

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HA4032 What is a City?

Pre-requisites : HA1002, HA2002

No. of AUs. : 4

Contact Hours : 52

Course Aims

It is no longer news that more than half of the world's population are living in urban areas and by 2050, 66 percent of the world will be according to United Nations' projection. Cities are growing in size and in presence! Literature about cities and urbanism proliferates as new fads of urbanism ebb and flow. With the deluge of information about the woes and potentialities of cities for human futures, this course aims to take a reflective stance and ask as Lewis Mumford once did, "What is a City?" with the goal to gain clarity about the concept, purpose and the nuts and bolts of a city as a human environment.

This course draws upon selected readings in classic and modern philosophy about what a good city is. Even though these philosophical readings discussed cities in the classical and early modern times, they touched upon many dimensions and challenging issues of contemporary cities including size, class, inequality, diversity, justice and their relationship with the urban built environment. These topics are intended to form the content of the course for the subsequent weeks. Whenever available and appropriate, policy reports from international organizations like the United Nations will be included in the topical discussion throughout the semester to make explicit the nexus between theory and practice that lies at the crux of most urban research. The course content is deliberately multi-disciplinary, reflecting the rich and vast interest in the planning and development of cities.

This course is for students who are keen to further engage in a critical inquiry of cities and discussing about what a good city is, beyond the basic content offered in HU 1002: Introduction to Urban Planning and HU 2002: Urban Life and Urban Planning. The course is crafted with the aim to allow students to co-produce and co-own the course content that they find valuable in informing their interests about the subject matter, and their graduation research projects.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Use discerning lenses to critically process and synthesize the large amounts of information about cities and urbanism

2. Discuss different ways that cities are conceptualized in scholarship
3. Analyze the applicability of theories and histories drawn from European and American cities to the context of urban development in Singapore
4. Conduct and present research on the urban context independently and as part of a team
5. Communicate and collaborate with others who have different interests, perspectives and disciplinary focuses

Course Content

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: What is a City? What is a good city?

Week 3: The City in Philosophy 500BC- 1899 AD

Week 4: The City in Philosophy 1900 AD - Present

Week 5: The Good City and its form

Week 6: Urban Utopias

Week 7: Global City

Week 8: Governance

Week 9: Diversity

Week 10: Equity and Inequality

Week 11: Justice

Week 12: Immigration

Week 13: Summary

Course Assessment

Class Participation : 15%

Individual Topical Research Project : 40%
(about a socio-spatial issue in Singapore)

Individual Presentation : 15%
(on one topic that is outside your chosen research project topic)

Team Project (making planning and policy recommendations to improve the social and physical development of a neighborhood) : 30%

Total -----
100%