UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Cities, Globalisation and Sustainability

2026/2027

Code: 107583
Credits: 6

Degree programme	Type	Course
Geography, Environmental Management and Regional Planning	OP	4

Contact lecturer

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Group languages

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

Prerequisites

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

Objectives

This is an elective course that can only be taken in the 4th year.

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

- CM19 (Propose solutions in a case study related to problems of inequality, population distribution and urbanisation.) Propose solutions in a case study related to problems of inequality, population distribution and urbanisation.
- KM25 (Illustrate the common and distinctive elements of cities in different regional areas of the world.) Illustrate the common and distinctive elements of cities in different regional areas of the world.
- KM27 (Cite the relevant sources of information to study territorial, environmental and urban dynamics in a specific study.) Cite the relevant sources of information to study territorial, environmental and urban dynamics in a specific study.
- SM21 (Solve practical exercises by exploiting data on urban issues of a social, scientific or ethical nature.) Solve practical exercises by exploiting data on urban issues of a social, scientific or ethical nature.
- SM22 (Analyse geographical dynamics (socio-demographic, geo-economic and environmental) at different territorial scales.) Analyse geographical dynamics (socio-demographic, geo-economic and environmental) at different territorial scales.

Contents

BLOCK I. City and Globalization

- Cities of the 21st century.
- Historical perspective and evolution of global processes.
- Capital flows: urban financialization, global real estate markets, and the shift towards a service economy (tertiarization).
- Flows of people and cultures: migrations and multiculturalism.
- Housing, gentrification, and the rise of urban tourism.

BLOCK II. City and Sustainability

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

BLOCK III. Cities of the World Today

- Cities in Europe.

- Cities in North America.
- Cities in Latin America.
- Cities in Asia.
- Cities in Africa.

Learning activities and methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Information search	18	0.72	
Practical exercices	20	0.8	
Personal study	35	1.4	
Reading and watching audiovisuals	20	0.8	
Practical sessions (PAUL and PLAB)	16.5	0.66	CM19, KM25, SM21, SM22
Preparation of activities	5	0.2	
Self-learning tests	2	0.08	
Theoretical lessons (TE)	31.5	1.26	KM25, KM27, SM22

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

Continuous assessment activities

Title	Weight	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Practical exercices	40%	0	0	CM19, KM25, SM21, SM22
Participation in theory sessions (TE)	15%	0	0	KM25, KM27
Final exam	40%	2	0.08	CM19, KM25, KM27, SM22
Self-learning tests	5%	0	0	KM25, KM27

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 calculated from the weighted average of these four activities. To pass the course, students must pass (grade of 5 or above) both the final exam and the average of the practical exercises.

Final Exam

At the end of the course, students will take an individual exam to assess the knowledge acquired throughout the course. All course content (theory, practicals, activities, readings, audiovisual materials, etc.) is subject to evaluation in the final exam.

Practical Exercises

Several individual or group practical exercises will be carried out as a result of the practical sessions. To be evaluated for an exercise, attendance at the practical sessions linked to that specific exercise is mandatory.

At the beginning of the semester, students will be informed about the exercises, their deadlines, and the weight of each one within this section of the grade.

Deadlines set by the practical sessions instructors must be respected. Late submission of practical exercises (up to a maximum of 72 hours) will be penalized with a 20% reduction of the grade for that specific exercise.

Participation in Theory Sessions

The grade for participation in theory sessions (TE) will be obtained through various submissions (individual or group) corresponding to the activities proposed by the teaching staff during these sessions (debates, summaries, cooperative work, oral presentations, etc.). Some of these activities may require prior preparation. Participation in these activities is not mandatory; however, non-attendance in any activity will result in a score of zero (0), with no possibility of submitting it at any other time.

Self-Learning Tests

Lastly, a self-learning test will be posted on the Virtual Campus for each block of the syllabus, with a deadline for completion. The test will provide feedback to the student. Completing each of the 3 tests will count for 1/3 of this section of the grade.

Schedule of Exams and Activity Submissions:

The dates for exams and activity submissions will be communicated to students sufficiently in advance and cannot be modified individually (except in exceptional and fully justified cases). Erasmus students requesting an early exam must present a written document from their home university justifying their request to the professor.

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

Review of Grades:

The maximum deadline for providing feedback and communicating the grades of the assessment activities is three weeks.

At the time of each assessment activity, the teaching staff will inform students of the procedure and date for grade reviews.

Retakes:

To be eligible for a retake, students must have been previously evaluated in a set of activities worth a minimum of 2/3 of the total course grade.

Students can retake the final exam and each of the practical exercises, provided they scored below 5. Practical exercises that were never submitted cannot be retaken.

Submissions from theory sessions (TE) activities and self-learning tests cannot be retaken.

Assessment activities where irregularities occurred cannot be retaken.

Non-Assessable:

A student will be considered "non-assessable" if they have not taken and submitted the final exam and/or if they have not submitted any practical exercise.

If an assessment activity (excluding the final exam) is not completed, the grade obtained for that activity will be zero (0), it will not be eligible for a retake, and it will be factored into the weighted average as such.

Plagiarism or Fraudulent Conduct:

If a student commits any irregularity that could lead to a significant variation in the grade of an assessment activity, that activity will be graded as zero (0), regardless of any disciplinary process that may be initiated. If multiple irregularities occur within the assessment activities of the same course, the final grade for the course will be zero (0).

Use of Artificial Intelligence:

For this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively for support tasks such as literature or information searches, text proofreading, or translations. Students must clearly identify which parts have been generated using this technology and specify the tools used. A lack of transparency regarding AI use in an assessable activity will be considered a breach of academic honesty and may result in a partial or total grade penalty for the activity, or major sanctions in severe cases.

Single Assessment:

This course does not offer a single assessment system.

Bibliography

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Software

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

Course groups and languages

The information provided is provisional until November 30. After this date, you will be able to consult the language of each group through this link. To access the information, you will need to enter the course CODE

Type of teaching	Group	Language	Semester	Shift
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	11	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	12	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed