Summer 2018
ENVS 437D
8 credits
Instructor: Nabil Kamel, Ph.D.
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How do cities change over time?

What are key features of urbanization in Southern Italy?

How similar or different are they from those of observed in US cities?

How does urban form change over time and how does it shape urban life in the present?

How do people navigate and produce urban space in their daily lives?

Why does our contemporary “modern” civilization produce cities that continue to suffer from “primitive” problems of violence, poverty, racism, and environmental degradation?

How do people reclaim their “right to the city” through everyday practices?

How do these practices address issues of social and environmental justice, economic opportunities, and sustainability?

Course Description:

This course addresses the above questions by exploring the relationship between urban social order and urban space through: a) a historical and geographical understanding of urbanization processes, and b) on site inquiries in select locations in Naples and Sorrento regions of Southern Italy. The aim of the course is to provide a critical and cross-cultural understanding of the evolution of cities, of their multi-layered functions, and of the role of urban space in the everyday life of their dwellers. The course consists of three main components: lectures and readings, site visits, and documentation and research. Lectures and readings take place throughout the course on WWU campus and in Italy. In Italy, site visits highlight how ancient forms of urbanization are integrated in present daily lives, community-based social and environmental activism, and sustainability practices.
Course Structure and Evaluation

Tentative schedule:

WWU: Lectures, readings, presentations, and short quizzes

(15% of the grade)

Southern Italy: Lectures, site visits, research, and documentation

(17 days – 60% of the grade)

Final report/poster

(25% of the grade)

Students are required to maintain a journal, research and collect information, and document their visits and findings. Student can choose to submit either a final poster or report to complete the course. Report and poster guidelines are available on canvas. Attendance to all course components is required.

Readings

An electronic reader will be made available on canvas. Readings cover urbanization processes throughout time and in different regions of the world. The readings selection is designed to highlight forces and patterns of urbanization that continue to influence current cities as well as readings specific to the sites and locations in Italy. No textbook is required.

The reading selection includes, but is not limited to, the selections from the following items:

- Baglioni, Simone. The Mobilization of the Unemployed in Italy: The Case of Naples.
- Calvino, Italo. Invisible Cities.
- Childe, Gordon. The Urban Revolution.
- Favro, Diane. The Urban Image.
- Harvey, David. The Right to the City.
- Mumford, Lewis. The City in History.
- Ohe, Yasuo and Ciani, Adriano. Evaluation of Agritourism Activity in Italy.
Graduate Students

Graduate students can take the course at a (400/500 level) subject to instructor approval. An independent research program must be submitted and approved by the course instructor and the student program advisors.

Environmental Studies Learning Objectives

Successfully completing this course will provide students with:

- the ability to ethically evaluate social priorities and their risks in the context of the human environment [ENVS 1],
- an advanced understanding of urban problems as well constraints and opportunities for urban change at different scales, times, cultures, and geographies [GEOG 2],
- an improved your written, verbal, and oral communication skills [ENVS 6],
- a familiarity with major intellectual debates related to urbanization processes, especially as they relate to concepts of space, place, landscape, politics, culture, and economy [GEOG 1], and
- an advanced understanding of theoretical, political, economic, and cultural processes that shape the urban environment [UP 2].

Southern Italy:

Southern Italy is a region that is famous for its major riches and treasures – from its strategic location and natural resources to its fertile lands and creative workforce. While these riches have supported continuous human settlement since the Neolithic period, they have also been coveted throughout the ages by rulers domestic and foreign. This course will provide an overview of the region by focusing on two of its main features: Naples and its urban life, and
sustainable development along the Amalfi coast with an emphasis on agritourism, ecotourism and historic preservation.

**Naples:**

Naples is a city where the contradictions of contemporary urbanization are most salient. “Watching Naples is like watching an autopsy... the city has all its guts out...”¹ it is a living laboratory where not only one can readily observe the entire drama of contemporary city life, but also see past patterns of urbanization integrated in the present life. Site visits will include sections of the city that inherited the Greek and Roman layout, “occupied spaces” and rehabilitated spaces by community activists, artists, and immigrants, post-earthquake housing solutions, new transportation solutions, historic preservation, artisanal production, and more. All visits are walking tours using public transportation as needed.

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¹ A quote from the film "Ciao Professore" by Italian director and screenwriter Lina Wertmüller.
Amalfi Coast

The Amalfi Coast is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a cultural landscape. For centuries it has attracted people for its unique natural beauty, jewel costal towns, lemons and Limoncello, quality artisanal production of candy, leather goods, clothing, mozzarella and other specialty foods. In order to preserve the quality of the environment and the quality of life along the coast, residents and local agencies implemented a series of innovative practices. This course will introduce students to some of these practices especially as they relate to historic preservation, tourism and agritourism, ecotourism, and artisanal production of food and consumer goods.