

## The Geography of Global Cities

Instructor: Stefano Bloch

E-mail: bloch@umn.edu

Mailbox: Geography Dept. main office, 4<sup>th</sup> floor Social Sciences Tower

Office Hours: Fridays 11:00 – 12:30 and/or by appointment

Class: Monday & Wednesday 3:00 – 5:30, Carlson 1-123



Judith Baca, *The World Wall* (Photo: J.R. Compton)

Compton)

My goal for this course is to help you develop a geographically-informed way of seeing, interpreting, and understanding global cities and some of the concepts and terms used when discussing global cities, such as neo-liberalization, development, globalization, gentrification, contestation, and space/place. While socio-political interconnectivity and flows of economic capital help define global cities in terms of their influence on world culture, we will be focusing primarily on various global cities and regions in terms of the social spaces people produce, built form, design, development, sub-cultural practices, and street-level urban aesthetics.

We will also discuss what aspects of the urban environment are typically left out of popular representations and mainstream accounts of global cities. Taking various academic perspectives into account, we will begin to identify and better understand the subjective character of seemingly objective representations of, and processes within, the global city — that is, the global city as it is represented in various media, to the global city as a physical place.

The course readings, like the lectures, are meant to supplement and inform your own perspective, class discussions, and even the way you read newspapers or watch films. I will expect you to rely on (or even argue against) the concepts presented in the lectures and readings as part of forming and articulating your own arguments.

In addition to class discussion and analysis of news articles, the three writing pieces for the class will also give you an opportunity to incorporate new perspectives and theoretical approaches to understanding the physical global city and its spaces of representation. Although I present this course in an overview format — presenting many different terms, perspectives, and aspects of the global city — you will have plenty of opportunity to explore specific areas of interest in your writing and during class discussions. I will also make supplementary readings available to you when you show a particular interest in one approach or area of study.

-

---

### Writing Pieces:

- Writing piece 1 — Global Cities in the Media.  
1½ - 2 pages (800 – 1000 words). Analysis/Op-Ed style (further description on in-class hand-out).
- Writing piece 2 — Urban Aesthetics of Global Spaces: Observations and Reflections.  
4-5 pages. Descriptive/reflective style (further description on in-class hand-out).
- Writing piece 3 — Is Minneapolis a ‘global city’?  
5-6 pages. Academic paper style (further description on in-class hand-out).

### Basic paper formatting Guidelines/Specifications:

- Use *Chicago* or *APA* handbooks for style and formatting guidelines.
- Provide proper paper headings (your name, my name, course, date) and original title.
- Numbered pages, 12-point Times/Times New Roman, 1-inch border all around.
- Adhere to specified page limit (not including bibliography page, no title pages please).
- Provide proper citations of all quoted or referenced work.
- Images no larger than 3 inches in length or width (example: above image is 1.7 x 2.6 inches).
- All papers must be stapled (no clips or folders please).
- No late papers (accept for legitimate reasons with prior arrangements)

*\*Plagiarism (passing off another person's published or unpublished writing as your own without providing full and accurate citations) can result in a Fail in the course and possibly other penalties as mandated by the University.*

### **Class Conduct and Policies: (or, re-articulations of common sense and courtesy):**

- *Absolutely* no using, texting/reading texts, checking, beeping, buzzing, vibrating, lighting-up cell phones in the classroom at any time. If you are a surgeon or are yourself awaiting an organ transplant please let me know so you can keep your phone on, otherwise **turn it off**.
- You can use computers in class provided you *do not* surf the internet, check e-mail/MySpace/Facebook/Twitter, look at pictures of your friends, check sports scores, etc.
- You can eat and drink in class, but be courteous: do not lay out a full spread, crunch chips, or slurp beverages. Save full, smelly, and loud meals and snacks for break.
- Any discussion or talking in class should be shared with everyone in the room or not done at all.
- Please do not arrive late to class (or late returning from break).

### **Grades:**

I do not feel that I am (or anyone is) in a position to objectively evaluate you in terms of your intelligence; therefore your grade will largely be based on your overall engagement with course materials, information, concepts, and ideas. I will grade your writing pieces based on the attention you pay to your topic, the depth of perspective and originality you offer your subject, the care with which you produce your work, and the rigor, enthusiasm, and originality you bring to your area or object of analysis. Attendance and class participation (verbal and well as non-verbal) are therefore important factors that will help me determine your final grade in the course.

#### **Grading Break Down**

- Writing Piece 1 (20%)
- Writing Piece 2 (25%)
- Writing Piece 3 (35%)
- Class participation and discussion (10%)
- Attendance: (6.25 points each class/100 total) (10%)

A 99 – 93

A- 92 – 90

B+ 89 – 86

B 85 – 83

B- 82 – 80

C+ 79 – 76

C 75 – 73

C- 72 – 70

D 69 – 60

### **Newspaper Articles:**

Every Monday come to class with an article from any section of a major newspaper that focuses on an event in, or issue pertaining to, a global city (immigration, economic development, social-political-cultural-religious conflict, technological innovations, tourism, art, war, popular trends, etc). Be ready to discuss the article in brief and bring up some of the issues from the article and how they relate to the themes of the course.

\* Newspaper articles should be hardcopy versions of English-language papers with a circulation of at least 325,000. (for example: *International Herald Tribune*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *London Guardian*, etc.) No on-line versions or print outs from the internet please. The *New York Times* is available on campus and at newsstands around town.

---

### **Course Schedule/Readings (all readings provided in hard copy by the instructor):**

(Note: This syllabus and schedule is subject to change if necessary.)

\* For supplemental reading and to access additional information, I will make the books for the course available to you. The textbooks from which I pull some of the information for my lectures are:

Urban Geography: A Global Perspective (Pacione, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2009)

Cities of the World: World Regional Development (Brunn, Williams, Zeigler, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2003)

#### Week 1

#### **Introduction to the Global City**

#### **Monday 15**

#### Lecture/Discussion

Course introduction, themes and terms, expectations and objectives. What (and why) is a city?

#### Reading for Wednesday 17

- *The Culture of Cities in the Information Age* (Castells, 1999, p. 367 – 386)
- *Global Cities* (Gottdiener & Budd, 2005, p. 39 – 44)

#### **Wednesday 17**

#### Lecture/Discussion

Global/local culture, networks, place(lessness).

#### Readings for Monday 22

- *A Global Sense of Place* (Massey, 1994, p. 146 – 156)
  - *Whose Culture, Whose City?* (Zukin, 1995, p. 1 – 47)
  - *The World in the City* (Flusty, 2004, p. 43 – 54)
- 

#### Week 2

#### **Built Form(s): Paris/Cairo**

#### **Monday 22**

#### Lecture/Discussion

Ideology and the built environment (gender, class, power geometries), comparative urban form and planning, the Haussmannization/Modernization of Paris.

Readings for Wednesday 24

- *The Islamic City: historic myths, Islamic essence, and contemporary relevance* (Abu-Lughod, 1987, p. 155 – 175)

**Due Wednesday: Writing piece 1 — Global Cities in the Media: an Analysis.**

**Wednesday 24**

*Due: Writing piece 1*

Lecture/Discussion

Robert Moses and the re-development/gentrification of New York.

Documentary: *New York* (Burns, 1999)

Readings for Monday 29

- *Market, Place, Landscape* (Zukin, 1991, 3-23)
- *The Struggle Over Space* (Mele, 2000, p. 1-30)

---

Week 3

**Traditional and Non-Developmental Development: New York**

**Monday 29**

Lecture/Discussion

Non-developmental development. Cultural and symbolic capital.

Readings for Wednesday 1

- *The World on the Street* (Flusty, 2004, p. 55 – 60)
- *The Urban Landscape* (Zukin, 1991, p. 39 – 54)

**Wednesday 1**

Lecture/Discussion

Non-developmental development cont., the cultural economy.

Documentary: *Bomb It!* (Reiss, 2007)

Readings for Monday 6

- *Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space* (Davis, 1990, p. 154 – 180)
- *Hard City, Soft Planet / The City Hardens* (Flusty, 2004, p. 61 – 92)

---

Week 4

**Urban Aesthetics and the Cultural Economy: Los Angeles**

**Monday 6**

Lecture/Discussion

Los Angeles development, planning, exclusion.

--Reading for Wednesday 8

- *L.A. as a Design Product: How Art Works in the Regional Economy* (Molotch, 1996, p. 225 – 266)

**Wednesday 8**

Lecture/Discussion

The OBEY/HOPE phenomena, graffiti and street art.

Documentary: *Bomb It!* (Reiss, 2007)

Readings for Monday 13

- *Geography, Ideology, and Transgression: A Relational Ontology* (Cresswell, 1996, 11 – 27)
  - *Another Pavement, Another Beach: Skateboarding and the Performative Critique of Architecture* (Borden, 2001, p. 178 – 196)
- 

Week 5

**Street Practices: London**

**Monday 13**

Lecture/Discussion

Global city streets – Contestation, Transgression.

Documentary: *Rash* (2007)

Readings for Wednesday 15

- *Finders Keepers: Performing the Street, the Gallery and the Spaces In-between* (Dickens, 2008, p. 1-27)

**Wednesday 15**

Lecture/Discussion

London, street subcultures (street art and skateboarding), Banksy.

Due Monday 20

- *A Neighborhood* (Till, 2005, p. 155 – 160)

**Due Monday: Writing Piece 2 — Urban Aesthetics of Global Spaces: Observations and Reflections**

---

Week 6

**Segregation/Congregation: Bangalore/ Mexico City**

**Monday 20**

*Due: Writing Piece 2*

Lecture/Discussion

Segregation/congregation.

Documentaries: *World in the Balance*.

Readings for Wednesday 22

- *HAND OUT MILLER PIECE*

*Music, Space, Identity: Geographies of Youth Culture in Bangalore* (Saldanha, 2002, 37-48)

**Wednesday 22**

Lecture/Discussion

Discussion, non-Western global cities.

Readings for Monday 27

- *Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation* (Caldeira, 1999, p. 83 – 105)
- *Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica* (Low, 2005, p. 111 – 135)
- *The Prevalence of Slums* (Davis, 2006, p. 20 – 49)

---

Week 7

**Slums**

**Monday 27**

Lecture/Discussion

Davis, Stresses to, and realities of, the urban system of global cities: population, environment, natural resources, access/distribution.

Readings for Wednesday 29

- *Rethinking Accessibility: How have changing economic conditions and new lifestyle choices affected our ability to plan the future?* (Miller, 2009, p. 1 – 28)

**Wednesday 29**

Lecture/Discussion

The planning fix, reflections on Minneapolis/St.Paul.  
Course evaluations.

---

Week 8

**Back Home: Minneapolis/Saint Paul**

**Monday 3**

Lecture/Discussion

Student writing day.

Wednesday 5

**Due Wednesday, 5:30 central time: Writing Piece 3 — Is Minneapolis a global city?**

**Wednesday 5**

*Due: Writing Piece 3*

Lecture/Discussion

Student writing day.

**Writing Piece 3 due no later than 5:30 Central Time.**