

WWS 540

Urbanization and Development: Syllabus

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Fridays, 9:00–12:00

This course gives an introduction to the role that urbanization plays in national economic development. We will begin with an analysis of the *demographic forces*—fertility, mortality, migration—that are propelling urbanization in poor countries, and which are, in their turn, shaped by urbanization. We will then investigate the phenomenon of *decentralization*, by which national governments across the developing world are increasingly placing responsibilities for service delivery and revenue-raising in the hands of local and regional governments, with important responsibilities being thrust upon generally ill-prepared municipal governments. Having developed the demographic and political economy contexts, we then turn attention the *linkages between urban and rural development* and the opportunities that are missed by policies that treat these sectors as being somehow separate and distinct, and discuss the *economies of scale and proximity* that (at least in theory) give rise to higher urban productivity and long-term technological progress that benefits the nation as a whole.

With the larger contexts thus sketched, we proceed to give close attention to the problem of *urban poverty*, which is often given short shrift in national poverty alleviation strategies, and explore what is known about *slum-dwellers*, that is, about the consequences of spatially concentrated poverty. Our study of *urban health and health systems* will show how even for city-dwellers, whose environments would seem to be well-stocked with modern health services, the economic and social costs of access effectively exclude many of the poor. We investigate the *social and community resources of the urban poor* with particular attention to what has been achieved by national and international associations of slum-dwellers. The course closes with a detailed study of the *urban health risks posed by climate change*, with emphasis on the adaptation needs facing coastal cities and the implications for urban development strategies and governance.

The main text is the recent report of the National Research Council's Panel on Urban Population Dynamics, *Cities Transformed: Demographic Change and Its Implications in the Developing World*, Mark R. Montgomery, Richard Stren, Barney Cohen, and Holly E. Reed, editors, National Academies Press, Washington DC, 2003. A copy of this book is on reserve and selected chapters will be posted on Blackboard. It will be supplemented with a number of readings that will be posted on Blackboard or placed on reserve.

The principal course requirement is to write a *paper of about 20 pages*, due before the end-of-semester reading period, a preliminary version of which will be presented to the class in the latter third of the semester. We will discuss the various forms that the paper and presentation can take. Many approaches are possible, spanning the continuum from econometric studies of small-area urban poverty data, to critical assessments of the performance of health subsidies ostensibly targeted to the urban poor, to essays on the political economy of local urban governance. During each class period, students will also have the opportunity, singly or in small groups, to synthesize and critically evaluate selected course readings. A *midterm examination* will also be given.