**GEG6148**

**The Public Life of Cities**

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**Module convenor:** Dr Regan Koch [r.koch@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:r.koch@qmul.ac.uk)

Office: 2.09 City Centre

Advice and Feedback hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm (in person), Wednesday 12-1pm (Teams)

**Teaching support:** Natasha Sharma [natasha.sharma@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:natasha.sharma@qmul.ac.uk)

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**Class sessions:** Tuesdays 12-1:30 in Geog 226 (Weeks 2-11) \*Week 1 will be in GC601

Fridays 4-5:30 in 1.13 in Bancroft 3.26 (Weeks 1-6; Weeks 8-11 optional)

**Module aims:**

This module provides an engagement with urban geography and interdisciplinary urban studies. Students will be introduced to a range of ideas, concepts and key thinkers that help in trying to understand and analyze urban environments. Topics and case studies draw on cities from around the globe, centering on matters of public space and urban publicness; urban transformation and social innovation; urban design and planning; government and regulation; and the social production of space though encounters among people, objects, and (im)material forces. Key concerns are with how people manage common problems, share resources (or not) and organize different forms of collective culture. The aim is that students become better equipped to comprehend and address the problems and potentials of an increasingly urbanized world.

**Learning outcomes:**

• To examine the social, economic, cultural and political dynamics that shape cities and urbanisation

• To introduce some of the key intellectual foundations and debates within contemporary urban geography

• To present case studies that are paradigmatic to different patterns of urbanization

• To give students an overview of various problems and potentials of cities and urban life

**Assessment:** 100% coursework, one submission of 3000 words (maximum) due at 2pm, 15th April 2024 via QM+.

**Module outline** by week

1. How to think about cities: an introduction to urban studies

2. Public space: longstanding concerns, recent debates

3. Urban publicness: towards a multidimensional approach

4. Social relations in public life: encounters, enchantments, and inequalities

5. Stigmatised people and places (NS, with RK)

6. Hospitable cities, caring publics (RSN, with RK)

7. Reading week.

8. Urban materialities (Friday with Tower Hamlets Urban Planning

9. Urban design, planning and development (Both days with Tower Hamlets Urban Planning)

10. Managing common problems: government and regulation – Friday, no class (Bank holiday)

11. Social infrastructure and the post-Covid City

12. Coursework Q+A (online)

**QM+**

The GEG6148 page on QM+ will provide almost everything you need for the module, including an overview for each, readings and assessment information. Please let us know if you’re having any problems with the page.

**Coursework** is comprised of two parts, submitted as a single document.

**Part A**consists of 4 possible questions, you will select one to answer.  These questions will be revealed and discussed in Week 4. You will have the opportunity to receive **advice and feedback on an essay plan** **or draft** (1pg max) if you submit one via QM+ by Friday 8thth March.

**Part B**consists of 4 possible questions, you will select one to answer. These questions will be revealed in Week 8. You will have the opportunity to receive advice and feedback on an essay plan (1pg max) if you submit one by 29th March. Following the final class session in Week 12, all questions will need to be asked via the Mo dule Forum on QM+.

**Reading**

To genuinely develop new ways of thinking critically about urban geographies, a focused programme of reading is vital. You should schedule protected time for reading at a few points throughout each week. Many of the academic papers are dense and will require sustained concentration and sometimes re-visiting. **A good rule of thumb is that every week of class should involve approximately 4 hours of reading.**

Each week, you are expected to read the **Required Readings** which can be accessed via QM+. Each week also features 1-2 **Key Thinkers on Cities.** You are also encouraged to read about these thinkers, as well as do some of the other **Recommended Readings**. The reading list for each topic is designed to give you a wide choice as to which aspects you wish to follow up in more detail. You should demonstrate engagement with Essential and Recommended readings in your coursework, as well as demonstrate original thought and creativity.

Journals that you might want to engage with include *Urban Studies*, *Urban Geography*, *City*, *Cities* and *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (IJURR). Websites and blogs with a good range of urban articles include Atlantic Cities, CityLab, Guardian Cities and OnLondon.

**Preliminary/Foundational Reading**

The following texts are good for comprehensive overviews of what urban geography involves. These are not required, but you might choose to read one of these alongside your weekly readings, or at the culmination of the

module in preparation for assessment.

Bridge, G. and Watson, S. (2010) *The Blackwell City Reader*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gandy, M. (ed) (2011) *Urban Constellations*. Berlin: Jovis.

Jonas, A., McCann, E. and Thomas, M. (2015) *Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Koch, R. and Latham, A. (2017) *Key Thinkers on Cities*. London: Sage.

Latham, A., McCormack, D., McNamara, K., and McNeil, D. (2009) *Key Concepts in Urban Geography*. London: Sage

Paddison, R. and McCann, E. (2014) *Cities and Social Change: Encounters with Contemporary Urbanism*. London: Sage.