Course Code / Title: HS4031/ Global Cities

Pre-requisites: HS1001 Person and society + HS2001 Classical Social Theory + HS2002 Doing Social Research + HS3001 Contemporary Social Theory + HS3002 Understanding Social Statistics

No. of AUs.: 4

Contact Hours: 52 hours

Course Aims

This course takes the concept of the Global City as its starting point to understand metropolitan life through this particular expression of contemporary urbanism. The limitations of such a conceptual framing will be explored, and applicability of the concept to cities outside the ‘West’ will be examined. In addition to exploring key issues in urban studies through the frame of the global city, the course also aims to introduce methodological perspectives for studying how global city processes manifest at the scale of the everyday. In doing so, this course takes the ‘urban’ as the primary unit of analysis, as opposed to the ‘national’ or ‘state’. The first part of the course introduces and discusses the main critiques of conceptualisations of Global Cities, after which examples of Global Cities from the ‘North’ and ‘South’ are discussed in greater detail. The course goes on to present methodological perspectives for doing research in such urban spaces. The second half of the course delves into important urban concerns around liveability, sustainability and the economy, amongst others, approached from the perspective of the Global City. As far as possible, discussions and the selection of readings will attempt a balance between cities of the global ‘North’ and ‘South’, with a particular focus on Asia.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course students should be able to
1. Define and identify characteristics of the Global City
2. Critique the concept of the Global City and discuss its shortcomings, both theoretically and in terms of the implications for urban residents.
3. Understand how to employ the method of ‘global ethnography’ with respect to the relationship between different scales of analysis; the global and everyday.
4. Discuss issues of urban inequality, international migration, local governance, city-branding attempts, liveability and sustainability with regards to the Global City.

Course Content

Week 1: What is the Global City? Key concepts: Key characteristics of Global City
Global City rankings

Week 2: Limitations of Global City concept Key concepts: Ordinary City Non hegemonic networks Relational City
Week 3  Tools for Studying the Global City  Key concepts: Global Ethnography Glocalisation
Local vs Global dichotomies
Week 4  First Tier/Traditional Global Cities Key concepts: Inequality
Economic & financial services
Week 5  Key concepts: Non-Western modernities Infrastructural development
Regional particularities
Week 6  Singapore as a Global City Key concepts: Asian urbanism Nation-building & nationalism
Week 7  Class Visit: Singapore Discovery Centre Key concepts: nation-building City branding
Week 8  Global City culture & branding Key concepts: Tourism and heritage Gentrification Intercity competition
Week 9  Global City Governance Key concepts: Resource allocation Migrant labour and immigration
Week 10  Sustainability and Resilience Key concepts: Smart city & technology enabled growth
Precautionary and the future of work
Week 11  Liveability and the Global City Key concepts: Critique of liveability indices
Inequality: elites and marginalized Social and spatial polarization
Week 12  Class Visit: Centre for Liveable Cities Key concepts: Liveability policies
Urban inclusion
Week 13  Review the global city within the urban Review and presentation of final term papers

Course Assessment

CA1  Class Presentations : 30%
CA2  Analytical reflections : 30%
CA3  Final Research Project : 30%
CA4  Class Participation : 10%
Total
        100%