



URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY

OPEN ACCESS LEARNING
MATERIAL

Produced by Mikko Poutanen, Timo Uotinen, Anna Rajala and Anni Kangas as part of the research project Assembling a Postcapitalist International Political Economy (Academy of Finland project no 325976) in collaboration with Mika Hyötyläinen, Ville Kellokumpu, Daria Krivonos, Derek Ruiz and Özlem Çelik

August 2023
Inquiries: Mikko Poutanen
(mikko.poutanen@tuni.fi)



URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This five-week module aims to deepen understanding of how political-economic relations shape and constrain policies aimed at promoting urban sustainability. The lectures examine urban sustainability across scales from the local to the global and further to the planetary, also problematising the “methodological cityism” of urban studies. The lectures highlight the importance of examining urban sustainability dynamics beyond Eurocentric contexts and including themes such as racial capitalism into inquiries about urban sustainability.

The lectures have been recorded at Tampere University in autumn 2022 and edited by Timo Uotinen and Anna Rajala. The lecture series and video production were supported by Tampere University’s Politics Degree Programme, Postcape research project and the STUE (Sustainable Transformations of the Urban Environments) profiling area.

The videos will be available for non-commercial use on the YouTube channel of the Postcape research project until the end of the year 2025 (<https://www.youtube.com/@assemblingpostcape7145>).

We hope that the lectures and the readings are helpful for anyone interested in urban political economy and sustainability. In this handout, after the presentation of the five-week course programme, we have included an example of how we constructed a master’s level course around the lectures and readings recommended by each lecturer.

COURSE PROGRAMME

WEEK 1

Özlem Celik:

Financialisation of Housing and the Role of the State: Can Sustainability be Achieved?

LECTURE (1 hr 18 min)

<https://youtu.be/Fu4yoa5FsVc?si=XkXEI-BS498eJcj7>

READINGS


Castree, Noel & Brett Christophers (2015) Banking spatially on the future: Capital Switching, Infrastructure, and the Ecological Fix, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105:2, 378–386, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.985622>



Çelik, Özlem (2023) The roles of the state in the financialization of housing in Turkey, *Housing Studies*, 38:6, 1006–1026, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2021.1928003>



Long, Joshua & Rice, Jennifer L. (2019) From sustainable urbanism to climate urbanism. *Urban Studies*, 56:5, 992–1008, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018770846>

 Taylor, Zac J. & Manuel B. Aalbers (2022) Climate gentrification: risk, rent, and restructuring in greater Miami, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 112:6, 1685–1701, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2021.2000358>

WEEK 2


Daria Krivonos:


Ukrainian Migration, Racial Capitalism and Labour

LECTURE (58 min)

https://youtu.be/ixud_7_QXc?si=zRSCflujQqYY_ujd

READINGS

 Krivonos, Daria (2023) Racial capitalism and the production of difference in Helsinki and Warsaw, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49:6, 1500–1516, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2154911>

 Krivonos, Daria (2020) Ukrainian farm workers and Finland's regular army of labour, *Raster.fi*, 30 April 2020, <https://raster.fi/2020/04/30/ukrainian-farm-workers-and-finlands-regular-army-of-labour/>

WEEK 3

Derek Ruez:

The Politics of Compassionate Urbanism

LECTURE (1 h 8 min)

https://youtu.be/KUjl-Cr0O-E?si=M0MNSXxmpx_t5l4d

READINGS

 Danewid, Ida (2020) The fire this time: Grenfell, racial capitalism and the urbanisation of empire. *European Journal of International Relations*, 26:1, 289–313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066119858388>

Ruez, Derek & Trushna Parekh (2019) 'There is no political agenda', *City*, 23:1, 17–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2019.1575078>



WEEK 4

Ville Kellokumpu:

The Violent Abstractions of 'the Urban': From a Depoliticized Urbanism towards a Political Economy of Space

LECTURE (49 min)

https://youtu.be/9AO_o0qHlMs?si=YDtF_j5bZCUCxgcm

READINGS



Kellokumpu, Ville (2023) Depoliticizing urban futures: visionary planning and the politics of city-regional growth, *Regional Studies*, 57:4, 617–628, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2021.1980206>

Luukkonen, Juho & Heikki Sirviö (2019) The politics of depoliticization and the constitution of city-regionalism as a dominant spatial-political imaginary in Finland, *Political Geography*, 73: 17–27, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.05.004>

WEEK 5

Mika Hyötyläinen:

From Welfare Cities to Property Cities: The Political Economy of Public Real Estate Policy in the Nordics

LECTURE (1 hr 6 min)

<https://youtu.be/T3yM-9YZVrA?si=VZbcesmB2G0mg2nF>

READINGS



Adisson, Félix & Artioli, Francesca (2020) Four types of urban austerity: Public land privatisations in French and Italian cities. *Urban Studies*, 57:1, 75–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019827517>

Hyötyläinen, Mika & Anne Haila (2018) Entrepreneurial public real estate policy: The case of Eiranranta, Helsinki, *Geoforum*, 89, 137–144, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.04.001>

Olsson, Lina (2018) The neoliberalization of municipal land policy in Sweden. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 42:4, 633–650, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12651>



COURSE FORMAT

We used the lectures as a part of a 5 ECTS module where students were required to

- Watch/attend the lectures
- Participate in Moodle discussions based on the assigned extra readings
- Write an essay on a theme related to the lectures
- Attend a student mini-conference where they presented their essays and had some other conference responsibilities (e.g. chairing, acting as a discussant)

Instructions for Moodle Forum discussions

In Moodle, we asked students to go to the Forum designated for each lecture and engage in discussion about the readings and the lecture with other students. The course teacher participated actively in discussions, offering alternative perspectives, linking students' comments together to encourage interchange from different contexts and posed critical further questions.

In each post, we asked the students to reflect on the following five points and to engage with others:

- 1) What do you think was the main point of the lecture and the readings?
- 2) What did you find insightful?
- 3) What did you find difficult to understand?
- 4) How does the content relate to your own experiences of urban and non-urban environments (feel free to offer examples).

The students were expected to a) post their own four points and b) comment on at least two (2) posts from other students. In the discussion, they were also asked to reflect on how the lecture and the readings challenged, changed, or deepened their understanding of the readings.

Essay instructions

- topic of the essay is related to the themes of the course
- length of the essay is 6–8 pages, 1.5 spacing, font 12 Times New Roman (or similar)
- writing and argumentation is based on academic, preferably peer-reviewed articles or books/book chapters
- sources are properly cited following a citation system of your choice (e.g. APA, Chicago Style, the “Finnish style”)
- writing follows the university's instructions on written assignments (available on Moodle)
- grading (0–5) is based on the university's evaluation criteria (available on Moodle)

Student mini-seminar

Students present their essays in a half-day seminar where they were also tasked with other duties, such as acting as a chair and/or discussant.

