Social Change in the Global City

COURSE DESIGNATOR ISTN 3005

NUMBER OF CREDITS 3 credits

Language of Instruction English

Contact Hours 45 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Our ultimate goal in this course is to understand how the social, economic and political geography of mega-cities in the developing world are shaped as a result of the interplay of global political-economic dynamics with local forces. As a ‘typical’ third-world megacity in many respects, Istanbul will serve as our case in this endeavor. Once we have a firm understanding of dynamics of urban growth through intensively studying the case of Istanbul, we can then start discussing the differences observed among cases and explain what accounts for these differences. For example, we can ask why informal settlements in Istanbul evolved quite differently than Mexico City or Buenos Aires, even though their general economic trends have been similar. Or we can start making sense of why many poor neighborhoods in Istanbul are becoming the target of state-sponsored clearance and renewal programs while in major Brazilian cities, such as Rio de Janeiro, the government implements radically different policies of upgrading and in-situ transformation.

With more than 14 million inhabitants and an economy larger than many medium sized countries, Istanbul is both a fascinating and a very challenging megapole for its inhabitants as well as for social scientists who try to understand its social and economic geography.

As an old imperial city that served as the seat of 3 major empires for more than 1500 years, ‘the city’ (Poli), as it is called in Greek, has always played a crucial role in history due to its strategic geopolitical location between the eastern and western worlds as well as its very rich hinterland. Although its days of glory has receded with the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul is now rapidly regaining its importance in the 21st century as it once again becomes a crucial center of global economic and political forces. The speed of demographic, economic, cultural and environmental changes that it is going through can only be described as spectacular as impressive rates of capital from around the world flow to its bustling real-estate, finance and service sectors as well as to its very dynamic cultural industries.

The ‘darker’ side of this spectacular rate of change is enormous infrastructural, environmental, economic and social challenges that the city unfortunately is not well-equipped to overcome. As a megacity whose population increased more than ten-fold in the last 6 decades, Istanbul has grown way beyond its capacity to house, feed and employ its millions of inhabitants. Majority of Istanbulites live in substandard dwellings in underserviced neighborhoods that present all kinds of risks, particularly in the face of the major earthquake that the city awaits. The rapid population growth has expanded the built environment well into the forests and water reserves to the north of the city, causing serious environmental problems. Traffic congestion levels is one of the worst in the world, making it almost impossible to move within the city. Youth unemployment is rapidly rising, presenting serious social problems. Economic inequality is also on the rise, turning Istanbul, which has historically had relatively low levels of spatial segregation, into a high-segregation city, which brings with it all kinds of social and economic ills associated with socioeconomic segregation. Finally, as the city becomes a major hub of real-estate investment, millions of poor inhabitants face the risk of involuntary displacement as their neighborhoods become the target of state-sponsored urban renewal and regeneration projects that clear up space for profitable investments.

Whether or not the impressive economic growth in the city will lead to the development of policies to overcome these challenges so that a more sustainable, equitable and livable urban environment is created for all Istanbulites is a burning question that can only be answered through a careful empirical analysis of how the city is governed, how policies are made and implemented and how different classes and groups mobilize to influence policy-making in an environment of intense economic flows and political change. Answering this question also requires a close focus on the complex interactions of global forces with local/national dynamics. These are exactly our tasks in this course. By employing a political economy perspective, we will examine the socio-economic and spatial transformations that Istanbul has been going through in 4 main periods: Late 19th century, Early Republican Era, Period of Rapid
Industrialization until 1980, and the Post-1980 Neoliberal period. We will discuss how the political-economy of Istanbul has been shaped in each of these periods as a result of the interaction of global and local/national forces as well the power struggles between different actors and classes within the city. Among these 4 historical eras, the last one (the neoliberal period) will receive the most attention. This historical survey will make clear the challenges and opportunities that local urban actors faced in each period and how their responses have defined the geography of the city. It will also help us to answer more conclusively what the future will bring for Istanbul and its millions of inhabitants at this critical juncture in the city's history.

INSTRUCTOR

Tuna Kuyucu

COURSE GOALS

In addition to the obvious task of surveying Istanbul's complex urbanization history from a sociological perspective, this course has 3 more objectives:

First, students who successfully complete this course will have a firm understanding of urbanization dynamics and processes in developing countries all around the world. As stated above, Istanbul is typical of other megapoles of developing countries in many respects. A close focus on the urbanization process of Istanbul since late 19th century will provide the students with a solid theoretical understanding of how such processes unfold in other contexts. This will also allow those who are interested in the topic to conduct comparative research in the future.

Second, the course aims to raise students' intercultural understanding and communication as well as increase their appreciation for how people develop solutions to very complex problems in their lives in such a difficult urban context. The field trips that are an integral part of the course are primarily oriented towards this task. Observing firsthand how different classes and groups 'make it' in this difficult environment will no doubt enhance students' awareness of the resourcefulness and creativity of less advantaged groups in contexts such as Istanbul's low-income neighborhoods. As a result of these field visits as well as our in-class discussions, they will be much better equipped to criticize and move beyond simplistic accounts of less advantaged groups in such urban contexts that see them either as poor victims with no control over their lives or as people who deserve their place due to bad choices they have made in their lives. Neither of these views offers much in making sense of the complex reality of people's lives in the city. Finally, the course also aims to raise a similar awareness and appreciation of the difficulties faced and the creative solutions developed by different groups and individuals in the cities that the students live in (or call home). The students will hopefully develop a more sociologically informed and comprehensive view of urban growth, urban inequality and segregation in their own cities.

METHODOLOGY

This class will have two major components: in-class seminar style meetings and field trips. Our in-class meetings will mostly be based on active discussions that you are required to participate. I will be providing some lecturing in the beginning of these sessions but will mostly serve as a discussion facilitator. I firmly believe that learning takes place best in a dialogic environment where students and the instructor actively partakes in lively discussions. Therefore it is of utmost importance that you come to class prepared to ask questions and discuss the material.

In addition to these in-class seminars we will have numerous field trips to various sites in the city. Approximately half the instructional time will be spent exploring these sites. The field visits are extremely important for you to have a firm grasp of the topics, themes and theories we discuss each week. During these visits we will continue to have active discussions and conversations. You are encouraged to ask me as many questions as you want about the things you see around you as well as using me as a translator to ask questions to the local inhabitants of an area.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is a reading-intensive course with around 80-100 pages of reading for each week. For you to get the most out of this course it is very important that you read the material before coming to in-class meetings and to the field trips and partake in discussions we will have in our meetings. Participation constitutes 20% of your overall grade, which means to receive a good grade you really need to come to class prepared with questions and arguments!

Part of your participation grade will be based on leading class discussion twice throughout the semester with a colleague of yours. The two of you will decide which weeks to choose. You will be responsible to prepare discussion questions for the class, present the arguments of the readings to the class and bring-in any extra material that you find about the topics and themes we cover in that week. You can contact me prior to your week to get assistance, especially about extra material (such as films, images etc.)

Another major component of your grade will be based on a journal that you keep to record notes for the 8 field trips that we will make. I expect you to use this journal as an opportunity to reflect on your observations and experiences in the field sites with (implicit or explicit) references to our class readings and discussions. There is no set format or style that I require in these journals. You are free to develop your own style and use your creativity. I will collect the journals at the end of the semester and grade them according to their level of engagement with the themes and topics under discussion, comprehensiveness, attention to detail and seriousness.

Finally, there will be a take-home final exam that will require you to answer 2 questions (out of 4) in a well-integrated essay. Each answer will be no more than 6 pages. (12 font, double spaced, Times New Roman). In your answers, you need to refer to the readings from our course syllabus that are relevant to your answer. Answers without references will NOT be accepted. In other words, your answers cannot be based solely on your personal opinions and/or observations about the questions I ask. Use of extra material is encouraged as long as they are academically credible sources. I want the answers turned in to me in hard copy (NO EMAILED ANSWERS). No late submissions will be accepted.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, confusions or uncertainties about what plagiarism is and what it entails, please see me before you start writing your papers.

All assignments must be submitted on the due date. If the final paper is submitted late, 10 points will be deducted per day UNLESS you have a legitimate excuse like a doctor's note. Please respect all deadlines.

Grade appeals will be considered only if you present a written argument about why you think your grade must be higher.

Please be considerate and respectful during class time. Do not come late to class or to field visits, do not sleep in class, do not dominate class discussions etc.

NO CELL PHONES during class time. This includes text-messaging as well.

GRADING

CRITERIA FOR GRADING AND GRADING STANDARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95+</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of how grades are weighted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particpation</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Introduction and Setting the Scene


WEEK 2

Istanbul in the Late 19th Century: Capitol of a Peripheral Empire


Field Visit: Karakoy Bankalar Caddesi, Karakoy Harbor, Tophane, Grand Rue de Pera

WEEK 3

Demise of Istanbul During the Early Republican Period


Field Visit: Vefa and Suleymaniye Neighborhoods

WEEK 4

Rapid Industrialization and Unplanned Growth: 1950-1980


Field Trip: Gultepe, Celiktepe and Karanfilkoy Neighborhoods

WEEK 5

(Theoretical Intervention) Economic Restructuring, Neoliberalization and Urban Change


No Field Visit

WEEK 6

Post-1980 Economic Liberalization and Istanbul’s Rise as a Mega-City


### Week 7

**Study Tour to Rome**

### Week 8

**The Informal City: Changing Dynamics of Informal Settlements in Istanbul**


**Field Visit: Kucukcekmece Kanarya Neighborhood**

### Week 9

**Urban Entrepreneurialism and Restructuring Urban Space: Istanbul Becoming a Segregated Global City?**


**Field Visit: Cihangir Neighborhood and Santral Istanbul Campus**

### Week 10

**Politics of Urban Renewal and Regeneration under JDP Rule: State Sponsored Rent-Seeking?**


Field Trip: Fener-Balat UTP Area, Tarlabasi UTP Area

**WEEK 11**

**Battle over Cultural Symbols and Representations in Globalizing Istanbul**


Field Trip: Miniaturk Museum and Panorama 1453 Conquest Museum

**WEEK 12**

**Open Discussion Week**

Film: Crossing the Bridge (director: Fatih Akin)

No readings, no field visits

**WEEK 13**

Finals

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks. The final grade will take into consideration preparation required for class (i.e. readings) and participation in class discussions. If you miss any meetings without an excused absence from the on-site director, your final grade will be dropped accordingly. In the case of absences, it is the student’s responsibility to find out what information was given in class including any announcements made.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The
University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**
Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.
Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

**STUDENT CONDUCT**
The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct and student needs. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.