Cities are efficient social networks, and a very effective tool of power. They allow for increased communication and creation, and for better surveillance and control. They are conducive to deliberation and collective action, and to class warfare and repression. By concentrating large numbers of people in limited areas, cities allow for a richer human experience, and for the possibility of political and economic violence. This class explores the contrasted ways humans inhabit cities, and examines how cities become sites and stakes of political protest. By looking into the history, sociology, and economics of urban life, this class will teach you how to become urban anthropologists. Each week is organized around a theme, from “slums” to “urban ecology” and to “infrastructure.” Sessions alternate between theoretical conversations and fieldwork-oriented activities and discussions. The main geographical focuses of the course will be Middle Eastern cities, from Cairo to Beirut and to Riyadh, and the Boston metropolitan area. We will also read and think about such cities as Accra, Brasília, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, Mumbai, New York, and Paris.

1. Course Schedule

**Week 1: What is a city? (Sept. 1-3)**
Lewis Mumford, “What is a City?”
Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”
Jane Jacobs, “The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety and Contact”

**Week 2: Slums (Sept. 8-10)**
Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, chapters 1-2
Asef Bayat, “Does Islamic Militancy Have an Urban Ecology?”
Ananya Roy, “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism”
William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society*, Introduction and Appendix 1

**Week 3: Ghettos (Sept. 17)**
Loïc Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts*, chapter 2
Sudhir Venkatesh, “Doin’ the Hustle”
Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect*, Introduction and chapter 1

**Week 4: Gentrification (Sept. 22-24)**
Sylvie Tissot, *Good Neighbors: Gentrifying Diversity in Boston’s South End*, Introduction, chapters 1 and 5
Laura Nader, “Up the Anthropologist”
Karen Ho, *Liquidated*, Introduction

**Week 5: Suburbanization (Sept. 29-October 1)**
Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, Introduction and chapter 1
Frank Lloyd Wright, “Broadacre City”
Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, chapter 4

**Week 6: Class Warfare (Oct. 6-8)**
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*
Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the nineteenth Century”

**Week 7: Urban Spaces (Oct. 13-15)**
Ernest Burgess, “The Growth of the City”
Week 8: Urban Unrest (Oct. 20-22)
Pascal Menoret, Joyriding in Riyadh, chapters 1, 2 and 6

Week 9: Infrastructure (Oct. 27-29)
Stephen Ramos, Dubai Amplified, chapter 2-3
Brenda Chalfin, “Airport Anthropology and Customs Regime in Neoliberal Ghana”
Dictaphone Group, “This Sea is Mine”
Zeynep Celik, “Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism”

Week 10: Gender and public space (Nov. 3-5)
Farha Ghannam, Remaking the Modern, Introduction and chapter 4
Farha Ghannam, Live and Die like a Man, Introduction
Pascal Menoret, Joyriding in Riyadh, chapter 5

Week 11: High-Modernism (Nov. 10-12)
Le Corbusier, The City of To-Morrow and its Planning, chapters 11, 14 and 15
James Holston, The Modernist City, chapter 4
James Scott, Seeing like a State, chapters 3 and 4

Week 12: Urban Ecology (Nov. 17-19)
Anne Spirn, The Granite Garden, Prologue and chapters 1
Robert Sullivan, Rats, chapters 1-7
Eric Klinenberg, Heat Wave, Prologue and chapter 2

Week 13: Urban Protest (Nov. 24)
David Harvey, “The Right to the City”
Salwa Ismail, “Civilities, Subjectivities, and Collective Action”
David Graber, The Democracy Project, chapters 1 and 2

Week 14: Leaving the City (Dec. 1-3)
Abdelrahman Ibn Khaldun, Al-Mugaddima, chapter 2
James C. Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed, chapter 1

Week 15: Presentations (Dec. 8)

2. Learning Outcomes
There is no prerequisite for this course. You will learn to develop observation, reading, and critical thinking skills; how to write clearly, build an original argument, articulate it with other arguments, and present it in a compelling manner. You will acquire a broad understanding of the social, economic, and political issues related to the urban phenomenon. You will be introduced to urban anthropology and its methods: field notes, interviews and observation. At the end of the class, you will be able to deploy efficient research strategies to study urban poverty, urban power, spatial segregation, gendered urban spaces, urban ecologies, and the relationships between urban spaces across continents.

3. Teaching and Learning Methodologies
This course is a seminar and you are expected to read all the week’s texts in advance, to think about them carefully, and to participate actively in our discussions. The reading of fundamental texts of urban studies and urban anthropology will be accompanied by fieldwork. Fieldwork will take place during class hours and on your own time. It requires a personal engagement from you: you will have to focus on a particular area within the Boston metropolitan area (see http://www.mapc.org/about-mapc), write your observations on a regular basis, collect or create visuals, and plan and process an in-depth interview with a resident of
Boston. The learning outcomes will be assessed through class participation, six field notes, three written assignments, and an in-class mid-term exam.

**Submit work on time.** You must complete all assigned coursework to pass the course. It is your responsibility to electronically submit all assignments in a timely manner. Work not turned in, or turned in after the due date without a documented explanation will receive an F.

**There will be no tolerance for plagiarism.** Academy integrity is the acknowledgment of what we owe to other writers and researchers. Plagiarism is the non-acknowledgment of our sources and ranges from improperly quoting to paraphrasing to copying an author without admitting it. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and all cases will be submitted to the university administration. For more information on academic integrity at Brandeis University, see: https://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/instruction/academic-integrity/index.html

**Address your concerns and issues during office hours.** If you experience difficulties with the readings and the assignments, see me as soon as possible. Office hours are opportunities to discuss the course material, get my advice and help on how to best work on assignments, and inform me of issues you may have with the course.

4. **Assignments**
   
a) **Participation (10% of the final grade)**
   
   Regular attendance and in class participation are required.

b) **6 Field Notes (not more than 500 words each, 20% of the final grade)**
   
   During the semester you will turn in six field notes that show the progress of your field research and your engagement with the readings. Field notes must (1) present an event, an interaction or a place that is particularly important to your research and (2) analyze it by using the theoretical tools we explored in class or through the readings. **Field notes are due on Mondays before noon and you must submit your two first notes by October 5.**

c) **Three Written Assignments (50% of the final grade)**
   
   During the semester you will write three essays on the following topics:
   
   - **First assignment (around 1,500 words, 15%):** Write a short history of a city or of a neighborhood (without using Wikipedia). You may choose one of the cities/neighborhoods we study in class. This assignment will help you connect the anthropological lens with the necessary recourse to archival and/or bibliographical work. While preparing this assignment, focus on those issues that matter most to you. Feel free to come discuss your draft during office hours. **Paper due on September 28 before noon.**
   
   - **Second assignment (around 2,000 words, 15%):** Interview a resident of the Boston metropolitan area, preferably somebody who doesn’t belong to your social class and doesn’t live in your area. Transcribe and edit the interview (around 1,500 words) and write a short introduction (no more than 500 words). You will present your interview in class before you finalize it. Presentations are 5 min. long. **Presentation on October 22 and 29. Paper due on November 9 before noon.**
   
   - **Third assignment (around 3,000 words, 20%):** Write a research paper that uses your field notes and your interview to explore a particular urban issue or set of issues. You will present your final paper in class before you finalize it. Presentations are 5 min. long. **Presentation on December 8. Paper due on December 10 before noon.**

d) **Mid-term Exam (20% of the final grade)**
   
   The mid-term exam will consist of three definition exercises and a short essay. **It will take place on November 5.**