

COA 4803 CITY LITERACY (3-0-3)

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Overview

This course looks at cities and city life with an eye toward increasing "city literacy": the ability of city users to both understand and engage the city around them. The course provides both a theoretical and an empirical framework for understanding the city, city life, and the processes through which they are negotiated (city governance, civic institutions, market forces, etc.).

Course materials reflect this dual focus on disciplinary and experiential knowledge; both the perspectives of "professionals" (politicians, sociologists, planners, designers, activists, etc.) as well as "users" (citizens, inhabitants, tourists, commuters, etc.) are privileged. The lectures and readings provide political, social, and economic perspectives on Barcelona and its citizens. The projects reverse the point of view, inviting instead an immersive understanding of Barcelona that focuses on everyday experience.

Format

During the first half of the semester, the 90-minute sessions are divided into lectures followed by discussion of assigned readings. During the second half of the semester the class periods are divided between lectures, reading discussions, and project presentations.

City tours take place outside of class time. Student Projects require on-the-street exploration; in-class presentations introduce the class to the range of situations explored by individual students.

Requirements

- Midterm and Final Exams. Short Answer and Essay Questions
- Project One: Itineraries. Student-designed 'four-hour 'cuts' through the city that intersect with and reveal the way in which Barcelonans use and experience their city.
- Project Two: Bench Behaviors. Analysis of Public Space and its Use through a focus on the deployment and use of Public Furniture

Readings

Primary. Nancy Kleniewski. Cities, Change, and Conflict: A Political Economy of Urban Life. Course Reader with articles on Barcelona and Atlanta drawn from politics, urban studies, sociology, planning, urban design, anthropology, and literary and biographical accounts.

Outline

Atlanta/Barcelona: A Comparative Framework
Barcelona/Spain: Nation; Geography; Topography
Barcelona/Catalunya: Politics; Culture; Society
Barcelona/City: Neighborhoods; Districts; Region
Barcelona Imaginary: Resurrection, Reinvention
Barcelona Identity: Commonalities, Conflicts
Barcelona Everyday: Itineraries, Trajectories