



*Map of indigenous settlements of Gadap, Source: Karachi Indigenous Rights Alliance*

## CFA 62-525 / 62-725: Urban Nature, Architecture, and the Modern South Asian City

Units: 9

Instructor: Nida Rehman

Representations of cities in the so-called global south often present a lagging modernity amidst unrelenting urbanization, fractured infrastructures, social inequities, and climate catastrophe. In this seminar, we critically question such discourses, examining the historic and ongoing processes of colonial and capitalist enclosure, extraction, and exploitation that have shaped urban environments in South Asia from the mid-19th century onwards. As a critical nexus of the effects of the global climate crisis, South Asia provides an important case to investigate not only the technical but also cultural, social, political, and material dimensions of urban nature and the nature of the urban. Drawing on literature from architecture history, critical urban studies, political ecology, and environmental justice, and through close reading, analytical writing, and dialogue, we will examine how urban nature is enrolled in and reconfigured by processes of colonialism, caste/class/gender politics, and extractive development — while shaping everyday life, the built environment, and cultural norms. We will interrogate the spatial geographies and political ecologies of the modern South Asian city via colonial ideologies of improvement; racialized discourses of hygienic planning; developmentalism in the new nation states; neoliberal urbanization; and contemporary discourses of sustainability, resilience, and smart cities. We will also think with recent scholarly and activist perspectives that counter the destructive and unjust processes of capitalist urbanization to envision and shape alternative ecological and spatial futures.