



48-712 Issues of Global Urbanization

Instructor: Stefan Gruber

Abstract: Within our lifetime, the world population will swell to 10 billion citizens, 75% of which will live in cities. The seminar is an investigation into the future of cities focusing on three existential challenges of our urban age: the escalating environmental crisis, growing social inequity and technological dislocation. In the face of these wicked problems, we will address the role and agency of designers and planners, decision makers and citizens in tackling what Jeremy Rifkin describes as the *Third Industrial Revolution* and how to lay the foundational infrastructure for an emerging collaborative age. These issues are explored through contemporary writings and case studies that situate urban transformations in the US within a broader global context, with a specific focus on the political as articulated through the negotiation of top-down planning and bottom-up behavior of cities.

The seminar course will revolve around reading reflections, in-class presentations and discussions on theories and case studies of global urbanization, with. This is a 3- or 6-unit course that requires attendance at one 1.5-hours class per week. The extra credits involve a more extensive final paper.

Key Topics: Global Urbanization, Uneven Growth, Political Economy, Ecological Urbanism, Resilience, Cosmopolitan Localism, Smart Cities, Commons.

Course Relevance: An understanding of theories and practice of urbanism in global developments.

Course Goals: The seminar provides an understanding of the social, political, economic and environmental forces at play in shaping our built environment and reflects on the role and agency of designers and planners can have in building more resilient and sustainable cities.