UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Cities, Globalisation and Sustainability

Code: 106789
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Environmental Sciences	OP	4

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this
document.

Prerequisites

- Ability to read complex texts in English.
- Ability to work with Geographic Information Systems.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This course aims to study the processes of global change and transformation that have urban impacts on cities around the world. More specifically, it will analyze the challenges these transformations pose for the sustainable future of 21st-century cities and will delve into the study of the contemporary city as a nerve center of the political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural dynamics of today's society.

The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

- To describe, explain, and analyze the process of globalization through the study of specific historical moments, with special attention to the current context.
- To explain the relationship between globalization processes of all kinds -economic, political, environmental, social, and cultural- and the analysis of urban transformation dynamics that characterize cities today.

- To introduce the perspective of cities as spaces of flows (of capital, people, cultures, resources, etc.) and the paradigm of political ecology as an analytical approach to understanding current urban transformations.
- To analyze the most relevant challenges in achieving sustainable cities and urban-metropolitan spaces, with special attention to climate change and the main environmental impacts in different urban realities.
- To illustrate, through the explanation of specific case studies, the global processes of urban transformation across the planet, as well as the socio-environmental issues and challenges they pose in various geographical contexts around the world.

Learning Outcomes

1. CM44 (Competence) Interpret the social, economic and environmental impact of issues related to demographic flows, global change or management in companies.
2. CM45 (Competence) Identify the different philosophical, ethical and sociological conceptions of science and technology, recognising their evolution throughout history and their ethical and democratic implications in today's society.
3. CM46 (Competence) Contrast the different current and future options for environmental risk management, especially in the context of resource management, human health, and global and climate change.
4. KM57 (Knowledge) Identify the complex network of knowledge necessary to comprehensively address the main contemporary challenges in environmental science.
5. KM59 (Knowledge) Recognise the relationship between health, human activity and environmental factors.
6. SM56 (Skill) Identify the main threats associated with the use of the natural environment and their corresponding restoration mechanisms on a local and territorial scale.
7. SM58 (Skill) Analyse demographic, urbanisation and industrialisation processes, both on a global and local scale (especially in Catalonia), in terms of their respective impact on the environment.

Content

BLOCK I. City and Globalization

- Historical perspective and evolution of global processes (20th and 21st centuries)
- 21st-century cities
- Capital flows: urban tertiarization, global real estate markets, and gentrification
- Flows of people and cultures: migration, multiculturalism, and tourism

BLOCK II. City and Sustainability

- Urban Ecology and Urban Political Ecology
- Natural resource flows: water and energy
- Urban climate action
- The social dimension of urban sustainability
- The political dimension of urban sustainability

BLOCK III. The Cities of the World Today

- Cities in Europe and North America
- Cities in Latin America
- Cities in Asia
- Cities in Africa

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Practical sessions (PAUL and PLAB)	16.5	0.66	
Theoretical lessons (TE)	31.5	1.26	
Type: Supervised			
Practical exercices	20	0.8	
Preparation of activities	5	0.2	
Type: Autonomous			
Information search	18	0.72	
Personal study	35	1.4	
Reading and watching audiovisuals	20	0.8	
Self-learning tests	2	0.08	

Learning Activities of the Course

Directed Activities

Theoretical Classes (TE)
In the face-to-face theoretical sessions, the following activities will be carried out:

- Lectures: presentations by the teaching staff encouraging debate and student participation.
- In-class guided exercises: activities based on the active participation of students (usually through informal cooperative work) that will not require prior preparation.
- Prepared cooperative work: various formal cooperative activities will be carried out based on students' prior work (readings, viewing of audiovisual materials, or preparation of the activity).

Practical Sessions (PAUL and PLAB)
The practical sessions will be divided between classroom practices (PAUL) and practices using Geographic Information Systems (PLAB).

Some of these practices will require data collection and processing using statistical software. GIS practices will involve map production.

The instructors responsible for the practical sessions will provide detailed information about the activities to be carried out in each session. As a result of these activities, students will complete various exercises (some of which will span multiple sessions). Some exercises may require oral presentations by students.

This course is taught in Catalan. However, some practical sessions may also be conducted in Spanish.

Supervised Activities

Students will carry out, under supervision, the activities from the theoretical sessions (TE) that require prior preparation (readings, audiovisual viewing, or activity preparation), as well as the practical exercises derived from the practical sessions.

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in both theoretical and practical sessions. However, they may also consult with the teaching staff viathe virtual campus, email, or during scheduled in-person office hours (individually or in groups).

Autonomous Activities

Individual effort will be necessary to consolidate the theoretical classes and practical knowledge. Students are expected to work on these contents through continuous personal study throughout the course, completion of required readings, consultation of recommended bibliography, viewing of audiovisual materials, information searches for practical work, etc.

Additionally, a self-assessment test will be posted on the Virtual Campus for each content block, providing feedback to students.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final exam	40%	2	0.08	CM44, CM45, CM46
Participation in theory sessions (TE)	20%	0	0	KM57, KM59
Practical exercices	35%	0	0	SM56, SM58
Self-learning tests	5%	0	0	CM44, CM45, CM46

The assessment of the course is based on:

- Final exam: 40%
- Practical exercises (PAUL and PLAB): 35%
- Participation in theoretical sessions (TE): 20%
- Self-assessment tests: 5%

The final grade will be the weighted average of these four components. To pass the course, students must obtain a minimum grade of 5 in both the final exam and the average of the practical exercises.

Final Exam

At the end of the course, students must take an individual exam to assess the knowledge acquired throughout the course. All course content (theory, practicals, activities, readings, audiovisuals, etc.) may be included in the final exam.

Practical Exercises

Several group practical exercises will be carried out as part of the PAUL and PLAB sessions. To be assessed for an exercise, students must have attended the corresponding practical sessions.

At the beginning of the course, students will be informed about the exercises, their deadlines, and the weighting of each in the final grade.

Deadlines set by the practical instructors must be respected. Late submissions (up to 72 hours) will be penalized with a 20% reduction in the grade for that exercise.

Participation in Theoretical Sessions

The grade for participation in theoretical sessions (TE) will be based on various individual or group submissions related to activities proposed by the instructor (debates, summaries, cooperative work, oral presentations, etc.). Some of these activities may require prior preparation. Participation is not mandatory; however, if a student does not attend an activity, the grade will be zero (0), with no possibility of making it up later.

Self-Assessment Tests

For each content block, a self-assessment test will be posted on the Virtual Campus with a deadline for completion. Each of the three tests will count for one-third of this part of the grade and will provide feedback to the student.

Exam and Assignment Schedule

Exam and assignment dates will be communicated to students in advance and cannot be changed individually (except in exceptional, well-justified cases). Erasmus students requesting to take an exam early must present a written document from their home university justifying the request.

The date of the resit exam will be set by the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and cannot be changed.

Review of Grades

At the time of each assessment activity, the instructor will inform students of the procedure and date for reviewing grades.

Resits

The final exam and each practical exercise can be retaken if the grade is below 5. Activities not submitted are not eligible for resit.

Submissions related to theoretical sessions (TE) and self-assessment tests are not eligible for resit.

The maximum grade for any resit activity is 5.

Assessment activities involving irregularities are not eligible for resit.

Not Assessable

A student will be considered "not assessable" if they do not take the final exam and/or do not submit any practical exercises.

If an assessment activity is not completed, the grade will be 0, it will not be eligible for resit, and it will be included in the weighted average.

Plagiarism or Fraudulent Conduct

If a student commits any irregularity that could significantly affect the grade of an assessment activity, that activity will be graded with a 0, regardless of any disciplinary action thatmay follow. If multiple irregularities occur in the same course, the final grade for the course will be 0.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

In this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively for support tasks such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction, or translations. Students must clearly identify which parts were generated using AI and specify the tools used. Lack of transparency in the use of AI in an assessment activity will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in partial or total penalties in the grade, or more severe sanctions in serious cases.

Single Assessment

This course does not offer a single assessment option.

Bibliography

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Stiglitz, Joseph (2002). *El malestar de la globalización.* Taurus.

Vollmer, Lisa (2019). *Estrategias contra la gentrificación. Por una ciudad desde abajo.* Katakrac.

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WorldCities Report (2024). *Cities and Climate Action*. UNHABITAT.

Software

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Basic statistical software
- GIS software available at UAB

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	11	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	12	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	11	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	12	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed