11.488 URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT CITIES: PLANNING CHALLENGES AND POLICY INNOVATIONS

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Office Hours: T 12:00 -2:00, 10-402  
Class Meeting: Tuesdays, 2:00 to 5:00  
Location: 10-485

COURSE OVERVIEW
In a highly urbanized world like the one we live in, cities become the strategic place of violent conflict. Economic, religious, gender and ethnic differences are negotiated every day on the urban arena, when tensions become conflict and conflict escalates into violence, the urban space become the battlespace. The process of city building with all its conflicts and tensions then is a tool for both violence and reconciliation. In short, the tools of urbanization are the tools of war in an urbanized conflict.

In this class, we examine urban development challenges in conflict cities. Case studies are used to examine the basic infrastructural, governance, social, and economic dilemmas facing citizens and local officials. The course explores multiple disciplinary perspectives from which urban conflict is addressed. It gives equal power to understand the particular conditions of urban conflict and to the policy solutions used to address such issues. This course examines the urban development challenges facing conflict and post-conflict cities, defined as locales that are socially, economically, and physically impacted by war, ethnic or religious conflict, and/or endemic criminal violence. The course reviews the literature by specific topics in which violence and cities intersect. The course introduces the concept of urban violence and its relationship to development, and take a look at different perspectives of urban conflict: Military, gender, spatial, gang, mapping, peace building, and reconstruction.

The goal of the eclectic survey is to give students a general idea of the varied concept of urban conflict and to by focusing on a particular local (city) inform each case with potential solutions to specific cases in the form of policy or project solutions. We intent to collaborate with a diverse group of institutions that deal with urban security (UN-Habitat, First Mile Geo, USAID, UNDP all TBC) that will provide analytical data for some of the students selected cases. Students are also encouraged to use other cities, data sources and methods.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
This course meets one day a week for an intensive three hour discussion, building on the expectation that students will have completed all readings prior to class. Weekly readings are divided into required and recommended readings. All students are responsible for weekly required readings. Each student will also sign up for a brief oral report of recommended readings for a given week, once in the semester.

Within the first week of the course, students will pick a single “conflict” city to research during the semester, both for deeper empirical study as well as problem-solving.

Data may be available for a number of students to focus on the following cities: San Pedro Sula, Medellin and Aleppo. However, students are also encouraged to focus on other conflict cities, and to select a city of their choosing for deeper empirical study. Student grades will be based on in class participation the class presentation, and a paper that would have two parts (1) survey and description of the particular issues of urban conflict in the chosen city (mid-term) and (2) Tentative policy or strategic interventions as forms to cope with the conditions of conflict.

Students are graded on the basis of active participation, commitment, quality of presentation and submitting the assignments on time. Progress during the semester and striving for improvement will be credited.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% Final Grade</th>
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<td>1. a Paper on description of the conditions of conflict in the selected city.</td>
<td>10/9/2014</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>1. b Second part of the paper that would suggest a particular policy or strategic intervention to cope with violence in the selected city.</td>
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<td>2. Class presentation of one of the class topic. Presentation of the assigned and suggested readings.</td>
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<td>3. Participation.</td>
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COURSE MATERIALS
Course will have a stellar website where most course reading materials are available at:
SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER

SEP. 4 FIST DAY OF CLASS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT CITIES.
Introduction to conflict and cities in conflict.

Topics selection for in class review of material

SEP. 11 DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN CONFLICT ZONES.
The relationship between national conflict and cities, and vice-versa.

Final student selection of city for paper.

REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:


SEP. 18 MILITARY PERSPECTIVE
Today more than ever wars are fought in cities. Here we explore how military literature see the role of cities in conflict.
REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:


SEP. 25  VIOLENT CONFLICT MULTIPLE DEFINITIONS
Understating the context of disciplinary study of urban conflict, definitions and areas of research.

REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:

OCTOBER

OCT. 2  “SLUM WARS”
The intersection between urban informality and conflict. Understanding of urbanization as a subversive act.

REQUIRED:


Blake 2013, Shadowing the State: Violent Control and the Social Power of Jamaican Garrison Dons


RECOMMENDED:


OCT. 9  GENDER AND CONFLICT
Gender issues among ideas of conflict and new perspectives brought by a gendered perspective of the conflict.

1.a Paper Due: Description of the conditions of conflict in the selected city.

REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:


**Oct. 16**

**Defensible Space to Space Syntax**


**REQUIRED:**


**RECOMMENDED:**


**Oct. 23**

**Mapping Conflict**

How we map conflict mirrors ways that we understand conflict, different perspectives in mapping violence and conflict. Policy and research implications.

**REQUIRED:**


**RECOMMENDED:**


**OCT. 30**

**Gangs**
A particular form of urban violence, gangs are key to understand the role of NSAG in cities.

**REQUIRED:**


**RECOMMENDED:**


**NOVEMBER**

**NOV. 6**

**Weak states and conflict the NSAG perspective.**
When the state monopoly of violence is challenged, NSAG appear as para-state organizations that fill those voids left by the state a phenomena call by some “New Violence”. What is the role of these organization on a world of “megacities” in “weak states”?

**REQUIRED:**


RECOMMENDED:


**Nov. 13**

**Conflict and the Built Environment**

How the built environment does interacts with conditions of conflict?

REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:


**Nov. 27**

**NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**December**

**Dec. 4**

**RECONSTRUCTION — POST CONFLICT**

The war is over now what? Challenges of reconstruction and policies of post conflict.

**1.b Final Paper due:** policy or strategic intervention to cope with violence in the selected city
REQUIRED:


RECOMMENDED:


DEC. 11 Final Presentations of papers.
MIT NOTES

Disabilities. If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform in class, please see the instructor early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are not acceptable. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension. Please see the instructor if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism.