

POLI 3809: Urban Poverty in Developing Countries (Honors Seminar)

Instructor: Dr. Emily Rains, erains@lsu.edu
Class times: Tuesdays, 9 am – 11:50 am
Location: 210 Stubbs Hall

Office: Stubbs Hall 232
Student office hours: Wed, 3– 5
or by appointment

Overview:

Nearly *one billion people* around the world live in urban “slums” — high poverty neighborhoods that lack formal housing rights and basic services. With Africa and South Asia projected to become majority urban by 2050, the world’s urban population is increasing on an unprecedented scale. Most growth will be in slums in developing countries, posing substantial challenges to sustainable development. This honors seminar focuses on the political implications of these urbanization trends. Our discussions will be motivated by questions such as the following: What do we know about lived experiences in slums? When and how do residents turn to politics to solve problems associated with poverty and informality? How do differences in local political conditions and behavior lead to diverse development outcomes?

Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will be able to

- Discuss key empirical patterns of urbanization trends in developing countries
- Describe characteristics and policy challenges unique to urban slums
- Think critically about how local conditions shape the political behavior of urban slum residents and what this implies for development outcomes
- Evaluate the key takeaways of an ethnographic book based on how it connects to concepts discussed in class
- Develop an original research proposal that would advance knowledge on urban poverty and politics in low and middle-income countries

Prerequisites:

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. Many of the assigned papers will include presentations of statistical data analyses. Previous coursework in statistics may be helpful in reading these papers but *is not required*. We will discuss how to read quantitative articles in the social sciences in class and I will provide additional support during office hours.

Required books:

Boo, K. (2014). *Behind the beautiful forevers*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks.

- The e-book is available through the LSU library. Please let me know if you have any issues gaining access.

Grading and assignments:

- Participation: 15%
- Discussion facilitation: 15%
- Paper response to *BTBF*: 15%
- Final paper proposal: 10%
- Final conference presentation: 15%
- Final paper: 30%

*Course structure and assignments are modeled after Dr. Gunderson's Spring 2020 honors seminar (The Politics of Punishment).

The final grades will be calculated in the following way:

100-98 = A+

97-93 = A

92-90 = A-

87-89 = B+

86-83 = B

82-80 = B-

79-77 = C+

76-73 = C

72-70 = C-

69-67 = D+

66-63 = D

62-60 = D-

Participation (15%):

Attending and being prepared for class is mandatory and will account for 15% of the final grade. This is an honors seminar, so courses will be based on discussions and in-person activities rather than lectures. You are expected to complete the assigned readings **before** each class and you will be required to post 2-3 discussion questions or comments based on the readings to Moodle ahead of each class. The participation grade will be determined from how often the discussion questions are posted *on time* as well as also active participation during the class discussions. You will be permitted to skip two days of posting reflection questions before it begins to affect your participation grade.

Discussion facilitation (15%):

You will be required to facilitate the discussion of one session throughout the semester (to be chosen in the first class). As a facilitator, you will help guide that class, by helping to pose questions and reflections to the group based on that week's readings. For that week, you will not be required to post discussion questions ahead of time to Moodle. Instead, you will write an approximately 5-page reflection document on that week's readings that will be due on Moodle before the start of that class. This document should summarize each of the readings,

following this guide (Green, Amelia Hoover. (2013). “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps” : https://calgara.github.io/Pol157_Spring2019/howtoread.pdf). In other words, for each paper you will summarize the following:

- the main question(s) the article tries to answer
- the main argument(s) of the article
- the evidence used in the article
- the author’s stated and unstated assumptions

In addition to summarizing each paper, you will reflect on how the papers complement or contradict one another, how they build on readings from the previous week, and what new questions they generate. You will also prepare 5 to 10 questions on the readings and themes that can be posed to the class during that day’s discussion.

Final paper proposal (10%):

By **October 5th**, you will need to have your final paper topic approved by me (see below for more information on the final paper). By **October 11th at 11:59 pm**, you will complete a 2-page proposal on your final paper topic that you will share with me and one other student for feedback. The proposal should briefly describe the research topic, why you think it is an interesting topic, how it relates to the course content, how you plan to research the related existing literature on the topic, and a tentative set of hypothesis that you plan to design a test for. Each student will also review one other student’s proposal and provide constructive written feedback to the student. The proposal and the written feedback will both count for 10% of your final grade.

Paper response to Behind the Beautiful Forevers (15%):

Between the first day of class and November 16th, you will be expected to read the book, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*. Instead of posting discussion questions that day, you will write an approximately 5-page reflection paper on the book, which you will upload to Moodle before class on the 16th. We will then discuss the book during that class period. The reflection paper should summarize three of your key takeaways from the book. These takeaways can be themes that you thought were most central to the book or were things that most surprised or stuck with you. In addition to summarizing these three takeaways, you will reflect on how they relate to the concepts previously discussed in class. The reflection should conclude with how likely you would be to recommend the book to other students (and why or why not) on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest recommendation.

Final conference presentation (15%):

On the final two days of class, we will hold a mini-research conference. This is a chance for you to present your progress on your final paper to the class. This will be an opportunity to receive helpful questions and feedback from the audience that you can use to improve your final paper. The presentation will be approximately 10 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes of Q&A. We will discuss the content of a research conference presentation closer to the mini-conference.

Final paper (30%):

The final paper for the course (approximately 15 pages) will be an original research paper on a topic of your choosing that is relevant to the politics of urban poverty in developing

countries. This paper should follow the structure of a standard academic article published in a peer-reviewed journal: a.) an introduction that describes the research question and why it is important; b.) a summary of the existing background literature that has already been published on this and similar topics – including how your project builds or connects to this existing literature; c.) your original hypotheses for what you expect to find; d.) the data that you would need to use to test these hypotheses; e.) how you would test these hypotheses; and f.) a conclusion summarizing the key points of the paper. You do not need to have access to the actual data and you do not need to carry out the hypothesis tests, but you should suggest a plausible research design that draws on realistic data sources. I encourage you to meet with me in office hours early and often to discuss your paper ideas and progress. The final paper will be due at **11:59 pm on December 6th**.

*** Extra credit:*

I will offer extra credit to students who meet with mentors at the CxC Writing Center for support with the response paper to *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* or for the Final Paper.

Key dates:

- October 5th: Final paper topic must be approved by end of class
- October 11th: Final paper proposal due to me and one peer by 11:59 pm
- October 12th: Instead of regular class time you will a.) meet with me for office hours and b.) provide feedback on another student's proposal
- November 16th: Response to *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*
- November 23rd and November 30th: Final presentations
- December 6th: Final paper due

Grading disputes:

Students must wait a minimum of 24 hours after receiving a graded assignment before contacting me about the grade. If you want to dispute your grade, email me after 24 hours but within one week of receiving your grade with a clear explanation for why you are requesting a grade reconsideration, and what grade you believe is appropriate based on that explanation.

Additional policies:

COVID-19:

If you need accommodations because of COVID-19, please let me know and I will work with you. For instance, if you are required to self-quarantine, we can work together to establish a plan so you are able to complete the work necessary for the course. For LSU policies on COVID-19, see: <https://lsu.edu/roadmap/>.

LSU does not mandate COVID-19 vaccines and still has a mask mandate in place. Therefore, **masks are required in our class**. As much as possible, we will social distance and use other precautionary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Note that LSU does strongly encourage all students, faculty and staff to get vaccinated for COVID-19. Visit www.lsu.edu/roadmap/vaccines/ to learn how to get vaccinated on campus. Vaccination helps keep our campus community safe, helps protect those among us who are

most vulnerable to COVID-19, and is our path back to more normal operations and the full college experience that our students deserve.

Mental health and other services:

Not only does the pandemic continue to pose difficulties in our everyday lives, but we will also cover content in this course that can be quite difficult to read and discuss. If mental health challenges related or unrelated to the course inhibit your ability to participate, please feel free to reach out to me about accommodations or support. I also highly encourage you to contact Mental Health Services (MHS) at LSU (<https://www.lsu.edu/shc/mental-health/mhshome.php>) if you or a friend is struggling. Moreover, if you or a friend have experienced sexual violence or harassment, you can contact the Lighthouse Program at LSU (<https://www.lsu.edu/shc/wellness/the-lighthouse-program/index.php>) or the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX (<https://lsu.edu/support/>).

Respectful classroom environment:

Universities and classrooms thrive when we can learn from one another. This means engaging in discussions and debates with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity both inside and outside of this classroom.

Honors credit:

This is an honors seminar. If you are planning to write an honors thesis, please feel free to contact me to discuss ways this course can complement your other research efforts.

Filming and recording:

You may not film or record this class without permission.

Late assignments:

The penalty for unexcused late assignments is 10 percentage points if turned in late within the due date of the assignment. After the due date, the penalty is 20 percentage points per day. For example, if the quality of your work earned a 90 on the assignment but you turned it in after the deadline on the due date, then you would receive an 80. If you turned it the day after the due date, you would receive a 60. Extensions may be made on a case-by-case basis so please feel free to reach out to me as needed.

Academic integrity:

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to cheating on exams, plagiarizing (from published sources or from fellow students), buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. Be very careful with the writing assignments. The LSU Code of Student conduct defines plagiarism as "the unacknowledged inclusion, in work submitted for credit, of someone else's words, ideas, or data." Please review the University's guidelines on plagiarism here:

https://www.lsu.edu/hss/english/university_writing/faculty_resources/policies_and_procedures/plagiarism.phpI reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Accommodations for disabilities:

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation as soon as possible and I will be happy to work with you to make the appropriate arrangements. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website here: <https://www.lsu.edu/disability/>.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

August 24th: Introduction and syllabus

- Slum Dwellers International: www.sdinet.org

Classes canceled from August 30th through September 6th due to Hurricane Ida

September 7th: Urbanization trends and the “urbanization of poverty”

- Post, A. E. (2018). Cities and Politics in the Developing World. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21(1), 115–133. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042716-102405>
- United Nations. (2014). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/352)*.
 - Introduction, pages 1-3
- Beard, V. A., Mahendra, A., & Westphal, M. I. (2016). *Towards a More Equal City: Framing the Challenges and Opportunities*. Washington, DC.
 - Pages 1-22.
- Mitlin, D., & Satterthwaite, D. (2013). *Urban poverty in the global south: scale and nature*. Routledge.
 - Chapters 1 and 6

September 14th: Political participation in developing countries, with a focus on poverty

- Krishna, A. (2008). Introduction: Poor People and Democracy. In A. Krishna (Ed.), *Poverty, participation, and democracy: a global perspective* (pp. 28–64). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. (e-book available online through the LSU library)
- Kasara, K., & Suryanarayan, P. (2015). When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality across the World. *American Journal of Political Science*. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12134>
- Nathan, N. L. (2016a). Does Participation Reinforce Patronage? Policy Preferences, Turnout and Class in Urban Ghana. *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Weitz-Shapiro, Rebecca. (2012). “What wins votes: Why some politicians opt out of clientelism.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56.3 (2012): 568-583.
- Auerbach, A., & Kruks-Wisner, G. (2020). The Geography of Citizenship Practice: How the Poor Engage the State in Rural and Urban India. *Perspectives on Politics*.

September 21st: Urban migration

- Nelson, Joan M. (1976). “Sojourners versus Urbanites: Causes and Consequences of temporary versus permanent cityward migration in developing countries.” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 24(4): 721-57.
- Thachil, T. (2017). Do Rural Migrants Divide Ethnically in the City? Evidence from an Ethnographic Experiment in India: *American Journal of Political Science* .
- Klaus, K. & Paller, J. (2017). “City under siege: Migration and citizenship in urban Africa.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 55(4).
- Adida, C.L., (2011). “Too Close for Comfort? Immigrant Exclusion in Africa.” *Comparative Political Studies* 44(10).
- Gaikwad, N., & Nellis, G. (2020). Do Politicians Discriminate Against Internal Migrants? Evidence from Nationwide Field Experiments in India . *American Journal of Political Science* .

September 28th: Informality & “slums”

- Auerbach, A., LeBas, A., Post, A., & Weitz-Shapiro, R. (2018). State, Society, and Informality in Cities of the Global South. *Studies in Comparative International Development*. New York: Springer US. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-018-9269-y>
- Fox, S. (2014). The Political Economy of Slums: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa . *World Development* . Oxford : Elsevier Science Publishers . <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.08.005>
- Rains, E. & Krishna, A. *Forthcoming*. “Informalities, volatility, and precarious social mobility in urban slums.” In V. Iversen, A. Krishna, & K. Sen (Eds.) *Social Mobility in Developing Countries: Concepts, Methods, and Determinants*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roy, A. (2009). Why India Cannot Plan Its Cities: Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanization . *Planning Theory* . London, England : SAGE Publications .
- Holland, A. C. (2016). Forbearance. *American Political Science Review*. Washington: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000083>

October 5th: Political implications I – clientelism & brokers

- Mitlin, D. (2014). *Politics, informality and clientelism – exploring a pro-poor urban politics* (No. 34).
- Harriss, J. (2010). “Participation” and contestation in the governance of Indian cities (Simons Papers in Security and Development). Vancouver.
- Auyero, J. (2000). The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account . *Latin American Research Review* . Pittsburgh : Latin American Studies Association .
- Murillo, M., Oliveros, V., & Zarazaga, R. (2019). *The Most Vulnerable Poor: Clientelism among Slum Dwellers*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.26295.68008>
- Auerbach, A., & Thachil, T. (2018). How Clients Select Brokers: Competition and Choice in India’s Slums. *American Political Science Review*. Washington: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541800028X>

October 12th: PEER REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FINAL PROPOSAL

- Final proposal due to me and one peer by **11:59 pm on October 11th**
- Instead of a regular class session you will a.) schedule a 15-minute meeting with me during class time to discuss your proposal and b.) provide written feedback to one student on his or her proposal

October 19th: Political implications II – group networks & vote banks

- *Auerbach, A. (2016). Clients and Communities: The Political Economy of Party Network Organization and Development in India's Urban Slums. *World Politics*. Princeton: Cambridge University Press.
- Auerbach, A., & Thachil, T. (2019). Cultivating Clients: Reputation, Responsiveness, and Ethnic Indifference in India's Slums. *American Journal of Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12468>
- Lall, S. V, Deichmann, U., Lundberg, M. K. A., & Chaudhury, N. (2004). Tenure, Diversity and Commitment: Community Participation for Urban Service Provision . *The Journal of Development Studies* . Taylor & Francis Ltd . <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022038042000213184>
- Auerbach, A. (2017). Neighborhood Associations and the Urban Poor: India's Slum Development Committees. *World Development*. Oxford: Elsevier Science Publishers.
- Haritas, K. (2013). Gender identity in urban poor mobilizations: evidence from Bengaluru . *Environment & Urbanization* . London, England : SAGE Publications . <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247813477811>

*Many of these readings are by Adam Auerbach. I decided to assign several articles rather than his recent related book. If you would like to read the full book, the information is provided below:

- Auerbach, A. (2019). *Demanding Development: The Politics of Public Goods Provision in India's Urban Slums*. *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/9781108649377>

October 26th: Property rights and evictions

- Payne, G. (2001). Urban land tenure policy options: titles or rights? . *Habitat International* . Elsevier Ltd .
- Kumar, T. *Forthcoming*. "Home-price subsidies increase local-level political participation in urban India" *Journal of Politics*.
- Paller, J. W. (2015). Informal Networks and Access to Power to Obtain Housing in Urban Slums in Ghana . *Africa Today* . USA : Indiana University
- Marx, B., Stoker, T. & Suri, T. (2019). "There is No Free House: Ethnic Patronage in a Kenyan Slum." *American Economic Journal Applied Economics*, Vol. 11 (4), 26-30.
- Bhan, G. (2009). "This is no longer the city I once knew". Evictions, the urban poor and the right to the city in millennial Delhi . *Environment & Urbanization* . London, England : SAGE Publications .

November 2nd: Informal employment

- Chen, M. A., & Beard, V. A. (2018). *Including the Excluded: Supporting Informal Workers for More Equal and Productive Cities in the Global South*. Washington, DC.
- Centeno, Miguel Angel, and Alejandro Portes. "The informal economy in the shadow of the state." In M. P. Fernández-Kelly & J. Shefner (Eds.), *Out of the shadows: Political action and the informal economy in Latin America* (2006): 23-48.
- Prillaman, S. A., & Phillips, J. (2019). How the Labor Force is Mobilized: Patterns in Informality, Political Networks, and Political Linkages in Brazil. In S. López-Cariboni (Ed.), *The Political Economy of the BRICS Countries: Volume 3: Political Economy of Informality in BRIC Countries*.
- Rains, E. & Wibbels, E. *Forthcoming*. "Informal Work, Risk and Clientelism. Evidence from 223 Slums Across India." *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Gottlieb, Jessica. 2021. "The Decline of Collective Clientelism in the City: Theory and Evidence from Senegal." *Working paper*.

November 9th: Accessing documents and services

- Gupta, A. (2012). *Red tape: bureaucracy, structural violence, and poverty in India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
 - Chapters 2 and 6
- Cuesta, Jose et. al. (2020). "Urban social assistance: Evidence, challenges and the way forward, with application to Ghana." *Development Policy Review* 39(3).
- Krishna, A., Rains, E. and Wibbels, E. 2020. "Negotiating Informality – ambiguity, intermediation, and a patchwork of outcomes in slums of Bengaluru" *Journal of Development Studies*.
- Ranganathan, M. (2014). Paying for Pipes, Claiming Citizenship: Political Agency and Water Reforms at the Urban Periphery . *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* . Oxford : Wiley Subscription Services, Inc .

November 16th: BTBF discussion

- We will also cover the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic during this class to make up for the missed session due to Hurricane Ida. No readings are required on Covid-19.

November 23rd: Final research presentations

November 30th: Final research presentations

December 6th: Final paper due by 11:59 pm on Moodle