

URPL-GP 4670
Urban Innovations in Latin America

Spring 2015

Wed 4:55 PM – 6:35 PM at Wave, Room 435

01/26/2015 - 03/14/2015

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Office Hours: Thursdays 10:00-11:30am, Wagner/Puck, room 3043

A. Course Description:

It is easy to assume that innovations in Urban Planning can only happen in a developed country and that developing countries could not possibly achieve it due to lack of resources or lack of capacity to implement policies. But over the last two decades, some Latin American cities have proved this assumption wrong; its leaders have implemented a series of innovative policies and transformed their cities and the quality of life of its citizens.

Since the 1980s, several Latin American countries rolled out policies on the national level that focused on democratization, transparency, security, and decentralization. These policies created a framework for local governments to act independently. This independence, in conjunction with national efforts to decrease violence, gave many leaders the opportunity to innovate in local government. Their initiatives demonstrated that local government had the capacity to transform urban spaces.

City government leaders took a new approach to urban challenges. With teams headed by charismatic mayors that did not fit the typical of politicians, city government tackled the corruption and clientelism so common in their cities. Mayors and their staff invested in developing a deep local knowledge of the dynamics and spatial forms of their city. They identified inequality as the main challenge their city faced, and posited that people would change if their physical space changed. They believed that there was a need for to create new ways for citizens to interact and a need to build a different urban culture. The strategies they adopted focused on improving mobility for all, creating educational facilities, recuperating and improving public spaces, and designing better homes for the poor.

In this class, we will study Latin American cities that exemplified these innovative policies. We will look at: the Brazilian city of Curitiba, which developed an ingenious bus system (bus rapid transit or BRT) expanded its system of natural preserves, and implemented interesting policies of recycling; Bogotá, Colombia, which created a civic culture, recuperated public spaces, and reduced the use of the auto by implementing a BRT and a large net of bicycle paths; Medellín, Colombia, where the leadership focused on the education of the poor, and built and revitalized a series of high quality libraries, schools, and training centers in the poorest neighborhoods; Santiago, Chile with an interesting case of social housing build through a process of public participation of its final users; and finally, Mexico City, which built on federal budgeting reforms to increase social housing for low-income residents.

In all of these cases we will discuss the leaders' profile, the policies implemented, the innovative side of each policy and the urban, social, and economic context in which these transformations occurred.

B. Objectives:

1. Learn how to analyze a case looking at each case from different points of view
2. Learn how to implement a strategy in a different country by abstracting the important elements of the strategy and tropicalize it for the new country
3. Identify the regional policies that created a framework for the local government to transform itself
4. Identify key physical elements of a contemporary city and the potential for innovation.

C. Course Schedule:

Week 1: INTRODUCTION—The Sustainable City

Baurdett, Ricky and Kaasa, Adam. "Governing Change: the Metropolitan Revolution in Latin America. Architectural Design Magazine, Volume 81, Issue 3, April 18, 2011, pages 43–57.

Farr, Douglas. "*Sustainable Urbanism, Urban Design with Nature*". John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 2008, pp. 16-61

Chakrabarti, Vishaan. *A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America*. Metropolis Books, 2013. Pages 18 to 49.

Week 2 – CURITIBA, BRAZIL: Improving access and cradle of innovation

Kroll, Lucien. "Creative Curitiba" *The Architectural Review*, May 1999; 205, 1227 pg 92-95

Gustafsson, Hanna-Ruth and Kelly, Elisabeth. "Urban Innovations in Curitiba: a Case Study" Report with support from the Streicker Fund for Student Research, Yale Law School, June 2012.

Irazábal, Clara. "The Politics of Urban and Regional Development in Curitiba" Chapter 4 in *City Making and Urban Governance in the Americas: Curitiba and Portland*. Great Britain, Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2005, Pg. 85-134. ISBN 0-7546-4253-4.

Suggested Readings and Documentaries:

"Curitiba, Brazil: BRT Case Study", TCRP Report 90 Volume 1, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. Washington DC. 2003

TED – Jaime Lerner

http://www.ted.com/speakers/jaime_lerner.html

Week 3 – BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA – Civic Culture and Public Space

Lorenzo Castro, Alejandro Echeverri, “Bogotá and Medellín Architecture and Politics”, Architectural Design Magazine, Volume 81, Issue 3, April 18, 2011, pages 96–99.

Berney, Rachel. Learning from Bogotá: How Municipal Experts Transformed Public Space, journal of Urban Design, 15:4, 539-558.

Suggested Readings and Documentaries

Katherine Beckett and Angelina Godoy, “A Tale of Two Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Quality of Life Initiatives in New York and Bogotá”, Urban Studies, February 2010. pg 277-301

Mockus, Antanas. “Urbanismo y espacio público: oportunidades para fomentar la cultura ciudadana” in Políticas Integrales y Convivencia en las Ciudades de América Latina: Servicios Urbanos e Inclusión. Ilustre Municipio del Distrito Metropolitano de Quito. Quito Ecuador, Septiembre de 2009. Pages 97-106. ISBN 978-9978-370-08-7

Antanas Mockus Documentary

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1k8Py6D_A&list=PL093D92F98B4EE096

Bogota: Building a Sustainable City, E² Series, PBS

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1144748717/>

Due: Assignment 1

Week 4 – MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA: From Fear to Hope

Lorenzo Castro, Alejandro Echeverri, “Bogotá and Medellín Architecture and Politics”, Architectural Design Magazine, Volume 81, Issue 3, April 18, 2011, pages 99–103.

Devlin, Matthew and Chaskel, Sebastian. “From Fear to Hope in Colombia: Sergio Fajardo and Medellín, 2004-2007”. Innovations For Successful Societies, Case Study, December 2010.

“Introduction” and “Peace and Reconciliation Program: Back to Legality”, In Medellín Laboratory: An exhibit of ten ongoing practices, Pages 18-30 and 31-52. Alcaldía de Medellín, Medellín Colombia, November 2011. ISBN 978- 958-8493-92-3

Due: Assignment 2

Week 5 – SANTIAGO, CHILE : Innovating with housing for the poor

Greene, Margarita and Rojas, Eduardo. "Housing for the Poor in the City Center: A Review of the Chilean Experience and Challenge" in Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America. Edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett and Lea K. Allen. Berghahn Books, 2010.

Aravena, Alejandro. "Elemental: A Do Tank" in Architectural Design Magazine, Volume 81, Issue 3, April 18, 2011, pages 32–37.

Fox, Catherine. "Tripartite Partnerships: Recognizing the Third Sector" Inter-American Development Bank, 2005. Pages 19 to 31 and 46 to 53

Due: Assignment 3

Week 6 – MÉXICO: Gated Communities for Low Income Population

García Peralta, Beatriz and Hoifer Andreas. "Housing for the Working Class on the Periphery of Mexico City: A New Version of Gated Communities". Social Justice, 2006, 33, 3. Pg. 129-141.

Monkkonen, Paavo. "The Housing Transition in México: Expanding Access to Housing Finance". Urban Affairs Review, March 8, 2011. Pages 672-695.

Week 7: CONCLUSION – Thinking About the Sustainable City

Beatley, Timothy. "Planning for Sustainability in European Cities: A Review of Practices in Leading Cities" (2003) in The Sustainable Urban Development Reader. Edited by Wheeler, Stephen M. and Beatley, Timothy. New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004. Pg 249-258.

Due: Assignment 4

D. Assignments:

Activities to Grade	Percentage
Class Participation	20%
Assignment Curitiba	20%
Assignment Bogotá	20%
Assignment Medellin	20%
Assignment Chile+Mexico	20%

You will have four assignments. The first two assignments are to be completed in groups of 4 students. Teams will be assigned at the beginning of class (2nd week). The instructor will be available to work with teams during office hours or by appointment. The last two assignments are individual.

1. CURITIBA.- *Group assignment:* A series of maps of the county of San Pedro, Garza García will be given to you to analyze and propose a concept for a transportation system based on BRT's and regular buses. The maps illustrate the land use and density of the county. Based your concept on the logic of the Curitiba system, locate the express routes (BRT) where there is more density or intensity of use and the regular buses where there is less density and intensity of use. Think about the width of the streets and avenues in order to place a dedicated lane, the pedestrian routes to get to the stations, the distance between each station as well as other issues discussed in class. This assignment will be done in teams of 4. The idea is to learn the basics of how to create a coherent transportation system that includes a BRT system and regular buses. You will deliver a route map; a drawing of the sections of each route including bus lanes, car lanes and sidewalks; and a 4-page report explaining the strategy you took to design your routes. Try to explain how each route relate to land use and density in the county currently and in the future, how they link some areas with others, how they impact existing street sections. How would this system improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of San Pedro? Please focus on lower income residents. In your essay, please explain how you plan to incentivize the use of the BRT routes that you lay out. Please detail how your plan will promote a shift from automobile usage to public transportation. Please be specific and provide evidence for your claims.
2. BOGOTA.- *Group assignment:* Based on the campaigns of Mayor Mockus in Bogotá Colombia, you will have to develop a campaign for a city choosing one of the following three goals: to close the bars at 1:00am, to convince people not to pay or accept bribes in order to decrease corruption, to convince high income population to use public transportation (imagine a city where having a car and not using public transportation is a status issue). This assignment will be done in teams of 4. You will deliver a written report in 3 to 5 pages plus images and a power point presentation (10 minutes) explaining the goal of the campaign, the tools needed to market the campaign and they way you expect the community to react and why. Think about every obstacle you could confront and how to overcome it. Your campaign should be original and unique; it has to be a new idea not used before in other city.
3. MEDELLIN.- *Individual assignment:* The Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey or TEC, is one of the best universities of México. It is situated in Monterrey México surrounded by residential areas with some commercial streets. The university has lost 40% of its students due to violence from the drug business. The residential areas have been affected too. A series of maps of the TEC district will be given to you in a power point presentation explaining the actual situation of the area. Following what you learn from Medellín you will develop an

integral strategy for the district. You will have to identify a theme of the integral strategy, propose one program to advance this theme, and identify an approach to evaluate the program and its impacts. This assignment is individual. You will deliver a 3 to 6 pages written report explaining the theme, the program and the evaluation system. Try to explain the current situation as you see it, identify the main issue that you are going to resolve, later explain how the theme relates to the main issue and how it could change the future of the area. Chose a simple and easy program that could be implemented fast and simply, and a way to evaluate the impact of this program.

4. CHILE AND MEXICO. *Individual assignment:* Please use the concepts explored in the sessions on Chile and Mexico to analyze Mexico City's downtown revitalization initiatives. Please write a 4-page essay about how Mexico City could improve its approach to downtown revitalization so as to foster the economic and social vitality of downtown without promoting wholesale gentrification. Use the case of Mexico city to consider how a city can create a downtown that is vibrant, that provides employment, and that offers entertainment and educational opportunities, but that also preserve space and access for lower income residents. Please draw on policy examples from cities around the world – policies that you view as either successes or failures – and please explain what lessons they might offer Mexico City. Please detail how you would apply those lessons to Mexico City downtown revitalization through specific policy recommendations of your own.

E. Class Policies:

Late Assignment Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted (except in cases of emergency).

Class Attendance: Attending class is mandatory and critical to achieving the course's pedagogical goals. Missing class will result in a lower participation grade.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to abide by NYU-Wagner's academic code (<http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code>). Violations may result in a failing course grade and disciplinary action.