Comparative Urban Geography of Very Big Cities  
GEOG 383.32/785.96  
Summer 2010  Mon/Weds  
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A. Objective

This class will investigate the hypothesis that very big cities, like NYC, are typically quite unlike cities in their own nation and more like one another. As we evolve into a world with increasingly rapid international communication, urban innovation and change may depend on adaptations and relationships that are based on size, density and complexity rather than proximity and cultural similarity.

This class will review the literature on models of cities for their adequacy/inadequacy in explaining spatial patterns, growth and change in the very large cities of the world. Students will select a metropolitan area from among the world’s 25 largest and open lines of communication with experts and their peers in these cities as well as search for existing literature. We will compare these cities to NYC around such topics as response to topography, transportation, evolution of the CBD, in-migration, intra-urban migration, ethnicity and various planning initiatives.

B. Calendar/Attendance

The class meets Mondays and Wednesdays from June 2 through July 12, 2010 (except for the holiday on July 5.) Additionally there will be a three hour class field trip in New York City on Saturday June 25 or Sunday June 26. This will be scheduled at a time most convenient for the greatest number of students.

This class will be taught as a “round-table seminar” requiring active participation from every student at every class. Casual attendance is not tolerated.

C. Required Contacts Abroad

After selecting a “Very Big City”, students will establish email contact(s) in that city through suggestions from the instructor or other means. The contact(s) will be used to funnel particular information about that city for comparative topical discussions throughout the semester. Published and Internet reference material may also be used, but not exclusively. Another objective of the class is opening lines of communication with peers!

D. Tentative Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W. June 2</td>
<td>Models of Cities retrospective; Class organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. June 7</td>
<td>Models and Globalization; Class organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. June 9</td>
<td>Topography</td>
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Transportation (Boats and Rail)

Demography (Migration; Ethnicity); Class organization

Demography (Class, Density, Health and Age Issues)

or Sun. June 27 3 hour field trip in NYC stressing VERY BIG features

Economic Issues (Movement of CBD and Industry); Political Issues

Planning Issues (Zoning, Redevelopment, Preservation)

Student Presentations

Student Presentations

E. Grades

Grading for this class is based on two forms of class participation.

1. 50% on oral participation and contributory notes relating to issues covered in classes from June 9 through June 30. The instructor will provide guidelines or questions to answer for each class.

2. 50% on oral/written/graphic topical presentations on July 7 and July 12. Each student will be assigned to work on two presentations in conjunction with another student. (There will be choices. Same pairings are not likely.) The presentations will focus on a comparative look at each issue based on contributions from the separate cities.

F. Readings

There is no text. Background readings for the discussion at the first two sessions are assigned as follows: (a few more reference readings may be added later in the class)

Readings will be available on line or scanned into a Black Board format for the class.

G. Retrospective readings discussion (Session 1)

In order of priority:

Maurice Yeates and Barry Garner, *The North American City* Ch 9 (part) pp 241-261

Stanley Brunn et al. *Cities of the World*, 1993. Parts of chapters Ch 1 pp 1-12; Ch 6 pp 224-240; Ch 9 350-365; Ch 11 pp 430-443 (N.B. This book is also on reserve at the Hunter Library)

Arnold Toynbee, *Cities on the Move*, 1970. Ch. 3 pp 67-78

Ray Northam, 1975, *Urban Geography*, Ch. 3 pp 23-50

T. G. McGee, 1967, *The Southeast Asian City*, Ch. 4 52-75


**H. Globalization readings discussion (Session 2)**

_In order of priority_


Jean Gottman 1961 *Megalopolis* Ch. 15 pp. 770-782


David Harvey 1973 *Social Justice and the City* Ch. 7 (part) pp. 302-314

Arnold Toynbee 1970 *Cities on the Move* Ch. 10 pp 195-247

Lewis Mumford 1963 *The Automobile and the City* Ch 22 pp 244-256