AN URBAN APPROACH TO SPAIN AND EUROPE
CITIES AND GLOBALIZATION
Mediterranean Studies

Course contact hours: 45
Recommended credits: 6 ECTS – 3 US credits

OBJECTIVES

The European urbanization process has given rise to an extraordinary pool of very diverse cities: some of them being leading global economic and political centers, such as London, Brussels, Paris, Berlin or Frankfurt. Others are very important cultural and heritage hubs for global tourism, such as Venice, Rome, Vienna, Prague or Barcelona, whilst cities, like Helsinki, Hamburg, Milan or Rotterdam, have become centers of creativity and innovation.

This course aims to provide an explanation of how this great range of urban diversity came about, beginning with the presentation of an historical overview of the urbanization process in Europe, and concluding with a summary of the main urban challenges that European and Spanish cities are facing in the 21st century.

It is worth noting that despite this urban diversity, the post-Covid global world we are living in shows a common range of problems and challenges for European and Spanish cities alike, particularly dealing with the following three main challenges: firstly, the effects of climate change in the present-day context of urban climate emergency; secondly, the increasing situation of urban social inequality characterizing more and more urban spaces since the 2007 global economic crisis; finally, the opportunities and risks represented by the global digitalization process and the concept of the 'smart city'.

REQUIREMENTS

Fluent English

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand main relationships between the globalization process and the urbanization process in the specific case of European and Spanish cities.

2. Identify the key characteristics of the European urbanization model.

3. Analyze the evolution of European and Spanish cities and the process of adaptation to new economic, technological and social changes.

4. Interpret the present-day challenges for European and Spanish cities dealing with some key ideas in regard to environmental, social and technological issues.

CONTENTS

1st week. Cities and Globalization. An urban approach to Europe and Spain.

- Urbanization and Globalization: main definitions for understanding the urban arena today.
- A continent made of cities: the urbanization process in Europe and Spain (an introduction).
- Global cities and globalized territories: European and Spanish cities today.

2nd week. European and Spanish urbanization: similarities and differences.

- European urban regions: different urban models in a diversity of areas.
- From cities to metropolitan regions: the 'Blue Banana'; the 'Ruhrgebiet'; the 'Randstad'.
- The specificities of the Mediterranean urban region: the Spanish cities study case.

3rd week. Historical evolution of European and Spanish cities. An urban approach.

- Historical urbanization (I): the Roman foundation and the Middle Ages urban network.
- Historical urbanization (II): The Industrial Revolution and the modern urban growth process.
- Historical urbanization (III): The urbanization process during the 20th century.
- Presentations (readings).

4th week. The environmental dimension: cities facing climate change.

- Climate change, resilience and sustainability: towards 'climate-proof' cities.
- Climate-proof strategies, green resilient programs: mitigation & adaption to climate change.
- Climate-proof and resilient cities in Europe and Spain: overview and study cases.
- Presentations (midterm essay).

5th week. The urban and social dimension: cities facing the global economic crisis.

- The social and economic dimension of cities: historical approach and present-day context.
- The globalization of cities' social and economic basis: sample of cities in Europe and Spain.
- Post-Covid social and economic urban changes: risks and challenges for European cities.
- Presentations (midterm essay).

6th week. The urban digitalization process: innovation, creativity and sustainability.

- The global urban digitalization process: the *smart city* idea and the *knowledge economy*.
- Providing new innovative, creative and sustainable urban spaces in European cities.
- Assessment activities (final exam and feedback on the midterm essays and presentations on readings).

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Classes will be conducted in lecture format. Lectures start by explaining the topics covered in the session and why they are relevant. They are interactive from the start and individual student participation is encouraged. Lectures are combined with group exercises with the aim of consolidating the knowledge acquired during the lecture. Some of the sessions include fieldtrips taking advantage of some urban spaces in the city of Barcelona. Some other sessions will be fully articulated through presentations on readings and some key study cases in regard to European and Spanish cities.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Presentations on readings: 30%.
Mid-term essay: 30%.
Final exam: 30%.
In-class Quizzes & participation: 10%.

LINKS AND DIGITAL RESOURCES ON GENERAL ISSUES

The City Journal.
https://www.city-journal.org/

The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture (Mies van der Rohe Award by the Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona):
https://eumiesaward.com/archive

The Historic Chart of Barcelona (Museum of History of Barcelona, MUHBA).
https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/en/

The European Prize for Urban Public Space:
www.publicspace.org

Comments on the visual representation of the modern city (Gustave Caillebote):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lQepko6yzE

'Industrial urbanization and urban change'.
https://www.coursera.org/lecture/urban-development/industrial-urbanisation-and-urban-change-m3UD5

'The making of the industrial city as a social structure'.
https://www.coursera.org/lecture/urban-development/the-making-of-the-industrial-city-as-a-social-structure-oeEd4

'Barcelona architecture walks'.
https://barcelonarchitecturewalks.com/art-lovers-bbc-program/

BIBLIOGRAPHY (general)

Castells, M.: *Urban Sociology in the Twenty-First Century*, 2002.

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European Commission: *The state of European Cities 2016. Cities leading the way to a better future*. European Commission Publication, 2016.

European Commission: *Urban development in the EU:50 projects supported by the European Regional Development Fund (executive summary).* EU, 2014.

Gebhart, D.: *Building inclusive cities: multilevel governance of immigrant integration*, Migration Policy Index Publication, 2014.

Harvey, D.: *Rebel Cities. From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Verso Editions, 2012.

Lapunzina, Alejandro. *Architecture of Spain*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.

Le Gales, P.: *European Cities: social conflicts and governance*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Muñoz, F, "Fragments of the European City: The EU Mies van der Rohe Award archive as an urban hypertext". In Marin Vega, Celia; Romero, Marina (eds.) *The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award, 1988-2015 Atlas* (65-75). The Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona, 2016.

Muñoz, F. "Beyond *Urbanalization*: urban form and the low-carbon challenge". In Nel·lo, Oriol; Mele, Renata (eds) *Cities in the 21st Century* (69-77). Routledge, New York, 2015.

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Riley,T, *On Site: New Architecture in Spain*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2006.

Roberts, P. and Skies, H. (eds.).: *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*. London: Sage, 2000

Sassen, S.: *The global city*. N.J: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001 (Chapter X and Epilogue).

De Sola-Morales, I. *Contemporary Spanish Architecture*, Rizzoli, 1986.

UN-Habitat: *Enhancing the Competitiveness of Cities*, UN Publications, October 2015.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (in-class presentations on readings)

Benton-Short, L. "Monuments and memories' (87-105). In Hall, T; Hubbard, P; Short, J.R. *The SAGE companion to the city*. SAGE Publications Ltd, 2008.

Brenner, N. and Roger, K.: *The Global Cities Reader*. Psychology Press, 2006

Dinnie, K.: *City Branding: Theory and Cases.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Florida, R.: *The rise of creative class and how it's transforming work, leisure community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books. 2002.

Jacobs, J. The death and life of great american cities. Random House, New York, 1961 (chapter 4 'The need for aged buildings').

Polese, M. (2016): *Five Principles of Urban Economics*, in City Journal: https://www.city-journal.org/html/five-principles-urban-economics-13531.html

Ritzer, G., *The McDonalization of society*; Pine Forge Press, 2000.

Riza, M. "Mega-events and icònic buildings". *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 2015, 3, 269-274.