

# PIA5500: UNDERSTANDING THE MODERN METROPOLIS

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Understanding the Modern Metropolis

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

5500

### Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

POL5500 Understanding the Modern Metropolis

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course aims to provide the general theoretical backcloth for the programme, to offer a map of the relevant academic literature for prospective urban managers and an understanding of the key drivers of urbanization and urban change in and beyond Asia. It will explore the key contributors to our theoretical and conceptual understanding of the contemporary city, the notable paradigm shifts in urban theory and different disciplinary perspectives on urbanism and urbanization. In doing so, the course will engage with the following topics: what is a city?; urbanization and demography; cities, the global and the local; cities and economic competitiveness; social justice, inequality and the differentiated city; shifting geographies of urbanization and cities in particular regions; urban change and conflict; city futures and sustainability. Particular attention will be given to Asian urbanization and the extent to which our current theoretical understanding of urban processes and urbanization remains inappropriately western-centric.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Identify and critique the key theoretical perspectives on cities	30	x		
2	Summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change	30	x		
3	Judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues	20	x		
4	Present your ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms	20		x	

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	To provide both navigational and inspirational input. To excite and interest you in the key theoretical debates on urbanism and urban change and to demonstrate your relevance to the management of cities.	1, 2	2 hours per week

2	Presentation and discussion	Focused presentation and discussion on key issues / reading to deepen understanding of academic literature and to enhance communication skills.	1, 2, 3, 4	1 hours every week
3	Essay Writing	to develop and refine ability in integrating information, analytical and communication skills	1, 2, 3, 4	
4	Readings	close reading of one key article or book chapter per week to broaden understanding of the academic and policy debates-with supplementary reading as appropriate.	1, 2, 3	

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class presentation / discussant	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	No
2	Course essays (3 essays of different lengths with a total of 5000 words)	1, 2, 3	70	-	No
3	In-Class Test	1, 2, 3	10	-	Yes

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Additional Information for ATs**

If a course has both coursework and examination components, students are required to pass BOTH the coursework assessment AND the examination before they can be awarded an overall passing grade of the course.

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Class presentation / discussant (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

Present ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating excellent ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Demonstrating good ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Demonstrating adequate ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Marginal**

(D) Partial but inadequate ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

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**Assessment Task**

Course essay (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

Demonstrating critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating comprehensive and critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Demonstrating good critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Demonstrating adequate critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Marginal**

(D) Partial but inadequate critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of critical understanding of course content or its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

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**Assessment Task**

Class Quiz (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

**Criterion**

Summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating excellent ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) Demonstrating good ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Demonstrating adequate ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Marginal**

(D) Demonstrating partial but inadequate ability to Summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

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**Assessment Task**

Class presentation / discussant (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

**Criterion**

Present ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating excellent ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Good**

(B+, B) Demonstrating good ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Demonstrating adequate ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of ability in presenting ideas on urbanization systematically and critically, both in verbal and written forms

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**Assessment Task**

Course essay (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

**Criterion**

Demonstrating critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating comprehensive and critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Good**

(B+, B) Demonstrating good critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Demonstrating adequate critical understanding of urban theory and its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of critical understanding of course content or its relevance to urban management issues and challenges

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**Assessment Task**

Class Quiz (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

**Criterion**

Summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrating excellent ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Good**

(B+, B) Demonstrating good ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Marginal**

(B-, C+, C) Demonstrating adequate ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

**Failure**

(F) Little evidence of ability to summarise the key drivers of contemporary urban change and judge the relevance of different theoretical perspectives to contemporary urban problems and issues

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**Part III Other Information****Keyword Syllabus**

Urban theory; Marx;Weber; Chicago School; structuralism; demography; urban-rural migration; segregation; polarisation; stratification; global cities; deindustrialisation; post-industrialism; postmodernism; network society; managerialism

**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (Eds.). (2010). <i>The Blackwell city reader</i> . John Wiley.
2	Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (Eds.). (2011). <i>The new Blackwell companion to the city</i> . John Wiley.
3	City (2009) Special Issue: <i>Cities for People, not for Profit</i> , 13,2-3
4	Dear, M., & Dishman, J. D. (Eds.). (2001). <i>From Chicago to LA: Making sense of urban theory</i> . Sage.
5	Graham, S. (2011). <i>Cities under siege: The new military urbanism</i> . Verso Books.
6	Hannigan, J. (2013). <i>Fantasy city: Pleasure and profit in the postmodern metropolis</i> . Routledge.
7	Nature (2010) <i>Science and the City</i> Special Issue a, L.J.C. & F. Wu (2013) (Eds.) <i>Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy and Space</i> , Oxford: Routledge,
8	Neuwirth, R. (2005). <i>Shadow cities: a billion squatters, a new urban world</i> (pp. 309-316). New York: Routledge.
9	Parker, S. (2003). <i>Urban theory and the urban experience: encountering the city</i> . Routledge.
10	Roy, A. (2009). <i>The 21st-century metropolis: new geographies of theory</i> . <i>Regional Studies</i> , 43(6), 819-830.

11	Sassen, S. (2000). New frontiers facing urban sociology at the Millennium. <i>The British journal of sociology</i> , 51(1), 143-159.
12	Wu, Weiping (2013) <i>The Chinese City</i> , London: Routledge

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	Key Journals:
2	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research
3	Urban Studies
4	Urban Geography
5	Environment and Planning
6	City