GD319-15 Sustainable Cities

26/27

Department
Global Sustainable Development
Level
Undergraduate Level 3
Module leader
Jonathan Clarke
Credit value
15
Module duration
10 weeks
Assessment
100% coursework
Study location
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

In 1913 10% of the world's population lived in cities (UN-HABITAT, 2011), in 2018 this had increased to an estimated 55% (UN 2018). Urban areas are expected to absorb virtually all future population growth (UN 2018) and by 2030 are projected to accommodate 60% of the global population: one-third of which will live in cities with at least half a million inhabitants (UN 2018).

Despite covering only 2% of the world's landmass, cities produce 70% of total carbon emissions, over half of the world's GDP, are locations of often stark inequality and are uniquely vulnerable to a changing climate, as a result of their concentrated population and infrastructure. Cities are spaces of social and technological innovation, but also some of the most pressing human welfare concerns. Thus understanding the urban context is critical in promoting more sustainable trajectories of human development.

The module takes a series of themes and explores them through a mixture of theory and practice.

Module web page

Module aims

Critically reflect upon the UN's SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

Analyse the roles of built form, governance, through perspective of spatial and physical planning and political ecology, as well as examine the role art and culture in representing the city.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The units covered in this module address some of the fundamental ways in which we theorise and encounter cities. They examine our preconceptions about cities, considering more broadly the range of cities across the world, their different histories, power structures and trajectories. We go on to examine the multi-dimensionality of lived experience within any individual city and the way in which changes to the city sit in the power of some and not other city dwellers. This contributes to how we understand the sustainability of the city to be, particularly when we ask, whose city is it?

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Critically analyse the positive positioning of urban spaces within the sustainable development agenda, analysing competing discourses on the subject of sustainable cities in scholarship and practice
- Apply a selection of perspectives on the discourse of “sustainable cities”, including physical urban development policy and practice, political ecology and cultural and artistic notions of the city
- Undertake individual research working with and within the above perspectives
- Identify opportunities for more sustainable urban life and make proposals for their realisation
- Produce rigorous mixed media outputs that analyse the urban fabric and its representation
- Collate and rework individual outputs into a coherent portfolio of research and analysis, connected by appropiate metanarrative(s)

Indicative reading list

Reading lists can be found in Talis

Research element

Healey & Jenkins (2009) propose that Research-led-teaching design should consider four discrete opportunities. This module has been designed to include three of these opportunities.

1. Research-led learning, where the module syllabus is developed from current research in relevant fields, being based on contemporary and seminal, peer reviewed and other high quality research literature. As such, all knowledge for student engagement will be consciously and specifically chosen for its merits in reference to broader academic understanding.

2. Research-tutored learning, where students engage actively in discussing high quality,

contemporary and seminal research literature. This module will involve the critical discussion of prominent literature on the various themes.

3. Research-orientated learning, where students develop methodological skills. In this module, students will be introduced to one methodological approach per unit of study. This will include the practitioner creation of urban design briefs; the creation and analysis of photographs and narratives.

4. Research-based learning, where student use developing methodological skills to create original knowledge of their own. This module will provide students with the opportunity to create new primary and analytical knowledge via the opportunities to create various outputs for assembly into an overall assessment portfolio.

Interdisciplinary

The syllabus is inherently inter- and transdisciplinary disciplinary in nature, as students learn to observe and critically cities from the perspectives of planning, economics, geography, sociology and the arts and humanities.

International

Case studies as used from cities across the globe

Subject specific skills

An inclusive and sensitive communication style that engenders trust during group discussions
Research and identify opportunities for more sustainable urban trajectories
Inspire and motivate others to invest in sustainability vision through influential communication
Innovative and creative approach to problem-solving

Transferable skills

As per the University of Warwick framework for Core Skills, students taking this module will develop in the following areas:

Sustainability: Better understands the climate emergency and builds their commitment as an active contributor to a sustainable world, specifically in the area of physical, social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of urban development.

Organisational Awareness: Understanding of business, government and third sector issues and priorities within the urban context.

Professionalism: Develop competencies for autonomous work, being responsible for developing regular outputs and building a portfolio for assessment; effectively managing the creation of more short term and rapid outputs, in a resilient way; manages priorities and time between learning and ongoing assessment; being self-motivated, setting and achieving goals, prioritising tasks to successful learning and ongoing assessment; being aware of how urban organisation impacts

society.

Information Literacy: Critical methodological understanding of how information about the urban environment is generated managed and synthesised; including an understanding of the relative value of different sources and the importance of provenance; the systematic collection, analysis and evaluation of information in the investigation of a topic, during weekly learning and for output and portfolio creation.

Critical Thinking: Recognise patterns, themes and key messages from sometimes confused and incomplete data; make informed decisions on the value of a range of sources allowing an evidence based conclusion based on this analysis for outputs and portfolios.

Digital Literacy: Has the capabilities that enable living, learning and working in a digital society, as a learner and urban citizen; comfortable with using digital media to communicate, respond to problems, manage information, collaborate, create and share content.

Teamwork: Operate within, and contribute to, a respectful, supportive and cooperative group environment, during weekly tasks, discussions; and being sensitive to the impact of actions on others, including how these dynamics play out in the urban environment.

Responding to Issues: Use reasoning to develop appropriate and well-supported propositions for reforms and interventions. Retain an open mind, optimistic of finding proposals, thinking laterally and creatively to look beyond the obvious. Understand that learning requires risk.

Communication: Communicate orally in a clear and sensitive manner that is appropriately varied according to different audiences. Written and mixed media: Present arguments, knowledge and ideas, via diverse outputs using textual and graphical techniques (see assessment details); active listening: questioning, reflecting, summarising of personal research and discussion.

Self-awareness: Actively seek opportunities for personal development in the context of employment and life; aware of personal strengths and emotional intelligence; and reflect on learning, seeking feedback on and evaluating personal practices, strengths and opportunities for personal growth, recognising the value of peer to peer, and collective learning, as well as through more hierarchical social relations

Intercultural Awareness: Develop required observational, analytical and reflection skills to understand impact of culture on self and on interactions with culturally different others, in the context of learning as community, and how these dynamics play out in the urban environment.

Ethical Values: Committed to living ethically, including playing an active role as a reflective, critical and rigorous agent of urban transformation.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	2 sessions of 1 hour (2%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (20%)
Private study	70 hours (78%)
Total	90 hours

Private study description

Students will prepare for workshops and use this time to create their own outputs which might then be included in the portfolio.

Students will be expected to undertake more than a maximum of 11 hours notional working time within a 1 week student period, so they can manage this module alongside any others taking the same approach to module design.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Interdisciplinary Portfolio	100%	60 hours	Yes (extension)

Students are required to submit a Portfolio with three sections, each composed of:

1. A choice of two out of: a) Photo Essay, and b) Lived Experience Account and 2) a mandatory assessment in the form of a Design Brief. The two briefs should total 3,500 words or agreed equivalent (90%). The two assignments form a portfolio that is then also accompanied by a summary narrative of 500 words (10%). The total maximum length for the Portfolio submission is 4,000 words.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

A written summary and annotations on the portfolio document, provided on Tabula.

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.