Mission
The Barnard–Columbia Urban Studies program enables students to explore and understand the urban experience in all of its richness and complexity. It recognizes the city as an amalgam of diverse peoples and their social, political, economic, and cultural interactions within a distinctive built environment. Students study the evolution and variety of urban forms and governance structures, which create opportunities for, as well as constrain, the exercise of human agency, individual and collective. They explore the place of the city in different historical and comparative contexts, as well as in the human imagination.

Majors build an intellectual foundation that combines interdisciplinary coursework and a concentration of study within a single field. Through the two-semester junior colloquium, students study urban history and contemporary issues, and at the same time hone their interdisciplinary, analytical and research skills. This shared experience prepares them for their independent research project in their senior year. We encourage our majors to use New York City as a laboratory, and many courses draw on the vast resources of the city and include an off-campus experience.

Student Learning Outcomes
Having successfully completed the major in Urban Studies, the student will be able to:

• Apply concepts or methods from more than one social science or adjacent discipline to analyze an urban issue or problem.
• Describe the distinctive social, cultural, and spatial features of cities and illustrate their impacts on the urban experience.
• Apply basic skills of empirical reasoning to an urban problem.
• Explain how the idea of the city varies in different historical and comparative contexts.
• Demonstrate familiarity with a particular disciplinary approach to the city as an object of study.
• Demonstrate understanding of the history and variety of urban forms and governance structures.
• 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.
• Communicate ideas effectively in written or oral form.
• Organize and present group research projects.

Director: Aaron Passell (Term Assistant Professor, Urban Studies, Barnard)

Columbia College Advisor: Kathryn Yatrakis (Dean of Academic Affairs, Columbia College ret: Associate Professor of Political Science, adj.)

Urban Studies Faculty
Assistant Professors: Gergely Baics (History and Urban Studies), Deborah Becher (Sociology), Mary Rocco (Term, Urban Studies)

This program is supervised by the Committee on Urban Studies:

Director: Aaron Passell (Sociology)

Professor of Professional Practice: Karen Fairbanks (Chair, Architecture)
Columbia College Advisor: Kathryn Yatrakis (Political Science)
Professors: Ester Fuchs (International and Public Affairs, CU), Kenneth T. Jackson (History), Jose Moya (History), Elliot Sclar (Urban Planning and Public Policy), David Weiman (Economics)
Associate Professor: Randall Reback (Economics), Samuel Roberts (History and Sociomedical Sciences).
Assistant Professors: Gergely Baics (History), Deborah Becher (Sociology), Catherine Fennell (Anthropology), Maria Rivera Maulucci (Education), Van Tran (Sociology)

Major in Urban Studies
The major in urban studies is comprised of six curricular requirements:

Requirement A: Urban-Related Social Sciences (3 courses)
One course dealing primarily with urban subject matter from each of three of the following disciplines: Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology. For students declaring a major in Urban Studies after Spring 2018, one of the three courses must be History.

Many courses offered through Urban Studies may count towards Requirement A. For example, URBS UN3420 Introduction to Urban Sociology counts as a Sociology course, URBS UN3550 Community Building and Economic Development counts as a Political Science course, etc. Students must complete at least two of the Requirement A courses before taking the Junior Seminar (see Requirement E, below). It is recommended that majors fulfill this requirement before their junior year.

Requirement B: Urban-Related Non-Social Science (1 course)
One course dealing primarily with urban subject matter from a discipline not listed above (such as Architecture, Art History, English, Environmental Science, etc.)

Requirement C: Methods of Analysis (1 course)
One course in methods of analysis, such as URBS UN3200 Spatial Analysis: GIS Methods and Urban Case Studies.

Requirement D: Specialization (5 courses)
Five or more courses in a specialization from one of the participating departments. Barnard College students can double-count one A, B, or C course toward this requirement (only one of five), with the approval of the Director; Columbia College and General Studies students cannot double-count courses. Barnard majors also have specific requirements for each specialization, which are outlined in detail on the program’s website, urban.barnard.edu (http://urban.barnard.edu/).

Requirement E: Junior Seminar (2 courses)
URBS UN3545 Junior Seminar: The Shaping of the Modern City 4
URBS UN3546 Junior Colloquium: Contemporary Urban Issues 4

Requirement F: Senior Seminar (2 courses)
A senior thesis written in conjunction with a two-semester research seminar, chosen from the following four options:
URBS UN3992
- URBS UN3993
Senior Seminar: The Built Environment and Senior Seminar: The Built Environment 8

URBS UN3994
- URBS UN3995
Senior Seminar: New York Field Research and Senior Seminar: New York Field Research 8

URBS UN3996
- URBS UN3997
Senior Seminar: International Topics in Urban Studies and Senior Seminar: International Topics in Urban Studies 8

A research seminar in the department of specialization. This option must be approved by the Program Director.

A complete list and courses that fulfill requirements A–E can be found on the program’s website, urban.barnard.edu (http://urban.barnard.edu/).

Appropriate substitutions may be made for courses listed above with the approval of the Program Director.

There is no concentration in urban studies.

URBS UN1515 Introduction to Urban Studies. 3 points.
This course is intended to be both an interdisciplinary introduction to the city and to the field of Urban Studies. As an introduction to the city, the course will address a variety of questions: What is a city? How did cities develop? How do cities function socially, politically, and economically? Why do people live in cities? What are some of the major issues facing cities in the early twenty-first century, and how can cities address these issues? As an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Urban Studies, the course will present models of how scholars approach cities from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, including architecture, planning, law, sociology, history, archaeology, anthropology, political science, public policy, and geography. Students will learn some of the major concepts in the field of Urban Studies, and will study the works of leading scholars in the field. Students in the course will approach cities from a number of disciplines, not only through the reading, but also through assignments that take place in different locations throughout New York City.

URBS UN2200 Introduction to GIS. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Must attend first class for instructor permission. Due to the high demand for our limited-enrollment spatial analysis course (URBS V3200) the Urban Studies program is offering an introductory course to the fundamentals of GIS (Geographic Informational Systems), specifically for non-majors. Students create maps using ArcGIS software, analyze the physical and social processes presented in the digital model, and use the data to solve specific spatial analysis problems. Note: this course does fulfill the C requirement in Urban Studies.

URBS UN3308 Introduction to Urban Ethnographies. 3 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

Prerequisites: Students must attend first class. This course explores how scholars from different social science disciplines have used ethnography to understand how immigrants and rural migrants experience as well as affect cities. Community, work, and health, in cities within and outside the US, are used as lenses. Students will also perform their own ethnographic research.

URBS UN3310 Race, Space, and Urban Schools. 3 points.
Many people don’t think of themselves as having attended segregated schools. And yet, most of us went to schools attended primarily by people who looked very much like us. In fact, schools have become more segregated over the past 30 years, even as the country becomes increasingly multiracial. In this class, we will use public schools as an example to examine the role race plays in shaping urban spaces and institutions.

We will begin by unpacking the concept of racialization, or the process by which a person, place, phenomenon, or characteristic becomes associated with a certain race. Then, we will explore the following questions: What are the connections between city schools and their local contexts? What does it mean to be a “neighborhood school”? How do changes in neighborhoods change schools? We will use ethnographies, narrative non-fiction, and educational research to explore these questions from a variety of perspectives. You will apply what you have learned to your own experiences and to current debates over urban policies and public schools.

This course will extend your understanding of key anthropological and sociological perspectives on urban inequality in the United States, as well as introduce you to critical theory.

Spring 2019: URBS UN2200
Course Number  Section/Call Number  Times/Location  Instructor  Points  Enrollment
URBS 2200  001/03078  M W 6:10pm - 8:00pm  Glab Sulzberger Hall  Benjamin Huff  3  23/24
URBS 2200  002/08357  T Th 6:10pm - 8:00pm  Glab Sulzberger Hall  Adam Lubitz  3  21/24

Fall 2019: URBS UN2200
Course Number  Section/Call Number  Times/Location  Instructor  Points  Enrollment
URBS 2200  001/09852  T Th 10:10am - 11:25am  Room TBA  Christian Siener  3  23/24
URBS 2200  002/09853  M W 10:10am - 11:25am  Room TBA  Alisa Rod  3  21/24

Spring 2019: URBS UN3310
Course Number  Section/Call Number  Times/Location  Instructor  Points  Enrollment
URBS 3310  001/01268  M W 10:10am - 11:25am  302 Barnard Hall  Alexandra Freidus  3  33/40
URBS UN3315 Metropolitics of Race and Place. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Students must attend first class.
Course explores how the central cities and suburbs that make up American metropolitan areas are increasingly shaped by race/ethnicity. Class discussion and readings will trace the role of social scientists, foundations, urban planners, government actors, and private economic interests in this transformation of metropolitan American. The current consequences of the conflation of race/ethnicity and space on the regional landscape, such as gentrification, suburban sprawl, the mortgage foreclosure crisis, etc. will be the focus of student research and class projects.

URBS UN3420 Introduction to Urban Sociology. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Students must attend first class.
Examines the diverse ways in which sociology has defined and studied cities, focusing on the people who live and work in the city, and the transformations U.S. cities are undergoing today. Sociological methods, including ethnography, survey research, quantitative studies, and participant observation will provide perspectives on key urban questions such as street life, race, immigration, globalization, conflict, and redevelopment.

URBS UN3427 Imagining and Narrating the Urban. 3 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.
This course will explore the experience of urban space by examining how it is described in fine-grained, ethnographic accounts and in the thought experiments undertaken by science fiction writers. The purpose of the course is to focus on the evocation of the urban experience - how do we record or preserve what the city feels like as a physical place. Privileging the experience of space in this context is an attempt to complement conventional urban research that examines the dynamics of urban social life often without locating it in relation to the built environment of the city. Incorporating speculative or science fiction adds an experimental dimension (what would the city be like if...?) and emphasizes narrative, arguing that how exactly we describe and reproduce our experience is significant. Further, it raises an epistemological question about how we come to know what we know: can fiction "teach" us about the empirical world? How?

URBS UN3440 Shrinking Cities. 3 points.
While some cities thrive and struggle to house the global majority, others struggle with the effects of urban shrinkage—population loss, disinvestment and abandonment. The path to urban decline is paved by social, economic and spatial forces that result in shrinking cities. This class explores how to understand and engage with urban decline. It includes a consideration of sundry efforts to reverse, live with, and rethink urban decline in a variety of locales. The hope is that this exercise will shed light not only on iconic declining places like Detroit, but also on the nature of uneven development and how it is the rule rather than the anomalous exception within capitalist urbanization.

Course materials draw on disciplines such as planning, economics, architecture, history and sociology to help understand urban decline and its outcomes from a variety of perspectives. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate larger processes—globalization, deindustrialization and socioeconomic change—to understand how cities and communities responded to the consequences of these forces. We will engage with the global literature on shrinking cities but will be focused primarily on exploring the dynamics of shrinkage in US cities. To that end, following a wide-reaching examination of nation-wide phenomena, we will study in-depth a sample of cities to understand local and regional variations and responses. How do we treat cities that do not grow? Given the constrained or complete lack of resources in these places, to what extent should some cities be allowed to “die”? What is the impact on the residents that remain in these places?

Spring 2019: URBS UN3420
Course Number Section/Call Number Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
URBS 3420 001/08891 T Th 11:40am - 12:55pm 504 Diana Center

Fall 2019: URBS UN3440
Course Number Section/Call Number Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
URBS 3440 001/09859 M W 11:40am - 12:55pm 111 Milstein Center

URBS UN3450 Neighborhood and Community Development. 3 points.
New York City is made up of more than 400 neighborhoods. The concept
of neighborhoods in cities has had many meanings and understandings
over time. Equally complex is the concept of community used to describe
the people attached to or defined by neighborhood. While neighborhood
can be interpreted as a spatial, social, political, racial, ethnic, or even,
economic unit; community often refers to the group of stakeholders
(i.e. residents, workers, investors) whose interests directly align with the
conditions of their environment. Community development is “a process
where these community members come together to take collective
action and generate solutions to common problems” that result from the
changing contexts in their neighborhoods. Using a variety of theories
and approaches, residents organize themselves or work with community
development practitioners on the ground to obtain safe, affordable
housing, improve the public realm, build wealth, get heard politically,
develop human capital, and connect to metropolitan labor and housing
markets. To address the ever-changing contexts of neighborhoods,
community development organizations are taking on new roles and
adapting (in various cases) to larger forces within the city, region and
nation such as disinvestment, reinvestment, increased cultural diversity,
an uncertain macroeconomic environment, and changes in federal policy.

For more than a century, city-dwellers—and especially New Yorkers—have
been tackling these challenges. This course will examine both historic
and contemporary community building and development efforts, paying
special attention to approaches which were shaped by New York City.
This urban center, often described as a “city of neighborhoods,” has
long been a seedbed for community-based problem-solving inventions.
The course will focus on the theories (why?), tools (how?), and actors
(who?) within the field of community development practice and is
organized around important sectors (housing, economic development,
food systems, arts), case studies, and contested concepts (public
participation, social capital, public space).

URBS UN3464 Urban Ecologies and Grand Infrastructure: Metropolitan
Planning Issues. 3 points.
This lecture course is designed around different issues of metropolitan
regions around the worlds that govern and plan urbanized, risky and
vulnerable ecological systems and consequently large-scale urban
interventions that change the landscapes of the regions. The reality
of an age of drastic climate change and increasing number of natural
disasters in urbanized regions raises issues of resilience and ecological
governance. Metropolitan regions and the planning politics that lie
beneath the regional plans and strategic initiatives are critical in the
mitigation of some of these risks and in the understanding of regional
politics. Historical and contemporary case studies will prepare the
students to conduct their own critical analysis and reading of a case
where several themes discussed in class will be further explored.

URBS UN3467 Excavating the Empire City. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.
This course provides an introduction to the archaeology of New York
City and what (and how) archaeological research contributes to our
understanding of the city’s past. The course will be organized chronologically
and thematically. Students will explore each “stratigraphic layer” of
history and discover how each relates to key themes and theories in
urban studies. Readings and discussions will be enhanced by on-site
learning at a number of NYC archaeology-related locations. There are no
prerequisites.

URBS UN3480 From Homelessness to Foreclosure: NYC Geographies of
Shelter and Home. 4 points.
This course will examine the social, political, and economic elements
that have aligned in New York City to produce the most expansive
infrastructure of homeless shelters in the United States, as well as
ongoing changes in the city’s homeless policy since the housing
foreclosure crisis. While we will focus primarily on the past 30 to 40
years in New York City, we will consider the history of homelessness
and housing in the United States since the Great Depression. Major themes
will include criminalization, origin myths, and representations of people
who are experiencing homelessness. Key questions will include: In what
ways is the current geography of homelessness the result of historical
patterns of racism and discrimination? How does studying homelessness
provide insight into the ways urban spaces are made? Why have shelters
become the primary public response to homelessness in New York?
How are race and gender central to the project of building a shelter
infrastructure in New York? How are shelters experienced by those living
in them? What are some of the ways people living in shelters organize to
advocate for their rights and to resist mainstream representations?

URBS UN3485 Urban Political Economy. 3 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

What are the processes driving social change in contemporary cities?
How are urban spaces structured in power? This course introduces some
of the main concepts, theories, and ideas of contemporary scholarship
in urban political economy, with a focus on the history and institutions
of New York City. We will approach urban politics and economy from
a geographic and historical perspective in order to arrive at some
consensus conclusions about how urban spaces and places are made.
While New York City will be a primary focus, we will read case studies
and history on other cities as well. Throughout the course we will emphasize
the structural implications of class, race, and gender.

Spring 2019: URBS UN3450
Course Number Section/Call Number Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
URBS 3450 001/01220 M W 11:40am - 12:55pm 203 Diana Center Mary Rocco 3 35/40

Spring 2019: URBS UN3464
Course Number Section/Call Number Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
URBS 3464 001/08799 M W 1:10pm - 2:25pm 328 Milbank Hall Sevin Yildiz 3 32/45

Spring 2019: URBS UN3485
Course Number Section/Call Number Times/Location Instructor Points Enrollment
URBS 3485 001/01299 M W 10:10am - 11:25am 328 Milbank Hall Christian Sienel 3 28/40
URBS UN3540 Urban Governance in New York City. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

This course will introduce students to the study of urban governance, tackling the questions of how we organize cities and how we go about understanding that process. We will do this by looking at the case of New York City and, more specifically, at one if its neighborhoods. Accordingly, the assigned readings during the first part of the course will address urban governance both theoretically and—with regard to New York City—empirically. During the second half of the course, students will apply the covered readings to policy issues facing the neighborhood in question. In doing so, they will develop research skills and gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which concrete governance practices conform to but also always exceed our best attempts at theorizing them.

URBS UN3545 Junior Seminar: The Shaping of the Modern City. 4 points.
Prerequisites: Non-majors admitted by permission of instructor. Students must attend first class. Enrollment limited to 16 students per section.
General Education Requirement: Historical Studies.
Introduction to the historical process and social consequences of urban growth, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present.

URBS UN3562 The City in Beta: Public Participation in the Design Process. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

Prerequisites: Must attend first class for instructor permission. Preference is given to Urban Studies majors. Only 20 admitted. Examines local urban planning issues through the use of new technologies to facilitate multi-user, participatory planning and design. Examines the history and theory of the planning process and uses learned techniques to evaluate a live case scenario for which the students prepare recommendations using the Betaville software package.

URBS UN3565 Cities in Developing Countries: Problems and Prospects. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Must attend first class for instructor permission. Preference to Urban Studies majors.
This lecture course examines different facets of urban development and planning in cities of the developing countries. We will begin by studying common problems in developing urban regions, gaining an understanding of common settlement patterns and urban systems in changing metropolitan areas. The class aims to formulate a repository of concepts, urban trends, and terms around the ever-growing cities of the globe. We will also focus on specific issues in representative cities of the regions studied. These particular cases, which will be selected from cities in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, will present discussions of planning and policy development regarding water and sanitation, transportation and infrastructure, historic preservation, disaster risk reduction and housing. Students will also work in teams to analyze a particular urban problem in a developing city, and present team findings to the class via Canvas.

URBS UN3830 Eminent Domain and Neighborhood Change. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

Prerequisites: Intro to Urban Sociology or equivalent or permission of the instructor. Students must attend first class for instructor permission.
An examination of how the politics of eminent domain, as a government strategy for neighborhood change, plays out in the courts, city councils, administrative agencies, media, and the street. Readings drawn from law, history, planning, politics, economics, sociology, and primary sources. Emphasis on the U.S., with some international comparisons. This course will count toward Requirement A of the Urban Studies curriculum as a Sociology course.

URBS UN3833 New York City: Politics and Governing. 4 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

This course will examine through readings, class discussions, and in class debate, the complex politics and governing of New York City: the key political institutions, and who holds urban political power, voting and elections, and the changing roles of the electorate will be covered. We will examine the structure or New York City government and how the New York City Budget is developed and adopted; the interplay between Mayoral and City council powers, the city charter, the process of governing and the role of political parties, special interest groups, lobbyists and labor unions. We will look back in the City’s political history and consider that time in the mid 1970’s when New York City suffered a major fiscal crisis and was close to financial bankruptcy. In this context, New York City’s relationships with the state and federal governments will also be covered.
URBS UN3992 Senior Seminar. The Built Environment. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. Emphasizes the study of the built environment of cities and suburbs, and the related debates. Readings, class presentations, and written work culminate in major individual projects, under the supervision of faculty trained in architecture, urban design, or urban planning.

Fall 2019: URBS UN3992

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<td>Aaron Passell</td>
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URBS UN3993 Senior Seminar. The Built Environment. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. Emphasizes the study of the built environment of cities and suburbs, and the related debates. Readings, class presentations, and written work culminate in major individual projects, under the supervision of faculty trained in architecture, urban design, or urban planning.

Spring 2019: URBS UN3993

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URBS UN3994 Senior Seminar. New York Field Research. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. Using New York City as a research laboratory, under the guidance of the faculty coordinator, students clarify basic theoretical issues related to their chosen research problem; find ways of making a series of empirical questions operational; collect evidence to test hypotheses; analyze the data using a variety of social science techniques; and produce reports of basic findings.

Fall 2019: URBS UN3994

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URBS UN3995 Senior Seminar. New York Field Research. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. Using New York City as a research laboratory, under the guidance of the faculty coordinator, students clarify basic theoretical issues related to their chosen research problem; find ways of making a series of empirical questions operational; collect evidence to test hypotheses; analyze the data using a variety of social science techniques; and produce reports of basic findings.

Spring 2019: URBS UN3995

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URBS UN3996 Senior Seminar. International Topics in Urban Studies. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. A year-long research seminar for students who wish to conduct a senior thesis project that focuses on cities outside of the United States. Topics relating to the rapid urbanization of Latin America, Africa, and Asia are particularly welcome. Seminar meetings will include discussion of relevant readings, as well as occasional class presentations and peer-editing assignments.

Fall 2019: URBS UN3996

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URBS UN3997 Senior Seminar. International Topics in Urban Studies. 4 points.
(year-long course, 4 points per term)

Prerequisites: Senior standing. Year-long course; participation is for two consecutive terms. No new students admitted for spring. A year-long research seminar for students who wish to conduct a senior thesis project that focuses on cities outside of the United States. Topics relating to the rapid urbanization of Latin America, Africa, and Asia are particularly welcome. Seminar meetings will include discussion of relevant readings, as well as occasional class presentations and peer-editing assignments.

Spring 2019: URBS UN3997

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