

School Logo

University Logo

URGO – Urban Governance: Laws, Institutions and Policy
BA Economics (General Elective)

Course Information

Course Duration: February – May 2026
Credit Hours: 4.0 hours.
Meetings: FOB, TBD.
Pre-requisite: NA
Equivalent Courses: NA
Exclusive Courses: NA

Instructor Information

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1. Course Description

This course aims to provide an understanding of urban governance dynamics focusing on policies, laws and institutions. It situates urban governance within the broader dynamics of urbanization, land and economic development, highlighting the challenges governments face in reconciling the drive for growth with the imperatives of equity, inclusivity, sustainability, and democratic accountability. Such challenges are about reconciling the competing goals of driving economic growth and building socially and environmentally sustainable cities.

The course explores how cities evolve and change over time, and how policy, institutional and legal frameworks shape this transformation. We will interrogate the instruments such as land acquisition laws, master planning and building control

regulations, SEZ acts, infrastructure acts, institutions, and policies - used by governments to drive development and regulate urban growth, as well as their impacts on land, housing, access to jobs and basic infrastructure in everyday contexts. In sum, the course will focus on how laws and policies are interpreted, used, and impact on different groups. How do different groups in society engage with the State to advance their interest in urban material and symbolic resources.

Additionally, by engaging with theories of critical urban planning and development, students will learn how ideas about the “ideal city” influence practice, and how these frameworks produce uneven outcomes for people, business, and the environment.

The significance of this course is highlighted by the predictions on urban areas as key sites of growth in the years to come. Reports of international development institutions forecast the 21st century is forecasted as an urban century and that more than half the global population lives in cities. It is expected more than two thirds of the global population will be in cities and will be in the cities of Asia, African and Latin America.

The two most populous countries, India, and China will have 700 million inhabitants in their cities. Yet, their cities have a high concentration of inequality and poverty, with a substantial proportion of people not having adequate access to housing and other basic infrastructure they need to maintain their life. These conditions, together with the imperative of elevation of their cities in the global arena, have created significant challenges to governments with respect to governing their urban areas.

Predominantly mobilizing the experience of Indian cities, the course will explore the forces driving urban growth, the patterns of urban development, and its implications for urban governance. After a brief introduction to the role of cities in driving economic growth, theories on urban governance, assumptions in urban theories about the role of cities, the will engage in this course with contemporary policies, laws and institutions regulating /driving urban development. The course teaching will use a combination of lectures, student-led seminar sessions, and games to understand urban governance challenges.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives (Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
Understand the role of cities, its form and functions	Lecture and discussion based on documentary (weeks 1 and 2)	Class diary: Reflections on Wk 1 and 2

1.

Grasp existing arrangement for urban governance (actors, institutions, and legal framework.	Lecture and seminar presentation (Weeks 5,6 and 12).	Weekly Post 2 Mid Term and Final exam.
Comprehend the factors driving evolution and expansion of cities	Weeks 3-4 lectures and class discussion	Weekly Post 3 Mid term
Gain an understanding of theories on modern industrial cities and Global Cities	Weeks 10-12 lectures and class discussions	Final Exam
Critically analyze the relevance of modernization and global city theories to Southern contexts.	Weeks 5-9 lectures	Mid Term
Grasp the dual structure of cities in the Global South	Weeks 5-12 class discussions and presentations	Mid Term and Final Assessment

3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading Evaluation breakup

- **Evaluation:** Internal 70% and Final Exams 30%

Breakup of Internal Assessment Components:

Diary of Class Discussions and Reflections (8 classes): 40 marks (8 x5)

Class exercises (3 – one each in Feb, March and April): 30 marks (best two 15x2)

Class diary to be submitted at the end of Feb (3 themes); March (3 themes) and April (2 themes).

Final Exam: 30% (May first week will be administered by exam office]

- **Grade Definition**

Percentage of Marks	Grade	Grade Points
80% and above	O	8
75% – 79.75%	A+	7.5
70% – 74.75%	A	7
65% – 69.75%	A-	6
60% – 64.75%	B+	5
55% – 59.75%	B	4
50% – 54.75%	B-	3
45% – 49.75%	P1	2
40% – 45.75%	P2	1
Below 40%	F	0

- **Academic Integrity**
- **Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism:**
 - Cheating in any form will attract punishment. In accordance with JSJP's policy on Academic Integrity, all submissions will be checked for plagiarism. The school's policy on penalty for plagiarism is as follows:
 - Up-to 30% matches in Turnitin: accept the paper with penalty
 - Above 30%: reject the submission Participation/Attendance Policy
 - Participation/Attendance Policy: 80% attendance is mandatory failing which a student can be barred from the final exam.
 - Use of phone/ texting/ laptop surfing in class is not allowed. Please avoid any activity in the media both inside and outside the classroom. Any social media content that affects the dignity of fellow students or faculty or causes distress or trauma for others will be referred to the disciplinary committee for action.

4. Keyword Syllabus

Urban Policy Process, Governance, Urban space laws and institutions, Formal and informal city; Urban Planning, Urban Infrastructure; Urban Economy; Urban Land and Housing.

5. Course Material

- Massey, Doreen (1999). 'City Worlds: Understanding Cities'. UK: Open University and Routledge. (Electronic copy of book)
- Kaufmann, David & Sidney, Mara (2024). "Urban Policy Process and Policy Analysis." In *Handbook of Urban Politics and Policy*.
- Magnusson, Warren (2013). The Politics of Urbanism: Seeing like a City Everyday Politics. New York: Routledge (Chapter 1).
- Harold Wolman (1995). "What Cities Do: How Much Does Urban Policy Matter?" *Urban Affairs Review* 31(1).
- Watson and Bridge (2010). Companion to the City: The Blackwell City Reader, London: Routledge.
- Karen Tranberg Hansen Vaa (2004), Reconsidering Informality: Perspectives from Urban Africa, Spain: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. (all chapters)
- Ananya Roy, Nezar AL Sayyad (2004), Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia. Lexington Books (Chapter 1 8-30).

6. Weekly Plan

Session	General Topic	Readings	Pedagogy
Week 1	Introduction to key Concepts: Nature of Cities, Urbanization Urban Policy Process	<p>Massey, Doreen (1999). 'City Worlds: Understanding Cities'. UK: Open University and Routledge. (Electronic copy of book. Chapter 1).</p> <p>Tranberg Karen & Vaa Mariken (eds) (2004), <i>Reconsidering Informality: perspectives from Urban Africa</i>, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. (Section 1 on informal city).</p> <p>Harold Wolman (1995). "What Cities Do: How Much Does Urban Policy Matter?" <i>Urban Affairs Review</i> 31(1).</p> <p>Kaufmann, David & Sidney, Mara (2024). "Urban Policy Process and Policy Analysis." In <i>Handbook of Urban Politics and Policy</i>.</p>	Lecture 1 Discussion on Assigned Readings.
Week 2	Introduction to urban governance	<p>Hendriks, F. (2014). Understanding Good Urban Governance: Essentials, Shifts, and Values. <i>Urban Affairs Review</i>, 50(4), 553-576. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087413511782.</p> <p>Obeng-Odoom, F. (2012). On the origin, meaning, and evaluation of urban governance. <i>Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography</i>, 66(4), 204-212.</p> <p>Oldenburg Philip 'Delhi as a Political Unit' (pg. 22-28); 'The Councilor of Kucha Khirkiwala' ch. 3 (pg. 71 to 105) in <i>Big city government in India: Councilor, administrator, and citizen in Delhi</i>. Published for the Association of Asian Studies by the University of Arizona Press. (Available in JGU library).</p>	Lecture Weekly Post. Discussion on Assigned Readings
Week 3	Institutional and Policy Frameworks: Metro Contexts	<p>Magnusson, Warren (2013). <i>The Politics of Urbanism: Seeing like a City Everyday Politics</i>. New York: Routledge (Chapter 1).</p> <p>Benjamin, S., & Raman, B. (2006). Urban futures of poor groups in Chennai and Bangalore: How these are shaped by the relationship between Parastatal and Local Bodies'. In N. Jayal A. Prakash and P. Sharma (eds) <i>Local Governance in India: Decentralization and Beyond</i>. New Delhi, Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Mukhopadhyay, Partha & Revi, Aromar (2021). "Urban India: Institutions and Governance." <i>India Policy Forum</i>.</p> <p>Coelho, Karen & Venkat, T. (2009). "The Politics of Civil Society." <i>IDS Working Paper</i>.</p> <p>Idiculla, M. (2016). New regimes of private governance: The Case of electronics city in peri-urban Bengaluru. <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, 102-109.</p>	Map diverse institutions involved in urban governance; differences in their vision, legal and institutional architecture

Week 4	Institutions and Laws in Non-Metro Contexts	<p>Sivaramakrishnan, K. C. (2011). <i>Re-visioning Indian cities: The urban renewal mission</i>. SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.</p> <p>Exercise: Map institutional overlap (municipal corporations, development authorities, parastatals) in one Indian city</p>	Class exercise : mapping
Week 5	Urban Land: Law, Informality, and Legibility	<p>Holston (2010). The Modernist City. Anthropological Critique of Brasilia. In Bridge and Watson (2010). <i>The Blackwell City Reader</i>. Blackwell.</p> <p>Leggs. (2010). <i>Spaces of Colonialism. Delhi's Urban Governmentalities</i>. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>Dossal, M. (2005). A master plan for the city: looking at the past. <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, 3897-3900.</p> <p>Raman, B. (2015). The politics of property in land: new planning instruments, law and popular groups in Delhi. <i>Journal of South Asian Development</i>, 10(3), 369-395.</p>	
Week 6	Production of illegality and informality in urban areas	<p>Ananya Roy (2009). "Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities." <i>Planning Theory</i>, 8(1).</p> <p>Benjamin, Solomon & Raman, Bhuvaneswari (2011). "Illegible Claims, Legal Titles, and the Politics of Dispossession." <i>EPW</i> 46(42).</p> <p>Bhan, Gautam (2014). "Planned Illegalities." In <i>In the Public's Interest</i>.</p> <p>Jonnalagadda, I., & Cowan, T. (2024). City drafting: Property-making and bureaucratic urbanism in South Asia. <i>City</i>, 28(1-2), 7-23.</p>	Discussion: How do law and informality co-produce urban governance?
Week 7	Neo-Liberalism, Globalization and Urban Reforms	<p>Jamie Peck & Adam Tickell (2002). "Neoliberalizing Space." <i>Antipode</i>, 34(3).</p> <p>Neil Brenner, Peck & Theodore (2010). "Variegated Neoliberalization." <i>Global Networks</i>, 10(2).</p> <p>John Harriss (2005). "Political Participation, Representation, and the Urban Poor." <i>World Development</i>, 33(6).</p> <p>Key Question: How has neoliberalism reshaped the institutions and practices of urban governance in India?</p>	Student Discussion on Land Governanc
Week 8	Data Governance in Urban Contexts	<p>Adhvaryu, Bhargav, and Riby Rachel Mathew. "Let's get digital: Exploring urban governance and management in India." <i>Habitat International</i> 161 (2025): 103419.</p> <p>Chatterji, T. (2018). Digital urbanism in a transitional economy—a review of India's municipal e-governance policy. <i>Journal of Asian Public Policy</i>, 11(3), 334-349.</p>	

Week 9	Policy Mobility and Translocal Circulation	<p>Eugene McCann & Kevin Ward (2011). <i>Mobile Urbanism: Cities and Policymaking in the Global Age</i>. (Intro & Ch. 3)</p> <p>Jamie Peck & Nik Theodore (2010). "Mobilizing Policy." <i>Geoforum</i> 41(2).</p> <p>McCann, Eugene (2013). "Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City." <i>Urban Geography</i>, 34(1).</p> <p>Workshop: Trace the movement of a policy model (e.g., Bus Rapid Transit, Smart Cities Mission, Participatory Budgeting).</p>	Workshop
Week 10	Urban Infrastructure, Finance and Policy Instruments	<p>Stephen Graham & Simon Marvin (2001). <i>Splintering Urbanism</i>. (Ch. 1–2)</p> <p>Kathryn Furlong (2020). <i>Leaky Governance: Alternative Service Delivery</i>.</p> <p>Ayona Datta (2018). "The Digital Turn in Postcolonial Urbanism." <i>Urban Studies</i>, 55(5).</p> <p>Case Study: PPPs, smart cities, or urban utilities in India.</p>	Lecture and Group work on Case Studies and Presentation
Week 11	Law, Citizenship and Urban Rights	<p>James Holston (2008). <i>Insurgent Citizenship</i>. (Ch. 1–3)</p> <p>Vanessa Watson (2009). "The Planned City Sweeps the Poor Away." <i>Progress in Planning</i>, 72(3).</p> <p>Eva Bosch & Bettina Koreinberger (2020). <i>Urban Commons</i>. (Selections)</p> <p>Fernandes, Edesio. "Law and the production of urban illegality." <i>Land Lines</i> 13, no. 3 (2001): 1-3.</p> <p>Discussion: What does it mean to claim urban citizenship in unequal and informal cities?</p>	Lecture and Group Discussion
Week 12	Comparative and Global Urban Policy and Reform Agenda	<p>Jennifer Robinson (2011). "Cities in a World of Cities." <i>IJURR</i>, 35(1).</p> <p>Susan Parnell & Jennifer Robinson (2012). "(Re)theorizing Cities from the Global South." <i>Urban Geography</i>, 33(4).</p> <p>Colin McFarlane (2011). <i>Learning the City</i>. (Ch. 1–2)</p> <p>Workshop: Comparative analysis of institutional reforms in Johannesburg, São Paulo, Mumbai, and Delhi</p>	Workshop