

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPHY 369 - Urban Natures



Contact Time	1x 3hr seminar/week (evening)
Format	In-person seminar/lecture discussions, online course notes, local fieldtrips
Class Assessment (potential)	book review; ArcGIS StoryMaps; fieldtrip reflection; and take-home final exam

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course we will study urban natures through the lens of urban political ecology. In other words, we will use tools of critical social science analysis to look at how interlocking systems of power produce urban environments. Our guiding approaches will include feminist, political economic, Indigenous, and decolonial systems of thought - we will ask how racialization, imperialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and other axes of power shape urban ecological worlds but also, crucially, learn from the work of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities across the world who are transforming harmful environments. The six modules in this course will consider urban ecological worlds from a variety of vantage points, including: cities as sconatures; water and sanitation systems; climate disaster; sustainable cities; food/waste systems; and health/infectious disease. Each module will include a fieldtrip and/or case study that you will work through individually and/or with peers. Weekly resources will include academic articles, multimedia engagements, and creative texts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain key theoretical approaches in urban political ecology, including decolonial, political economic, and feminist perspectives
2. Describe how interlocking systems of power shape access to resources and differentially expose people to harm
3. Analyze case studies from the Global North and South to explain how urban natures are socially produced
4. Communicate complex ideas in written and verbal form

COURSE TOPICS

food apartheid; environmental racism; social construction of nature; racial ecologies; biopolitics and biosecurity; sustainability fix; urban agriculture; water politics; sanitation and waste systems; urban metabolism; infrastructure; Afrofuturism

COURSE READINGS (a selected list subject to change)

Prince, Guma; Monstadt, Jochen, and Schramm, Sophie. (2019). Hybrid constellations of water access in the digital age: The case of Jisomee Mita in Soweto-Kayole, Nairobi. *Water Alternatives* 12(2): 636-654

Woods, Clyde. (2017). *Development drowned and reborn: The blues and bourbon restorations in post-Katrina New Orleans*. University of Georgia Press.

Arefin, Mohammed Rafi. (2019). Infrastructural discontent in the Sanitary City: Waste, revolt, and repression in Cairo. *Antipode* 51(4): 1057-1078.

Turning Livelihoods to Rubbish? Situated Urban Political Ecology Collective. [Documentary Film]

Daigle, M. (2018). Resurging through Kishiichiwan: The spatial politics of Indigenous water relations. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 7(1): 159-172.

Butler, Octavia. (2013). *Parable of the Sower*. Four Walls Eight Windows. [Novel]

Mounzer, Lina. (2020). Waste Away: Notes on Beirut's broken sewage system. *The Baffler*.

Desai, Renu; McFarlane, Colin; Graham, Stephen. (2015). The politics of open defecation: Informality, body, and infrastructure in Mumbai. *Antipode* 47(1): 98-120.

Pulido, Laura. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(1): 12-40.

Justice, Daniel Heath (2021). *Trash panda: Pet and pest. Raccoon* (pp. 159-177). Reaktion Books Ltd.

Narayanan, Yamini. (2017). Street dogs at the intersection of colonialism and informality: 'Subaltern animism' as a posthuman critique of Indian cities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35(3): 475-494.