

STS 327 - Society and Natural Resources : Urbanization in Asia

Instructor: Prof. Erich W. Schienke

Spring 2010 - Time: T R 04:15P - 05:30P

In 2000, 50% of the global population lived in cities. By 2025, city dwellers are projected to reach 5 billion in number across the world. In countries such as in China, India, and Brazil we are seeing urbanization happening at an unprecedented rate in human history. Rural to urban migration, i.e. urbanization, is presenting rapidly developing societies with some of the greatest technological, material, logistical/planning, health care, infrastructural and organizational challenges never before encountered at this scale. This course will focus on the challenges facing global urbanization and what these challenges mean to ever growing resource constraints, one of the most pressing issues facing current and future relationships between environment and contemporary (developed/developing) societies.

Cities in Asia, specifically urbanization in China, will be the central focus of study throughout the course. Analytically, we will focus on issues such as: rural to urban migration, infrastructure development, resource management, transportation, urban sprawl, food security, employment, and carbon footprints. The main objective for the course is for students to understand the pressing issues and challenges presented by urbanization, and to provide an analytical foundation for analyzing and addressing these problems either through design (from technology to policy) and/or through social-institutional development. Course work will be reading and project based. We will be reading through various texts and excerpts from literatures in urban studies, geography, architecture, and STS. Course projects will be research based papers focusing on an urbanization/resource topic of student interest.