MOHANTY, BINDU

Proposal for teaching a course as a Mundus Urbano Scholar

Course Description

The dynamics of informal urbanism
One out of every six people in the world currently lives in a slum. By 2050, according to UN estimates, the number of people eking out a marginalized life in the cities will triple resulting in the sobering fact that one out of every three people will be a slum-dweller. The growing phenomenon of slums and favelas is referred to as informal urbanism for it transgresses the formal codes of the state in terms of land tenure, urban planning, design and construction. However, eschewing with facile binary distinctions of formal versus informal, this course examines the reality of informal urbanism in its own right—as a self-organizing adaptive system. While some degree of informality exists in all cities, and one sees a similar rise in squatting and inner-city neighborhoods in the North, the course will focus primarily on examples from the developing world. For, due to continual massive migration from rural to urban environments, informal urbanism is a dominant force of urbanization in the emerging economies of the South. The course will ground students in the dynamics of informal urbanism by employing interdisciplinary perspectives that view physical, social, cultural, economic, environmental, governance and policy issues as being interdependent.

Course Objectives:
After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
• Have a deeper understanding of the nature of informal urbanism from the perspectives of different stakeholders
• Understand the underlying reasons why informal urbanism is an overriding force of urbanization, at odds with mainstream notions of planned cities
• Compare and contrast social, cultural, and spatial features of informal urbanism in different parts of the world to identify common factors and understand their impacts on the urban experience
• Apply basic skills of empirical reasoning to study contrasting urban developments
• Apply creative skills of urban planning and design to suggest possible solutions to existing challenges in informal urbanism
• Organize and present peer-assessed group projects
• Articulate a well-defined research question, conduct independent research using primary sources and a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, and write a substantive research paper

Suggested Readings (Draft):

Required:


**Recommended:**

