and entertainment, start-ups and the gig economy, and more. In contrasting the opportunity and excess that is possible, with the debilitating realities of intergenerational poverty in America, the idea is that students will end the course with a robust appreciation for financial literacy, a portfolio of practical strategies, and a commitment to create new possibilities for financial wellness.
Taught by: Peterson and Copeland
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This course is co-designed and co-taught by New York Jets linebacker Brandon Copeland (W '13)

URBS 160 Race and Ethnic Relations
The course will focus on race and ethnicity in the United States. We begin with a brief history of racial categorization and immigration to the United States. The course continues by examining a number of topics including racial and ethnic identity, interracial and interethnic friendships and marriage, racial attitudes, mass media images, residential segregation, educational stratification, and labor market outcomes. The course will include discussions of African Americans, Whites, Hispanics, Asian Americans and multiracials.
Taught by: Charles, Kao, Zuberi
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 006, ASAM 006, SOCI 006
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Previously URBS 214

URBS 171 The Socialist City
This course will explore the ideology and politics of the socialist city in the Soviet Union, East Europe, and the Second World. We will focus on how design professionals, politicians, and residents realized utopian socialist values in the face of national design traditions, local politics, and limited resources. Beginning with the Soviet case, the course will consider how planners and architects addressed modernization, multi-family housing, and neighborhood units in new city plans. We will consider capitals, like Moscow, as well as less well-known regional centers that had strong local identities, such as Tashkent, Belgrade, and Prague. We will examine the state's use of public spaces for commemorations and preservationists' reinterpretation of existing historic sites. In addition, we will consider how everyday residents experienced the socialist city, such as multi-family housing, shopping centers, and subway systems. We will address how citizens circumvented official state channels to obtain state housing and illegally build homes for themselves, sometimes in a folk style. The course will center on Soviet and East European cities, but also address socialist cities in Cuba and Africa whose design was influenced by transnational exchanges. Most broadly, this course explores the question, what was the socialist city? How did its planners, architects, and politicians understand it, and what did they intend to construct? And, what resulted? In the past fifteen years, North American scholars have begun to take seriously the study of the socialist city, and this course draws on the emerging scholarship on this exciting, cross-disciplinary topic. How do scholars understand the socialist city today? We will examine the shared legacies that socialist cities across East Europe shared with their Western European counterparts, as well as the particularities of design that have sparked North American scholars' debates on what distinguished the socialist city from one's that emerged in a capitalist context. In our discussions, we will seek to understand how socialist design professionals understood their work and the emerging cities at the time, as well as how North American scholars view the socialist city today. Disciplinarily, the focus of the call will fall at the intersection of architectural history and politics.
Taught by: Aplenc
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 171
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 178 Faculty-Student Collaborative Action Seminar in Urban University-Community Relations
One of the goals of this seminar is to help students develop their capacity to solve strategic, real-world problems by working collaboratively in the classroom, on campus, and in the West Philadelphia community. Research teams help contribute to the improvement of education on campus and in the community, as well as the improvement of university-community relations. Among other responsibilities, students focus their community service on college and career readiness at West Philadelphia High School and Sayre High School. Students are typically engaged in academically based community service learning at the schools for two hours each week. A primary goal of the seminar is to help students develop proposals as to how a Penn undergraduate education might better empower students to produce, not simply "consume," societally-useful knowledge, as well as function as caring, contributing citizens of a democratic society. Please note new location of the class: The Netter Conference Room is on 111 South 38th Street, on the 2nd floor.
Taught by: Harkavy
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 078, HIST 173
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: previously URBS 078; Benjamin Franklin Seminar

URBS 180 Asian American Food
You are what you eat. Asian American Food explores the history, politics, and ethnic identity of food through a cultural lens. Growing food, eating, and sharing meals serve as intimate expressions of self and community. By examining the production and consumption of food, the course investigates the ways that Asian Americans navigate traditions, gender norms, religious dietary laws, food habits, and employment as they create lives in the United States. The course overviews the history of Asian American foodways, but has a particular focus on Philadelphia’s Asian American communities.
Taught by: Khan, F
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: ASAM 180, SAST 180
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 200 Urban Research Methods
This course will examine different ways of undertaking urban research. The goal will be to link substantive research questions to appropriate data and research methods. Computer-based quantitative methods, demographic techniques, mapping / GIS and qualitative approaches will be covered in this course. Student assignments will focus on constructing a neighborhood case study of a community experiencing rapid neighborhood change.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Fulfills Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement

URBS 202 Urban Education
This seminar focuses on two main questions: 1) How have US schools and urban ones in particular continued to reproduce inequalities rather than ameliorating them? 2) In the informational age, how do the systems affecting education need to change to create more successful and equitable outcomes? The course is designed to bridge the divide between theory and practice. Each class session looks at issues of equity in relation to an area of practice (e.g. lesson design, curriculum planning, fostering positive student identities, classroom management, school funding, policy planning...), while bringing theoretical frames to bear from the fields of education, sociology, anthropology and psychology.
Taught by: Clapper
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: EDUC 202
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 203 Introduction to City Planning: Planning Urban Spaces
This course will provide a general introduction to the concepts and practice of city planning. Topics to be discussed include: the process and nature of planning - theories, methods and roles as manifested in practice; history and trends in city planning; functional planning practice; planning within constraints—a field project; planning in the international arena; present crisis in planning.
Taught by: Gorostiza
Course usually offered summer term only
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 204 Urban Law
This course will focus on selected aspects of urban law that are particularly relevant to areas of high population density. After an introduction to the American judicial system, it will examine the legal issues that arise in the management of land development and use, with special attention to constitutional questions involving equal protection, due process, and the "takings" clause, and routine run-of-the-mill zoning challenges. This course meets the Cultural Diversity requirement.
Taught by: Keene
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 205 People and Design
The built environment of a city is more than a mere backdrop; the design can actually affect people's experiences. Environmental design primarily focuses on the relationship between people and the built environment. It also looks at how the built environment interacts with the natural one (and the potential for greater sustainability). This course will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of how people create, perceive, and use the designed environment. We'll approach these concepts by analyzing design at a variety of scales, from products to interior design to architecture. Finally, using that knowledge, we'll conclude by analyzing urban spaces of the city.
Taught by: Berman
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 206 Public Environment of Cities: An Introduction to the Urban Landscape
This course will explore the role of public spaces - streets, boulevards, parks and squares - in cities and their social uses. With the University of Pennsylvania campus and the City of Philadelphia serving as our laboratory, we will critically examine the evolution of the movement of corridors, open space and buildings of the urban landscape and their changing uses. Following the flaneur tradition of Baudelaire and Benjamin, we will walk the city to experience and understand the myriad environments and neighborhoods that comprise it.
Taught by: Nairn
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: URBS 506
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 207 Asian American Communities
Who is Asian American and how and where do we recognize Asian America? This interdisciplinary course explores the multiple factors that define Asian American identity and community. In order to provide a sketch of the multifaceted experience of this growing minority group, we will discuss a wide variety of texts from scholarly, artistic, and popular (film, cinematic) sources that mark key moments in the cultural history of Asia America. The course will address major themes of community life including migration history, Asian American as model minority, race, class, and transnational scope of Asian America. In combination with the readings, this class will foster and promote independent research based on site visits to various Asian American communities in Philadelphia and will host community leaders as guest lecturers.
Taught by: Khan
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ASAM 104
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 210 The City
Urbs/Hist 210 will focus on Baltimore and use The Wire as one of its core texts. The course will explore the history and development of the city and its institutions, with a thematic focus on issues such as industrialization and deindustrialization; urban renewal and the role of universities; public education and youth; policing and the criminal justice system; drugs and underground markets; public housing and suburbanization; and Baltimore's so-called renaissance amidst persistent poverty. The seminar will include field trips both in Philadelphia and a concluding all-day trip to Baltimore.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Nairn
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: HIST 210
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Also fulfills General Requirement in Society for Class of 2009 and prior

URBS 215 Topics in Asian American Sociology
Topics vary. Please see website for more current information:
asam.sas.upenn.edu
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ASAM 201, SOCI 150
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 216 Social Entrepreneurship
Amidst perceptions that public sector and philanthropic support for local communities is increasingly scarce, many community development practitioners are turning to social enterprise as a means to improve social and economic conditions in their neighborhoods. This course will do a deep dive into the segment of social enterprises addressing workforce development and job creation challenges, especially as they relate to returning citizens and other vulnerable adults, including several planned field visits. Building on their understanding of these fields, students will then divide into groups for a hands-on course project.
Taught by: Mandujano
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 219 The Heart of Social Change
The Heart of Social Change: Experiments in Urban Development, Activism, and Social Entrepreneurship will seek to challenge those who desire to work for social change to consider how they may not only employ their heads and their hands, but also their hearts as they work to improve the aspects of contemporary society that mean the most to them. This seminar-based class will examine past and contemporary examples of heart-based activism, urban development and social entrepreneurship yet it will also be a space where students will be asked to experiment with ways that they too may be change agents.
Taught by: Charles Howard
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 220 Jews and the City: Advanced Benjamin Franklin Seminar
Jews have always been an extraordinarily urban people. This seminar explores various aspects of the Jewish encounter with the city, examining the ways that Jewish culture has been shaped by and has helped to shape urban culture. We will examine European and American cities as well as some in Palestine/Israel, covering an expansive view of urban culture. We will consider Jewish involvement in political and cultural life, the various neighborhoods in which Jews have lived, relations with other ethnic groups, as well as many other topics. We will read some classic works in the field along with contemporary scholarship. No prior background in Jewish history is required. *This course may be applied toward the US, European, or Middle East requirements for the History Major or Minor, depending upon the research paper topic. Students must consult with the instructor to determine which geographic requirement will be fulfilled.*
Taught by: Beth Wenger
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 215, HIST 216, JWST 216
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 234 Topics in Transnational History
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 236, HIST 234
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 236 IRAQ: ANCIENT CITIES AND EMPIRES
This course consists of an analytical survey of civilization in the ancient Mesopotamia from prehistoric periods to the middle centuries of the first millennium B.C. A strong focus is placed on Mesopotamia (Iraq, eastern Syria) proper, but it occasionally covers its adjacent regions, including Anatolia (Turkey), north-central Syria, and the Levantine coast. As we chronologically examine the origin and development of civilization in the region, various social, political, economic, and ideological topics will be explored, including subsistence, cosmology, writing, trade, technology, war, private life, burial custom, and empire. Based on both archaeological and historical evidence, these topics will be examined from archaeological, anthropological, historical and art historical perspectives. Students will be exposed to a variety of theoretical approaches and types of relevant evidence, including settlement survey data, excavated architectural remains and artifacts, and written documents. The course aims to provide students with a strong foundation for further study in Near Eastern civilization.
Taught by: Zettler
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 236, ANTH 636, NELC 241, NELC 641
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 237 BERLIN: HISTORY, POLITICS, CULTURE
What do you know about Berlin's history, architecture, culture, and political life? The present course will offer a survey of the history of Prussia, beginning with the seventeenth century, and the unification of the small towns of Berlin and koeln to establish a new capital for this country. It will tell the story of Berlin's rising political prominence in the eighteenth century, its transformation into an industrial city in the late nineteenth century, its rise to metropolis in the early twentieth century, its history during the Third Reich, and the post-war cold war period. The course will conclude its historical survey with a consideration of Berlin's position as a capital in reunified Germany. The historical survey will be supplemented by a study of Berlin's urban structure, its significant architecture from the eighteenth century (i.e. Schinkel) to the nineteenth (new worker's housing, garden suburbs) and twentieth centuries (Bauhaus, Speer designs, postwar rebuilding, GDR housing projects, post-unification building boom). In addition, we will read literary texts about the city, and consider the visual art and music created in and about Berlin. Indeed, Berlin will be a specific example to explore German history and cultural life of the last 300 years. The course will be interdisciplinary with the fields of German Studies, history, history of art, and urban studies. It is also designed as a preparation for undergraduate students who are considering spending a junior semester with the Penn Abroad Program in Berlin.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 237, COML 237, GRMN 237, HIST 237
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English

URBS 244 METROPOLIS: CULTURE OF THE CITY
An exploration of modern discourses on and of the city. Topics include: the city as site of avant-garde experimentation; technology and culture; the city as embodiment of social order and disorder; traffic and speed; ways of seeing the city; the crowd; city figures such as the detective, the criminal, the flaneur, the dandy; film as the new medium of the city. Special emphasis on Berlin. Readings by, among others, Dickens, Poe, Baudelaire, Rilke, Doeblin, Marx, Engels, Benjamin, Kracauer. Films include Fritz Lang’s Metropolis and Tom Tykwer’s Run Lola Run.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: MacLeod
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 244, COML 254, GRMN 244
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All lectures and readings in English

URBS 248 THE URBAN FOOD CHAIN
This course explores the social, economic, ecological, and cultural dynamics of metropolitan and community food systems. Field trips and assignments immerse students in various forms of experiential learning - including farming and gardening, cooking, eating, and more. Across the semester, we follow the food chain, from production to distribution, processing, consumption, and waste. Specific topics include urban agriculture, wholesale and retail, hunger and food assistance, restaurants and food trucks, food cultures and culinary traditions, food movements, and food justice. Students will learn how to research and map metropolitan and neighborhood food environments, and to analyze the relationships between food, culture, and society. Students taking this class should be open to trying new things, getting their hands dirty, and working with others in a variety of settings and activities.
Taught by: Vitiello
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 250 URBAN PUBLIC POLICY: PHILADELPHIA -- A CASE STUDY
An introduction to a broad range of substantive policy areas affecting the city, and an exploration into the complexities of policy formulation and implementation in a large and pluralistic metropolitan setting. The course subtitle, "Philadelphia -- A Case Study," describes our approach. Donna Cooper leads the region's foremost child advocacy organization focused on poverty, child welfare and education issues, she formerly served as the Deputy Mayor for Policy for the City of Philadelphia, and Secretary of Policy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
Taught by: Donna Cooper
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 252 Urban Journalism
This course will examine the state of urban journalism today with special emphasis on how large newspapers are redefining themselves, and the news, in an era of dwindling readership and growing financial pressures. The course will look at online journalism, ethics, and alternative sources of news, and will explore the techniques journalists use in reporting the news. Students will report and write four pieces of their own about Philadelphia and its environs. The course is taught by Dan Biddle, the Philadelphia Inquirer’s former politics editor, an award-winning journalist for 40 years.
Taught by: Biddle
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 253 Cities, Suburbs, Regions
This course will explore the political, economic, social, and demographic forces impacting development patterns in metropolitan areas, with a particular focus on Philadelphia. We will examine the government policies, economic forces, and social attitudes that affect the way a region grows, and the impact of these forces on poverty, equity and segregation. Specific topics to be discussed include the factors that make a region competitive, the city’s changing role in the region, the impact place has on opportunity, and approaches to revitalizing and improving communities.
Taught by: Black
Course offered spring; even-numbered years
Also Offered As: SOCI 254
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 258 Global Urban Education
This course examines the demographic, social, and economic trends impacting the growth of global cities—providing the context for global urban education. Through the dual lens of globalization and local urban culture, we explore relationships between urban education and economic development, democratic citizenship, social movements, social inclusion, equity, and quality of urban life. We consider key historical legacies (e.g., Colonialism), informal settlements and “slums,” the rise of the “knowledge economy,” and the role of international aid. Additional topics include: early childhood; gender equity; youth culture; impacts of crisis and war; urban refugees; teacher training and identity; accountability & governance; information & computer technology; religion, indigenous cultures, and language identity; & the role of the private sector and school choice. We focus on cities like Sao Paolo, Mexico City, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh City, Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi, Jakarta, Mumbai, Lahore, Tehran, and Cairo, and draw comparisons to cities like New York, London, Paris and Tokyo.
Taught by: Gershberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 258
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 264 Poverty, Race and Health
This course is designed to introduce students to current literature on race/ethnic difference in health and mortality in the United States, covering such topics as explanations for why some race/ethnic groups fare better than others, how inner city poverty and residential segregation may contribute to racial/ethnic differences in health outcomes, and health of immigrants versus native-born populations. Current policy debated and recent policy developments related to health are also briefly discussed. The course is organized as a seminar with a combination of lectures and class discussions.
Taught by: Jaeger
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 264
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 270 The Immigrant City
This course focuses on immigrant communities in United States cities and suburbs. We survey migration and community experiences among a broad range of ethnic groups in different city and suburban neighborhoods. Class readings, discussions, and visits to Philadelphia neighborhoods explore themes including labor markets, commerce, housing, civil society, racial and ethnic relations, integration, refugee resettlement, and local, state, and national immigration policies. The class introduces students to a variety of social science approaches to studying social groups and neighborhoods, including readings in sociology, geography, anthropology, social history, and political science. Ultimately, the class aims to help students develop: 1) a broad knowledge of immigration and its impacts on U.S. cities and regions; 2) a comparative understanding of diverse migrant and receiving communities; and 3) familiarity with policies and institutions that seek to influence immigration and immigrant communities.
For BA Students: Society Sector
Taught by: Vitiello, Domenic
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: LALS 273, SOCI 270
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 274 Advanced Topics in Theatre
This course will combine an intensive practical and intellectual investigation of some area of the making of theatre: performance techniques, theatrical styles, a particular period of theatre history. Please visit the Theatre Arts Program website for current topics for Thar 275 and other Theatre Arts Courses and special topics: https://theatre.sas.upenn.edu Please visit the Theatre Arts Program website each semester for information on the available THAR 275 special topics courses: https://theatre.sas.upenn.edu
Taught by: Fox, Ferguson, Malague, Mazer, O’Harra & Schlatter
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 225, ENGL 276, THAR 275
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This course, which may with different topics, be repeated for credit, will examine a specific aspect of theatrical practice. Recent topics have included performance art, Jacques Lecoq technique, improvisation, and puppetry.
URBS 276 The Modern City
A study of the European and American city in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Emphasis is placed on the history of architecture and urban design; political, sociological, and economic factors also receive attention. The class considers the development of London, St. Petersburg, Washington, Boston, Paris, Vienna and Philadelphia.
Taught by: Brownlee, D.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 270, ARTH 670
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 277 Gender, Sex & Urban Life
Is urban space gendered? Do we change how it is gendered as we move through it? Does it change us? This course explores gender and sexuality in the contemporary global city through the study of urban spaces. We will consider feminist, queer, and transgender theories of the city, as we investigate how practices of using and making space are gendered and sexualized. Each week of the course will be organized around a type of space, including subway, school, and birthing center, nightclub, suburb, and park. Assignments will include an auto-ethnography, a short critical essay, and a final assignment that asks you to propose an additional type of space in which to study the intersections of sex, gender, and the urban built environment. In each space, we will conduct an interdisciplinary exploration, drawing from sociology, anthropology, geography, city planning history, feminist and queer theory, as well as from fiction, poetry, music videos, photography, and documentary film.
Taught by: Knittle
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: GSWS 277
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 280 Neighborhood Dynamics of Crime
Crime varies in time, space and populations as it reflects ecological structures and the routine social interactions that occur in daily life. Concentrations of crime can be found among locations, with antisocial activities like assaults and theft occurring at higher rates because of the demographic make-up of people (e.g. adolescents) or conflicts (e.g. competing gangs), for reasons examined by ecological criminology. Variation in socio-demographic structures (age, education ratios, and the concentration of poverty) and the physical environment (housing segregation, density of bars, street lighting) predicts variations between neighborhoods in the level of crime and disorder. Both ethnographic and quantitative research methods are used to explore the connections between the social and physical environment of areas and antisocial behavior.
Taught by: Loeffler
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CRIM 280
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 285 Health on the urban margins: The experience of health in American cities
In this course we will investigate the social and spatial determinants of health in contemporary urban American. We will study how cities are impacted by healthcare delivery systems and social policy in the United States, with special attention toward understanding the relationship between health disparities and structures of urban inequality related to racial discrimination, extreme poverty, and the stigma of a criminal record. We will also explore how a variety of marginalized populations from war veterans to parolees to the homeless cope with mental illness and violence-related trauma in the urban environment.
Taught by: Tyson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 290 Metropolitan Nature
In order to understand the complex and often skewed relationship between the built and natural systems, we must think in processes and examine different scales simultaneously. The course explores urban sustainability and resilience. At its core, sustainability is a radical concept that integrates the economy, equity (social justice), and the environment. Co-opted by marketing slogans, stripped of meaning and context, it has become vague and pliable. Sustainability and resilience demand a holistic systems view of the world. The course focuses on communities such as New Orleans and Eastwick where urban development has focused on economic concerns at the expense of the environment and equity resulting in unintended, and sometimes, catastrophic consequences. Students will have the opportunity to interact with community residents who have organized to develop strategies to address these ongoing issues.
Taught by: Nairn
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 294 Global Cities: Urbanization in the Global South
This course examines the futures of urbanization in most of the world. With cities in “developing” countries set to absorb 95% of urban population growth in the next generation, the course explores the plans, spaces and social experiences of this dramatic urban century. How do proliferating urban populations sustain themselves in the cities of Latin America, Africa and Asia? What kinds of social and political claims do these populations make more just and sustainable cities? The course investigates the ongoing experiences in urban planning, infrastructure development and environmental governance in cities of the Global South. In so doing, it imagines new forms of citizenship, development and sustainability that are currently unfolding in these cities of the future.
Taught by: Anand
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 294
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 300 Fieldwork Seminar
Students work 15 hours per week in field placement and meet weekly with class and instructors. The class is intended to help students reflect from a variety of perspectives on the work that they are doing in their placement organizations. The class format is primarily discussion. Students are required to complete assigned readings, prepare written and oral presentations, and submit a final project. Course usually offered in spring term Activity: Seminar 2.0 Course Units Notes: Urban Studies majors and minors only.

URBS 320 Who Gets Elected and Why? The Science of Politics
What does it take to get elected to office? What are the key elements of a successful political campaign? What are the crucial issues guiding campaigns and elections in the U.S. at the beginning of the 21st century? This class will address the process and results of electoral politics at the local, state, and federal levels. Course participants will study the stages and strategies of running for public office and will discuss the various influences on getting elected, including: Campaign finance and fundraising, demographics, polling, the media, staffing, economics, and party organization. Each week we will be joined by guest speakers who are nationally recognized professionals, with expertise in different areas of the campaign and election process. Students will also analyze campaign case studies and the career of the instructor himself. Edward G. Rendell is the former Mayor of Philadelphia, former Chair of the Democratic National Committee, and former Governor of Pennsylvania. A note if you are not able to gain a seat in this course: Please write to Professor Fay Walker (listed in the Penn Directory) with your name, year of study, and major in order to be added to a waitlist. The professors will be able to register many waitlisted students in the first week of the semester, but only after the first class session on Monday Sept. 9th, 6pm, in Cohen Hall Room 402. Waitlisted students are encouraged not to miss the first class. Taught by: Rendell Course usually offered in fall term Also Offered As: GAFL 509, PSCI 320 Activity: Lecture 1.0 Course Unit

URBS 322 The Big Picture: Mural Arts in Philadelphia
The history and practice of the contemporary mural movement couples step-by-step analysis of the process of designing with painting a mural. In addition, students will learn to see mural art as a tool for social change. This course combines theory with practice. Students will design and paint a large outdoor mural in West Philadelphia in collaboration with Philadelphia high school students and community groups. The instructor, Jane Golden, is the founder and Director of the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. One-term course offered either term Also Offered As: FNAR 222, FNAR 622 Activity: Seminar 1.0 Course Unit

URBS 323 Tutoring School: Theory and Practice
This course represents an opportunity for students to participate in academically-based community service learning. Student will be studying early childhood development and learning while providing direct, one-to-one tutoring services to young students in Philadelphia public elementary schools. The course will cover foundational dimensions of the cognitive and social development of preschool and elementary school students from a multicultural perspective. The course will place a special emphasis on the multiple contexts that influence children’s development and learning and how aspects of classroom environment (i.e., curriculum and classroom management strategies) can impact children’s achievement. Also, student will consider a range of larger issues impacting urban education embedded in American society. The course structure has three major components: (1) lecture related directly to readings on early childhood development and key observation and listening skills necessary for effective tutoring, (2) weekly contact with a preschool or elementary school student as a volunteer tutor and active consideration of how to enhance the student learning, and (3) discussion and reflection of personal and societal issues related to being a volunteer tutor in a large urban public school. Taught by: Fantuzzo Course usually offered in spring term Also Offered As: EDUC 326 Activity: Seminar 1.0 Course Unit

URBS 326 Tutoring in Urban Public Elementary Schools: A Child Development Perspective
This course represents an opportunity for undergraduate students to participate in academically based community service learning. Student will be studying early childhood development and learning while providing direct, one-to-one tutoring services to young students in Philadelphia public elementary schools. The course will cover foundational dimensions of the cognitive and social development of preschool and elementary school students from a multicultural perspective. The course will place a special emphasis on the multiple contexts that influence children’s development and learning and how aspects of classroom environment (i.e., curriculum and classroom management strategies) can impact children’s achievement. Also, student will consider a range of larger issues impacting urban education embedded in American society. The course structure has three major components: (1) lecture related directly to readings on early childhood development and key observation and listening skills necessary for effective tutoring, (2) weekly contact with a preschool or elementary school student as a volunteer tutor and active consideration of how to enhance the student learning, and (3) discussion and reflection of personal and societal issues related to being a volunteer tutor in a large urban public school. Taught by: Fantuzzo Course usually offered in spring term Also Offered As: EDUC 326 Activity: Seminar 1.0 Course Unit

URBS 330 GIS Applications in Social Science
This course will introduce students to the principles behind Geographic Information Science and applications of (GIS) in the social sciences. Examples of GIS applications in social services, public health, criminology, real estate, environmental justice, education, history, and urban studies will be used to illustrate how GIS integrates, displays, and facilitates analysis of spatial data through maps and descriptive statistics. Students will learn to create data sets through primary and secondary data collection, map their own data, and create maps to answer research questions. The course will consist of a combination of lecture and lab. Taught by: tba Course usually offered in fall term Also Offered As: URBS 530 Activity: Seminar 1.0 Course Unit Notes: Fulfills the Qualitative Data Analysis Requirement
URBS 344 Documentary Experiments in Urban Research
What can video art, experimental documentary, and sensory ethnography teach us about the practice of urban research? How can we build on the traditions of first person and essay cinema to produce compelling documents of our own questions and findings? This course surveys a range of film and video works on themes such as the production of space, urban nature, infrastructure, and collective memory. Taken as a genre, these time-based works provide a powerful model for training scholars’ observational skills, conceptualizing scales of analysis, and engaging broader publics in urban research. In this course, we will explore this audiovisual genre in dialogue with selected theoretical, ethnographic, and case study readings in urban studies. As an advanced theory-practice course, it combines seminar readings and discussion with regular screenings and a series of workshops on photo, video, audio, and postproduction skills. The course will provide a general fluency in contemporary urban research, with particular emphasis on urban political ecology. In dialogue with this scholarship, students will develop and situate their own experimental documentary research projects.
Taught by: Mendelsohn
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 344, CIMS 344
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 359 Nutritional Anthropology
This course will explore the significance as it relates to food behaviors and nutritional status in contemporary human populations. The topics covered will be examined from a biocultural perspective and include 1) definition and functions of nutrients and how different cultures perceive nutrients, 2) basic principles of human growth and development, 3) methods to assess dietary intake, 4) food taboos, 5) feeding practices of infants and children, 6) food marketing, 7) causes and consequences of under- and over-nutrition, and 8) food insecurity and hunger.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 359
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 367 Philadelphia, 1700-2000
Using Philadelphia as a lens, this course will examine the transformation of American cities from the colonial period to the present. Through readings, lectures, and tours, we will consider urbanization and suburbanization, race, class, and ethnicity, economic development, poverty and inequality, housing and neighborhood change, urban institutions, and politics and public policy.
Taught by: Sugrue
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 367
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 400 Senior Seminar
Urban Studies senior research project
Taught by: Grossman/McGloone/Simon
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisite: URBS 200; URBS 300
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 401 Urban Studies Honors
Students in the fall Urban Studies Senior Seminar (URBS400) whose papers are exceptional and show promise for publication will be invited to participate in the spring honors seminar. If they choose to participate, honors seminar participants will revise and refine their research/papers with the goal of their work for publication in an academic journal relevant to the topic. The seminar meets periodically during the semester, structured around a set of assignments geared to facilitate the process of revision. Students will be assigned to read each other’s work and meetings take the form of a workshop with students reporting on progress and providing feedback to improve and develop each other’s papers. In addition to completing the revised paper for a grade, participants in the honors seminar are required to present their work to a wider Urban Studies audience in a special session at the end of the semester and to provide documentation that they have submitted their papers for publication. Students who successfully complete the honors seminar will graduate with distinction in the major, noted on their transcripts and in the graduation materials.
Taught by: Simon
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisite: URBS 400
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 404 Philanthropy and the City
This course will focus on how urban communities are shaped by the nonprofit sector and the billions of philanthropic dollars that fuel their work. By bridging theory and practice, the class explores what dynamics are at play to deliver vital services or programs in healthcare, education, the arts, community development, and other issues. The course will also focus on these important questions: (1) Whose responsibility is the public good? How is that responsibility shared by the public, private, and nonprofit sectors? and (2) Given that responsibility for the public good, which individuals and groups make the decisions about how to serve the public good? How are these decisions made, and who benefits from these decisions? Students will consider these questions in an interdisciplinary context that will bring a historical and philosophical perspective to the examination of the values and institutions that characterize the contemporary philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.
Taught by: Bauer/Goldman
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: NPLD 797
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 405 Religion, Social Justice & Urban Development
Urban development has been influenced by religious conceptions of social and economic justice. Progressive traditions within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Baha’i, Humanism and other religions and systems of moral thought have yielded powerful critiques of oppression and hierarchy as well as alternative economic frameworks for ownership, governance, production, labor, and community. Historical and contemporary case studies from the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East will be considered, as we examine the ways in which religious responses to poverty, inequality, and ecological destruction have generated new forms of resistance and development.
Taught by: Lamas
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: AFRC 405, RELS 439
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 410 Urban Communities and the Arts
Urban Communities and the Arts concerns itself with Arts, Music and Activism in Philadelphia. We investigate the social, economic and cultural fabric from which activism in the arts arises. To do so, we will investigate the histories and artistic reactions to oppression in Philadelphia by drawing on specific examples from various neighborhoods and through the media of music, visual art, theater, and dance. The long history of systemic and individual oppression in the US manifests itself in different ways in various urban neighborhoods in Philly and artists of various genres and inclinations participate in activism in many different ways. Examples of artistic and musical responses to the various forms of oppression will be offered and class participants will be asked to bring their own examples to share and analyze. By visiting significant arts practitioners and organizations that provide access to arts education and justice work, participants will have a hands-on experience to unpack the dynamics of artistic production in city life. In addition to art as an outlet for exposing oppression, we will also consider the ways that art and music become markers of the uniqueness of a neighborhood or city, which further complicates the idea of art as a tool for activism. Participants in Urban Communities and the Arts will unpack the role of music and art in defining city or neighborhood cultures by considering a few key sectors that reveal the ways in which cities fail to provide equal access to resources or participate in outright discrimination. At the same time, cities continue to cultivate creative spaces and socio-economic opportunities for economic gain and social understanding through art and music. It is the contradictions that this course will concern itself with and out of our study we will invite course participants to respond creatively. Participants will create either an original work of art, music or intellectual response like a visually interesting research poster as part of a final art/music show. Ultimately students will be asked to reflect back on the role of art in social and political activism to better understand the successes and failures of such movements as they come to define the ethos of city life and its limits.
Taught by: McGlone
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FNAR 410
Prerequisites: Students should have some knowledge of music and art communities in urban settings. Urban Studies and Fine Arts majors are particularly encouraged.
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 412 Building Non-Profits: The Business of a Mission-Driven Organization
This course will cover the basic elements of building and growing a non-profit organization, including the development of the mission and the board; needs assessment, program design, development, and management; financial management, contract compliance and understanding an audit; fundraising, public, foundation, corporate, and individual; communication and marketing; organizational administration (including staff and volunteer selection, management and development); public policy, research and advocacy. Students will make site visits and engage role play, in addition to research and writing.
Taught by: Goldman
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 415 Urban Real Estate Markets
Cities evolve over time, comprised of various inputs of different sizes at different stages of urban evolution. However, as cities continue to densify and navigate real estate market cycles, opportunities to redefine the urban context, while promoting the individual brand, become ever more sensitive. Projects are increasingly complex, often involving multiple partnerships among private developers, public agencies, non-profits, and community groups. Today’s development professionals need to be well-versed across a variety of disciplines and property types to effectively execute in an urban environment. As an introductory course in real estate development, this course will provide the underpinnings for critical decision-making in markets that change frequently and often unevenly - whether for financing, investing, development, public policy formulation, or asset management/disposition.
Taught by: Packard
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 417 Cities and Sustainability
A good idea is not enough - developing innovative and sustainable projects in cities requires understanding “how to get things done.” Developing projects to promote sustainability in major US cities requires sensitivity to the political and operational context within which cities implement innovative initiatives. Cities and Sustainability uses Philadelphia as a case study to explore the issues confronting modern American metropolises as they look to manage their resources and promote environmentally friendly policies. URBS 417 will introduce students to leading Philadelphia practitioners of sustainability and municipal projects. Students will be given the tools to politically, economically and critically analyze various sustainable policy initiatives across the United States.
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 419 Urban Transportation in Flux
Transportation systems and networks impact everything from the literal shape of American cities to their economic vitality and the well-being of their citizens. Urban Infrastructure in Flux provides students with an over view of the political, business, and policy concerns and processes that inform how Americans get around by foot, transit, and car. URBS 419 explores the use and reuse of legacy infrastructure, and roots innovations such as driverless cars, and scooters, in a historical conflict over the right-of-way (ROW). Students will have the opportunity to meet professionals in the field and engage in primary source research and data analysis.
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 420 Perspectives on Urban Poverty
This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to 20th century urban poverty, and 20th century urban poverty knowledge. In addition to providing a historical overview of American poverty, the course is primarily focused on the ways in which historical, cultural, political, racial, social, spatial/geographical, and economic forces have either shaped or been left out of contemporary debates on urban poverty. Of great importance, the course will evaluate competing analytic trends in the social sciences and their respective implications in terms of the question of what can be known about urban poverty in the contexts of social policy and practice, academic research, and the broader social imaginary. We will critically analyze a wide body of literature that theorizes and explains urban poverty. Course readings span the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, urban studies, history, and social welfare. Primacy will be granted to critical analysis and deconstruction of course texts, particularly with regard to the ways in which poverty knowledge creates, sustains, and constrains meaningful channels of action in urban poverty policy and practice interventions.
Taught by: Fairbanks
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: HIST 440, SOCI 420
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 424 Political Ecologies of the City
Cities have been centres of aspiration for much of human history. They have provided a limited yet critical locus for social mobility, both in political and economic terms. As large agglomerations of political and economic power, urban residents have also consumed growing proportions of the earth’s mineral, food and water resources from the national (and international) body. The contradictory aspects of urban aspiration frame this course. Drawing on the frameworks of political ecology, in this course we think through the cities of the global south to understand how cities are made. To do this, we will first focus on the construction on the liberal city and how it has been occupied, both formally and informally, by urban subjects in most of the world. Next, we will learn about projects through which natural resources have been directed to and through the city. Finally we will conclude with a particular attention to how urban resources are claimed by marginalized migrants, and the particular sorts of governance institutions these practices engender.
Taught by: Anand
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 424
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 428 Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium
A seminar run in conjunction with the Institute for Urban Research at Penn, students will learn about the range of cutting-edge topics in urbanism that Penn faculty are working on and work closely with a faculty member on current research. Students will learn about new topics and methods in interdisciplinary urban research, and get first hand experience collecting urban data under the close supervision of an experienced researcher. Students and faculty jointly will present their findings for discussion. This course is a good introduction for how to frame and conduct an urban research project.
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CPLN 528
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 431 Mapping Philadelphia
Philadelphia is a city that was mapped before it was built, inhabited before it was developed. Founder William Penn’s original concept for the gridded city continues to inform the historical evolution of Philadelphia, even as city planners, architects, artists, and social justice activists work to transform the layers of our built environment. This class will study the city through a variety of archival maps, historical mapping practices, and emergent digital approaches to representing space and time. We will explore public history projects that seek approaches to place-making and place-keeping at neighborhood intersections, share dialogue with social practice artists who produce site-specific works, and visualize civic data through platforms such as OpenDataPhilly. Each student will pursue a final research project resulting in a close study of a particular street or intersection in the city.
Taught by: Farber
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 435 The Political Economy of Urban Development
This course provides an introduction to the economic and political theories that have come to shape, for better or for worse, the spatial characteristics of late 20th century urbanism. It is intended to offer a range of analytical approaches to understanding the urban structures and processes that strategies of community-based organizers and urban policy planners seek to influence. The course focuses on postwar U.S. cities (Chicago and other Midwestern/ Northeast rust belt cities in particular), though a number of readings explore these issues in broader contexts. As a way to further understand postwar US urbanism, we will expand our focus briefly to the geopolitical/international scale during the weeks on neoliberalism and microfinance. Urban political economy refers to different theoretical traditions within the social sciences that explain urban development in terms of the relationship between markets, states, and community actors (or, civil society). Part I of the course covers four different theories of modern political economy. Neoclassical, Keynesian, Marxian, and Neoliberal. Our purpose is to provide a framework for political economic analysis and an historical foundation for understanding postwar transformation. Part II of the course grounds the foundational material of Part I by tracing the economic and political forces that have shaped post-war urban development trends in Northeastern and Midwestern cities (especially Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and NY). Particular attention will be given to issues such as race, suburbanization, deindustrialization, welfare state retrenchment, gentrification, and public housing transformation. Part III examines a range of contemporary (post 1970) approaches to urban development, focusing on processes of neoliberalization, neo-clientalism, urban informality, sub prime mortgage lending, and microfinance.
Taught by: Fairbanks
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 440 Introduction to City Planning: Past, Present and Future
Orientation to the profession, tracing the evolution of city and regional planning from its late nineteenth century roots to its twentieth century expression. Field trips included.
Taught by: Vitello or Ammon
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CPLN 500
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 448 Neighborhood Displacement and Community Power
This course uses the history of black displacement to examine community power and advocacy. It examines the methods of advocacy (e.g., case, class, and legislative) and political action through which community activists can influence social policy development and community and institutional change. The course also analyzes selected strategies and tactics of change and seeks to develop alternative roles in the group advocacy, lobbying, public education and public relations, electoral politics, coalition building, and legal and ethical dilemmas in political action. Case studies of neighborhood displacement serve as central means of examining course topics.
Taught by: Palmer
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: AFRC 448
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 450 Urban Redevelopment
This course will consider urban redevelopment from the early 20th century to the present day, looking at ways the economic, political, and social underpinnings of redevelopment practice have changed over that time. From the City Beautiful movement to Transit Oriented Development, the course will look at why and how the public, private, and non-profit sectors have intervened in urban neighborhoods, and will contemplate consequences - positive and negative - of those interventions. Students will be introduced to some of the technical aspects of redevelopment, including architecture/design, planning, and financing. The class will be in seminar format, mixing lecture, discussion, and guest speakers. The course requirements include a mid-term paper, an in-class charrette, and a final development project.
Taught by: Rachlin, Andrew
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 451 The Politics of Housing and Urban Development
This course offers an exploration of how legislative action, government policymaking, and citizen advocacy influence plans for the investment of public capital in distressed urban neighborhoods. Course topics this semester will include an evaluation of the results of City of Philadelphia development policies under the administration of former Mayor Michael A. Nutter, as well as consideration of plans being undertaken by the administration of Mayor James F. Kenney, who took office in January. The course will also include an assessment of a large-scale property acquisition and development strategy being implemented by the Philadelphia Housing Authority in North Philadelphia and a review of recent and current reinvestment proposals for Camden’s waterfront and downtown-area neighborhoods.
Taught by: Kromer
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CPLN 625, GAFL 569
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 452 Community Economic Development
Community economic development concerns the revitalization of impoverished communities. As with all things economic, poor and working people may be the subjects or the objects of development. We will utilize case studies from Philadelphia and around the world in an exploration of various models of economic justice and sustainable development. Note: Attendance at the the first class is mandatory (for those already enrolled and for those considering enrollment in the course). Enrolled students who miss the first class must drop the course. Those who were not able to enroll but who attend the first class will be permitted to enroll.
Taught by: Lamas
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 453 Metropolitan Growth and Poverty
This course analyzes the role of metropolitan regions in the U.S. and global economies, including the sources of metropolitan productivity, the ways that metropolitan structures affect residents, and analyses of public policy in metropolitan areas. The economic, political, and social forces that have shaped World War II urban and regional development are explored, including technology, demography, and government. Special attention is paid to how metropolitan change affects residents by income and race. Topics include: gentrification, schools, suburbanization, sprawl, metropolitan fragmentation, concentration of poverty, race, and various economic revitalization initiatives.
Taught by: Madden
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 453
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 454 City Limits: The Impact of Urban Policy
This course assesses the changing role of public policy in American cities. In the past, government often believed that it could direct urban development. New realities - the rise of an informal labor market, global capital and labor flows, the flight of businesses and the middle class to the suburbs - have demonstrated that government must see itself as one - but only one - 'player' in a more complete, transactional process of policy making that crosses political boundaries and involves business, organized interest groups, and citizens. This seminar uses a case-study method to study how public policy can make a difference in the revitalization of distressed American cities. The seminar is designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Seminar readings and projects will be organized around three themes: 1) history and vision, 2) data and analysis, and 3) policy and implementation. Students will be divided into project teams assigned to work on current development issues that will be reviewed by both public and private-sector experts. Extensive use will be made of real estate, economic development, and social indicator data to understand the complex forces at work in both large and small cities. Students will learn to access, analyze, and map information; to frame and interpret these data within a regional perspective; and to construct profiles of cities and neighborhoods. Students will study recent urban redevelopment initiatives in the Philadelphia region, including Philadelphia’s Neighborhood Transformations Initiative and New Jersey’s Camden Revitalization plans.
Taught by: Goldstein, Stern
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisite: Student must have taken an introduction to research methods course
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 457 Globalization & The City: Global Urbanization
In 2008, the UN estimated that the world’s population had become primarily urban, for the first time in history. According to the OECD, by the end of the century, close to 85% of the projected population will live in cities. The transition towards an urban planet is likely to have far-reaching economic, environmental, social, political, and cultural impacts on our species, many of which we cannot yet predict. But what is urbanization? Will it lead to more inequality, exploitation, conflict, resource consumption, and exposure to natural disasters and climate change, or is it an opportunity to move the world in a more sustainable and equitable direction? Taught by Chandan Deuskar and Patricio Zambrano Barragan, this course aims to explore these questions. In the first half of the semester, we will discuss various challenges associated with global urbanization and its impacts. In the second half, we will focus on responses to these challenges. The assignments will allow students to explore some of the most salient debates around global urbanization. By the end of the semester, students will be better able to understand the context for any future academic research, professional work, or business activities in the cities of the ‘developing world’. The course will help provide a foundation for any students considering graduate studies or professional work in the fields of urban planning or international development.
Taught by: Chandan Deuskar and Patricio Zambrano Barragan
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 435
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 473 The History & Theory of Community Organizing
"Power concedes nothing without a demand."--Frederick Douglass.
"Workers of the world, unite!"--Karl Marx. "Don’t mourn. Organize."--Joe Hill. "Strong people do not need strong leaders."--Ella Baker. "Freedom is a constant struggle."--Angela Davis. We will review the history and theory of critique, resistance, and solidarity, as we consider old and new social movements and freedom struggles around the world (Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia)–from encampments for indigenous sovereignty of tribal lands to demonstrations by poor and working people seeking “the right to the city,” from sit-ins and strikes to occupations and takeovers, from uprisings and insurrections to revolutions and counterrevolutions, from anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-caste, and anti-racist insurgencies to mobilizations for racial and gender justice and solidarity economy; from civil rights, labor rights, student rights, human rights, animal rights, and environmental organizing to movements for peace, democracy, equality, and liberation–and more (based on student interests and commitments). Strategies and techniques will be reviewed. Successes and failures will be registered. Limitations and possibilities will be debated. Source material will be drawn from mainstream and radical traditions within popular praxis and numerous fields, including urban studies, philosophy and critical theory, religion, history, art and culture, anthropology, politics, development economics, social psychology, sociology, organizational development, and law. Note: Attendance at the first class is mandatory (for those already enrolled and for those considering enrollment in the course). Enrolled students who miss the first class must drop the course. Those who were not able to enroll but who attend the first class will be permitted to enroll.
Taught by: Lamas
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SOCI 473
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 476 Urban Housing & Community Development Policy in America
This course examines how public policy influences housing markets and how markets influence public policy. The course reviews the development of housing policy since World War II and how shifts in policy have influenced people’s ability to find suitable shelter. Topics include: poverty and affordability, residential segregation / civil rights in housing, the financial crisis of 2008, mortgage foreclosure, affordable housing, and homelessness. The course focuses on the changing roles of different levels of government in housing policy and how the financial sector, the construction industry, and non-governmental organizations influence Americans housing options.
Taught by: Stern, Goldstein
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 480 Liberation and Ownership
Who is going to own what we all have a part of creating? The history of the Americas, and of all peoples everywhere, is an evolving answer to the question of ownership. Ownership is about: the ties that bind and those that separate; production, participation, and control; the creation of community and the imposition of hierarchies—racial, sexual, and others; dreams of possessing and the burdens of debt and ecological despoliation; dependency and the slave yearning to breathe free. Of all the issues relevant to democracy, oppression, injustice, and inequality, ownership is arguably the most important and least understood. Utilizing a variety of disciplinary perspectives—with a particular emphasis on radical and critical theories of liberation, and by focusing on particular global sites and processes of capitalism, students will assess and refine their views regarding ownership and liberation in light of their own social, political, religious, aesthetic, and ethical commitments.
Taught by: Lamas
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: AFRC 480
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 506 Public Environment of Cities: An Introduction to the Urban Landscape
This course will explore the role of public spaces - streets, boulevards, parks and squares - in cities and their social uses. With the University of Pennsylvania campus and the City of Philadelphia serving as our laboratory, we will critically examine the evolution of the movement of corridors, open space and buildings of the urban landscape and their changing uses. Following the flaneur tradition of Baudelaire and Benjamin, we will walk the city to experience and understand the myriad environments and neighborhoods that comprise it.
Taught by: Nairn
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: URBS 206
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 513 Urban Ethnography: Capturing the Cultures of Cities
Using Philadelphia as the site of students’ praxis, this course explores the symbolic meanings and social production of urban life and culture in the nation’s fifth largest city. This course is structured as a seminar with ethnographic background readings from Philadelphia and other urban settings to introduce students to the study of the city as a site of everyday practice, as well as training in conducting an ethnographic fieldwork project. The urban landscape provides an intensification of macro processes such as globalization. Such processes and how humans experience them are more easily studied and understood in an urban setting. The class will explore social relational and cultural themes such as the ethnic city, the gendered city, the contested city, the sacred city, the global city, and the aesthetic and expressive city. A diverse range of reading assignments, images, and videos will augment our understandings of urban life. Students will design and execute their own ethnographic fieldwork projects on an urban topic that interests them. Through step-by-step instruction throughout the semester, students will learn qualitative research techniques such as field notes, participant-observation, interviewing, and how to interpret their own data, so that they will be able to complete their semester project.
Taught by: Saverino
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FOLK 513, URBS 427
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 516 Public Interest Workshop
This is a Public Interest Ethnography workshop (originally created by Peggy Reeves Sanday - Department of Anthropology) that incorporates an interdisciplinary approach to exploring social issues. Open to graduate and advanced undergraduate students, the workshop is a response to Amy Gutmann’s call for interdisciplinary cooperation across the University and to the Department of Anthropology’s commitment to developing public interest research and practice as a disciplinary theme. Rooted in the rubric of public interest social science, the course focuses on: 1) merging problem solving with theory and analysis in the interest of change motivated by a commitment to social justice, racial harmony, equality, and human rights; and 2) engaging in public debate on human issues to make the research results accessible to a broad audience. The workshop brings in guest speakers and will incorporate original ethnographic research to merge theory with action. Students are encouraged to apply the framing model to a public interest research and action topic of their choice. This is an academically-based-community-service (ABCS) course that partners directly with Penn’s Netter Center Community Partnerships.
Taught by: Suess
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: ANTH 516, GSWS 516
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 530 GIS Applications in Social Science
This course will introduce students to the principles behind Geographic Information Science and applications of (GIS) in the social sciences. Examples of GIS applications in social services, public health, criminology, real estate, environmental justice, education, history, and urban studies will be used to illustrate how GIS integrates, displays, and facilitates analysis of spatial data through maps and descriptive statistics. Students will learn to create data sets through primary and secondary data collection, map their own data, and create maps to answer research questions. The course will consist of a combination of lecture and lab.
Taught by: Hillier
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: URBS 330
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
URBS 544 Public Environmental Humanities
This broadly interdisciplinary course is designed for Graduate and Undergraduate Fellows in the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities (PPEH) who hail from departments across Arts and Sciences as well as other schools at the university. The course is also open to others with permission of the instructors. Work in environmental humanities by necessity spans academic disciplines. By design, it can also address and engage publics beyond traditional academic settings. This seminar, with limited enrollment, explores best practices in public environmental humanities. Students receive close mentoring to develop and execute cross-disciplinary, public engagement projects on the environment. In spring 2018, participants have the opportunity to participate in PPEH’s public engagement projects on urban waters and environmental data. These ongoing projects document the variety of uses that Philadelphians make of federal climate and environmental data, in and beyond city government; they also shine light on climate and environmental challenges our city faces and the kinds of data we need to address them. Working with five community partners across Philadelphia, including the City’s Office of Sustainability, students in this course will develop data use stories and surface the specific environmental questions neighborhoods have and the kinds of data they find useful. The course hosts guest speakers and research partners from related public engagement projects across the planet; community, neighborhood, open data, and open science advocates; and project partners in government in the City of Philadelphia and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Course assignments include: * 2 short-form essays (course blog posts); * a 12-hour research stay (conducted over multiple visits) with a community course partner to canvas data uses and desires; * authorship of 3 multimedia data stories; * co-organization and participation in a city-wide data storytelling event on May 2, 2018.
Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 543, COML 562, GRMN 544
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 547 Anthropology and Education
An introduction to the intent, approach, and contribution of anthropology to the study of socialization and schooling in cross-cultural perspective. Education is examined in traditional, colonial, and complex industrial societies.
Taught by: Hall or Posecznick
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ANTH 547, EDUC 547
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 614 Weimar Landscapes
This new course is designed for students of literature, landscape architecture and urban planning, and cultural history in general. It will explore the ideas of, and attitudes towards, landscape in selected works by Wolfgang Goethe, and consider his own considerable practical involvement in reshaping the town and gardens of Weimar. The course will provide the larger context of German literature, aesthetics and landscape taste, and politics of the later 18th and early 19th centuries. We will consider the development of new gardens and parks in a “new” style (e.g. Worlitz); they were regarded to be less formal and more “natural” than their French predecessors. We will study the English models for this movement, and offer and particular attention to the major German theorist, C.C.L. Hirschfeld, who would soon become famous outside Germany as well.
Taught by: Weissberg/Hunt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 782, COML 615, ENGL 584, GRMN 614
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 706 Culture/Power/Subjectivities
This doctoral level course will introduce students to a conceptual language and theoretical tools for analyzing and explaining the complex intersection of racialized, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and classed differences and asymmetrical social relations. The students will examine critically the interrelationships between culture, power, and subjectivity through a close reading of classical and contemporary social theory. Emphasis will be given to assessing the power of various theories for conceptualizing and explaining mechanisms of social stratification as well as the basis of social order and processes of social change.
Taught by: Hall
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ANTH 704, EDUC 706
Prerequisite: EDUC 547
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

URBS 608 Urban Studies Proseminar
Open to PhD students, this scholar-oriented seminar explores how academic researchers from different disciplines define researchable questions, craft research designs, and contribute to knowledge through an examination of important and/or recently published books and monographs with an urban focus. Required of all doctoral students enrolled in the Urban Studies Graduate Certificate Program. Enrollment is limited to 15 students. Other doctoral students may enroll on a space available basis. Course requirements include completion of a major research paper on a topic selected in consultation with the instructor.
Taught by: Stern
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit