Summary
Asia’s recent urbanization has been rapid and unexpected, and Asian cities are now becoming petri dishes for the study of overlapping trends and cultures. The built form of these cities also reflects colliding ideologies in subtle but consequential ways. This seminar explores the political, social, and economic forces behind this urban transformation. Topics include socio-economic inequality, public space, migration, cultural preservation, informal housing, LGBT rights, and environmental protection, among others. For each topic, the seminar will examine the underlying themes of change, agency, and representation, repeatedly asking “who wins and who loses” and exploring how the particularities of Asian cases help us interpret and confront similar forces across an increasingly unsettled world. Students will have the freedom, through assignments and presentations, to guide their own experience in the seminar as preparation for a career in practice, academia, or the global commentariat. While most geographies of East and Southeast Asia will be addressed at some stage of the seminar, students are encouraged to “adopt” a country or city that interests them and use the topics structuring the seminar to better understand that place. Class format will be discussion, and students should be prepared to speak thoughtfully and critically about readings; everyone is expected to contribute daily. Students will have an opportunity to present three times during the semester, twice about an assigned or chosen article and once about the student’s original paper. This class requires reading, participation, and creativity, and students will be assessed as such.

Course prerequisites
No previous coursework is formally assumed. However, it is helpful to have a passing familiarity with salient economic, social, and environmental issues, which those who pay even casual attention to current events probably already have. Your prerequisites are passion, curiosity, and commitment, and I will know soon whether you meet this modest and very reasonable expectation.

Course materials
Weekly readings will consist of book chapters, scholarly articles, and research reports. Efforts will be made to assign articles that are easily available through the Cornell online library or through Google Scholar. You will be responsible for procuring your own copies of these, which is an opportunity to develop a very useful skill.

Student expectations
- Seminars function well only when people attend. I will take attendance each session, and I expect to be informed in advance if you plan to be absent. A noticeable number of absences will elicit an inquiry from me and a reduction in class participation grade.
- Students should comport themselves with consideration for the needs of fellow students and teaching staff, and should refrain from distracting behavior. Mobile phone use is not permitted, and laptop use is permitted only for course-related purposes. I reserve the right to modify these rules at any time.
- Students must observe the university’s Code of Academic Integrity in all matters.
- Students are responsible for being aware of all announcements made in lectures and on Blackboard.
Asian Urbanization: Policy, Space, and Society

Accommodations for students with disabilities
In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made.

Grading breakdown (undergrads: no final paper required; other components 33%)
- 25%: class participation (attendance; active engagement in discussions)
- 25%: presentations (2; dates to be assigned; 15-minute presentation and lead a subsequent discussion)
- 25%: reflective essays (3; between 1,000 and 1,200 words apiece)
- 25%: final paper + presentation (academic-style article or policy brief between 2,000 and 2,500 words)

For students who have taken my 5120 Public and Spatial Economics course, the reflective essay is similar in format to the commentaries, except that reference material should (primarily) come from assigned readings. For these essays, select a topic and place, apply concepts introduced by the readings, and extend existing ideas with your own creative analysis based on additional hyperlinked material (journal or press articles, data, etc.). This is original work that is at once analytical and editorial. I expect you to interact thoughtfully with the material and offer well-reasoned views.

Important dates
February break: No class Mon 2/20
Spring break: No class April 1-10
May Day (International Workers’ Day): No class Mon 5/1
Due dates: Reflective essays: Mar 3, Mar 31, May 10; Paper: April 28

Overview of topics
I. Policy
   a. The hills are high and the emperor far away: devolution and local government
   b. Steering or rowing? Statist developmentalism and its legacies
   c. Thumb wars: political economy and power
   d. Taking out the trash: realities and challenges of public service delivery

II. Space
   a. Coast, car, and cable: explaining spatial imbalances in economic growth
   b. Global capital, local space: preserving the public city
   c. Elastic waistbands: urban infrastructure at its limits
   d. Over the threshold: from informal housing to guarded gates

III. Society
   a. The poet and the muse: expression and mobilization
   b. Global cities and civic image: who wins, who loses?
   c. Movement of labor or labor movement? Work and migration
   d. A bridge too far? Civic engagement and environmental resilience
I. Policy

a. The hills are high and the emperor far away: devolution and local government (Jan 30/Feb 1)


b. Steering or rowing? Statist developmentalism and its legacies (Feb 6/8)


c. **Thumb wars: political economy and power** (Feb 13/15)


d. **Taking out the trash: realities and challenges of public service delivery** (Feb 22)


II. Space

a. **Coast, car, and cable: explaining spatial imbalances in economic growth** (Feb 27/Mar 1)


b. **Global capital, local space: preserving the public city** (Mar 6/8)


c. **Elastic waistbands: urban infrastructure at its limits** (Mar 13/15)


Achieving Sustainable Mobility (Paul Barter).


d. **Over the threshold: from informal housing to guarded gates** (Mar 20/22)


III. Society

a. **The poet and the muse: expression and mobilization** (Mar 27/29)


b. **Global cities and civic image: who wins, who loses?** (Apr 10/12)


Asian Urbanization: Policy, Space, and Society

c. Movement of labor or labor movement? Work and migration (Apr 17/19)


Yeoh, B. (2016). Migration and Gender Politics in Southeast Asia. Migration, Mobility, & Displacement, 2(1).


d. A bridge too far? Civic engagement, environmental resilience, and livability (Apr 24/26)


May 1, 3, 8, 10: Spill-over days and paper presentations