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

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Office Hours:  T 12:00 -2:00, 10-487m
Class Meeting: Tuesdays and Thursdays, (4:00-5:30)
Location: 9-450B
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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 in the urban arena, when tensions become conflict and conflict escalate into violence, the urban space becomes 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 curse introduces the concept of urban violence and its relationship to development, and take a look at different perspectives of urban conflict: Military, gender, race, spatial, gang, mapping, peace building, and reconstruction.

The eclectic survey of issues pretend to give students a general idea of the varied concept of urban conflict and by focusing on a particular local (city) inform each case with potential solutions to specific cases in the form of policy or project solutions. This class propose to collaborate with a diverse group of institutions that deal with urban security (UN-Habitat, First Mile Geo, USAID, UNDP, Internews all TBC) that will provide analytical data for some of the students selected cases. Students are also encouraged to use other cities of their interest, data sources and methods.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course meets two days a week a class to introduce a concept and the second to have student led discussion about the issue of the week, building on the expectation that students will have completed all readings prior to class. Two types of weekly readings divided into required (for Monday class) and student led discussion readings (for thuesday class). All students handle weekly required readings. Each student will also sign up for a brief oral report of Student led discussion 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 are 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. Each paper should not be more than 10-15 pages in length, including any data illustrations you may wish to include.

ASSIGMENT 1: DEFINING URBAN CONFLICT
In this assignment the goal is that you get accounted with a particular place of conflict, understand the unique conditions of the manifestations of conflict on the urban scale. Become familiar with the history of violence that permits to understand patterns of conflict and how government organizations, citizen, international actors, and perverse actors play a role in the reproduction of violence.

ASSIGMENT 2: INTERVENING IN URBAN CONFLICT
This second paper builds in the work you develop for the first paper on “Defining Urban Conflict”. Here you are expected to look closer into your case city, select a particular issue of violent manifestation of conflict among your case cosmology of stakeholders. You are required to explain such problem and to present the history of intervention on it (if exist). Finally, you are asked to propose based on your information a project/policy to engage with such selected issue. While this is an immense task, and one that is impossible in the timeframe of a semester, you are evaluated along the logic of your proposal based on the information that you provide. In other words, the issues that you decide to engage are the key elements to evaluate your idea.
GRADING
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. a Paper on the description of the conditions of conflict in the selected city.</td>
<td>10/9/2015</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>
<td>12/10/2015</td>
<td>30</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. 10  **First day of class and Introduction to the urban development in conflict cities.**
An introduction to conflict and cities in conflict.

**Topics selection** for in-class review of material
**SEP. 15**

**DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN CONFLICT ZONES.**

The relationship between national conflict and cities, and vice-versa.

Final student selection of city for the assignment.

**REQUIRED:**


**SEP. 17**

**DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN CONFLICT ZONES.**

Student discussion.

Deadline of student selection of city for assignment.

**STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:**


**SEP. 22**

**MILITARY PERSPECTIVE**

Today more than ever wars are fought in cities. Here we explore how military literature engages with the role of cities in conflict.

**REQUIRED:**


SEP. 24 MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:


SEP. 29 VIOLENT CONFLICT MULTIPLE DEFINITIONS

Understating different disciplinary views of the study of the urban conflict, definitions and areas of research.

REQUIRED:


OCT. 1 VIOLENT CONFLICT MULTIPLE DEFINITIONS

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:

October

Oct. 6  “SLUM WARS”
This class explores the intersection between urban informality (poverty in cities) and conflict (violent conflict related to specific territories). It focuses on a perspective in that of urbanization as a subversive act.

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

Oct. 8  “SLUM WARS”
STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:

Oct. 13  NO CLASS (MONDAY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES TO BE HELD.)

Oct. 15  1.A PAPER DUE: IN CLASS PRESENTATION
DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITIONS OF CONFLICT IN THE SELECTED CITY.
Paper 2 distributed

Oct. 20  GENDER AND CONFLICT
Here we explore both gender as a motivation of conflict and also new perspectives brought by a gendered perspective of the conflict.

REQUIRED:
Oct. 22  Gender and Conflict

**STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:**


Oct. 27  Defensible Space to Space Syntax

**Space policy of urban conflict. Urban form and its relationship with conflict.**

**REQUIRED:**


Oct. 29  Defensible Space to Space Syntax

**STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:**


November

Nov. 3  Mapping Conflict
How we map conflict narrows the ways that we understand it, different perspectives in mapping violence and conflict. Policy and research implications.

REQUIRED:


Nov. 5  Mapping Conflict

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:


Nov. 10  Gangs
A particular form of urban violence, gangs are key to understand the role of NSAG in cities.

REQUIRED:


Nov. 12  **Gangs**

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:


Nov. 17  **Weak states and conflict the NSAG perspective.**

When the state monopoly of violence is diminished by alternatives institution, NSAG appears as para–state organizations that fill those voids left by the state a condition called by some “New Violence”. What is the role of these organizations on a world of “megacities” in “weak states”?

REQUIRED:


Nov. 19  **Weak states and conflict the NSAG perspective.**

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:


NOV. 24  IN CLASS PRESENTATION ADVANCE PAPER 2

NOV. 26  THANKSGIVING VACATION.

DECEMBER

DEC 1. PEACE PROCESS AND RECONCILIATION

Analizing the challenges of the road to peace. Cases studies present examples of such complex process.

REQUIRED:


DEC 3. PEACE PROCESS AND RECONCILIATION

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION:


**Dec. 8**  
**Paper 2 Due and Final Presentations of Papers.**

**Dec. 10**  
**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.