When I applied to participate in the Piedmont Project, I was aware of many of the sustainability issues that Megacities and Slums pose for urban development, but the workshop heightened my awareness of some issues in particular.

Rapid urban growth – particularly in cities that already house more than 10 million people – poses fundamental challenges to the provision of key public services like potable water and the removal of sewage and solid waste. Informal settlements – or “Slums” – are fundamentally unsustainable in the due to the issues of precarity, poverty, and inequality that the course explores. Ironically, these settlements also rely on sustainable practices, as their residents build homes from found materials, and many collect and sell recyclable materials to make a living.

I think the parts of the workshop that influenced my thinking the most were actually learning about Emory’s many efforts to reduce its environmental impact by building LEED-certified structures, developing the Waterhub, and preserving greenspace. What struck me the most is how much planning (and technology) goes into these processes – and how planning is precisely what is missing in informal settlements.

I had originally planned on developing the course on Slums/Informal Settlements only, but it occurred to me that the focus on Megacities as well allows an exploration of how some cities have developed innovative solutions precisely because of pressures on natural resources (e.g. Singapore), or a political will to prioritize specific problems (e.g. transportation in Bogotá under Peñalosa), or the need to retrofit infrastructure for large segments of the population (e.g. water and sanitation in “Neza-Chalco-Izta” in Mexico City).

On a more personal note, I was rather horrified to realize that despite all my other efforts, my carbon footprint is determined by the 2-3 transcontinental flights (RT) I take each year!
**DEPARTMENT:** Global Health

**COURSE NUMBER:** TBD  

**SEMESTER:** (Fall 2018?)

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**COURSE TITLE:** Megacities and Slums: Global Health and Sustainable Development

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**INSTRUCTOR NAME:** Karen Andes, PhD.

**INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

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PHONE: 404-727-5454

SCHOOL ADDRESS OR MAILBOX LOCATION:

OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

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**BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Around the year 2010, the world's urban population outnumbered its rural population for the first time. By 2050, an estimated 70% of the world’s population will live in urban areas, including a rising number of “Megacities” and the expansion of hundreds of small to midsize cities. Over the same period, the potential proliferation of informal settlements – or “slums” –is tremendous. Currently, about a quarter of the world’s urban population lives in “slums,” which are typically poor, informal settlements characterized by inadequate housing, overcrowding, “illegal” or insecure land tenure, poor nutrition and/or food insecurity, as well as a lack of infrastructure (e.g. water, sewage, sanitation, electricity) and access to public services (e.g. education and health services). Because such settlements are typically built on relatively undesirable land, they also tend to be susceptible to natural disasters.

This course takes a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the challenges that rapid urbanization poses for progress in global health and sustainable development worldwide. The course will begin with an overview of processes and consequences of rapid urbanization from multiple disciplines, as well as an overview of challenges currently experienced in many Megacities and Slums such as: informality, precarity, inequality, sustainability, vulnerability to disasters, etc. The second part of the course will introduce the comparative historical method, outline a framework for students’ comparative analyses of specific cities/slums, and allow time for students to present their small groups’ analysis to the class.

The course focuses on Megacities and Slums as fundamentally un-sustainable urban forms in their current contexts, and seeks to identify more sustainable future pathways.
LIST SCHOOL LEVEL, DEPARTMENT, AND/OR PROGRAM COMPETENCIES
Each course will include school level, departmental or concentration competencies as is required by CEPH accreditation.

1. Assess the major forces that influence the health of populations around the world
2. Critique major global priorities and the reasons for their prioritization
3. Critique the evidence for improving health delivery systems and health status of individuals, communities, and populations around the world

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify key features of Megacities and Slums that challenge sustainable paths toward health and development.
2. Evaluate the relative importance of key features of contemporary urban environments in health and development outcomes.
3. Apply Comparative Historical Methodology to the empirical study of one city/slum case study.

EVALUATION

Student learning will be evaluated through the following methods:

Individual Grades
1. Attendance/Participation: 30%. Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage the weekly readings in discussion. After the first absence, 2 points will be deducted for each subsequent absence.
2. Book Review: 15%. Students will select a monograph/book to read and review in writing.
3. Book Review Critiques: 10%. Students will read and critique 2 of their peers’ Book Reviews.

Group Grades
1. Group Presentation: 15%. Presentation of case study in Cities on a Finite Planet.
2. Group Presentation: 25%. Comparative City/Slum Case Study Final Presentation.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE
The RSPH requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic course of study must be the original work of the student.
**Week 1: Cities, Megacities and Slums**

- Syllabus and Course Overview

  **Documentary:** “Slums: Cities of Tomorrow” (1:22)
  
  *This documentary seeks to address the housing problem in the age of urban overcrowding by looking at structures built on a human scale from a sociological and philosophical perspective.*

**Week 2: Urbanization and Development in Global Perspective**


- **Video:** Andrew Marr’s Megacities – Living in the City (Episode 1)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fo6dpahxPM

**Week 3. Urbanization Research in Historical Perspective**


- **Video:** Andrew Marr’s Megacities – Cities on the Edge (Episode 2)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJYrdwbfkkek

**Week 4. Urbanization and Poverty**


- **Video:** Andrew Marr’s Megacities – Sustaining the City (Episode 3)  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4OsB9R7kx8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4OsB9R7kx8)

**Week 5. Urbanization and Sustainability**


- **Documentary:** *H2O mx*  
  *Can a megacity mobilize its 22 million citizens for sustainable water consumption?*  
  *Mexico City was built in the middle of a lake. This film is an environmental case of study of the Valley of Mexico in its struggle to save itself from water shortage, while the population keeps on growing.*

**Week 6. Health in Global Cities**


Week 7. Informality


Week 8. Inequality


Week 9. Comparative Historical Method


**Week 10. Comparative Disaster Risk: Cities on a Finite Planet**


- **Student Presentations**: Students will sign up to present case study chapters on Bangalore, Bangkok, Dar es Salaam, Durban, London, Manizales, Mexico City, New York, and Rosario from *Cities on a Finite Planet*.

**Week 11. Gender**


- **Student Presentations**: Cities/Slums Case Studies

**Week 12. Youth**


- **Presentation**: Karen Andes, “Emerging Adulthood among Youth in the Bañados of Asuncion, Paraguay.”
- **Student Presentations**: Cities/Slums Case Studies

**Week 13. Potential Solutions**


- **Student Presentations**: Cities/Slums Case Studies

**Week 14. Case Studies**

- **Student Presentations**: Cities/Slums Case Studies