

Bombay/Mumbai and its Urban Imaginaries

Spring 2019

Bombay/Mumbai's built form reflects the social and spatial unevenness of (colonial) capital, while its distinctive urbanity is the product of the everyday lives and aspirations of those who inhabit it.

When was Bombay?

Bombay's transformation from an early-modern port city to British India's commercial and manufacturing hub (and now, megacity) is linked with global economic forces: the city experienced meteoric rise in the aftermath of the American Civil War due to a booming cotton economy. New technologies for rationalizing production and accelerating the circulation of Bombay cotton soon followed. Meanwhile, the plague of 1897 provided planners and government officials with an alibi for mass demolitions, and enabled them to undertake extensive experiments in urban governance and industrial housing. Bombay's famed cosmopolitanism is thus a vestige of social practices and cultural experiences produced by the contradictory forces of colonial capital: spatial regulation, together with social emancipation.

How do we approach Bombay/Mumbai in this seminar?

Scholarship on Bombay either focuses on the colonial city, or on Mumbai's status as an icon of postcolonial urbanity. While the former seeks to disaggregate local practice and community formation from the authoritarianism of colonial policy, the latter focuses on a post-1993 Bombay scarred by vicious anti-Muslim violence, and neoliberal strategies of re-territorialization. Instead, this seminar asks how we might bring questions of built form, capital flows, and social life and inhabitation to bear on a history of the city across the colonial/postcolonial divide. By so doing, we will attempt to think about Bombay comparatively together with cities of the global South, while asking, simultaneously, about how Bombay's distinctive urbanity might force us to alter our approaches to the city; approaches that are largely drawn from modular Euro-American paradigms for understanding urbanization as coeval with modernity, as well as industrialization. We do so in this seminar by focusing on people and practices—subaltern urbanity (and on those whose labor produced the modern city), as well as spatial orders—the informal or unintended city—to ask the question, “what makes and unmakes a city?”

Seeing the City

In order to answer some of these questions, this course includes a spatial mapping component. You will learn to use and be comfortable with ways of visibilizing the city, and get comfortable with basic (digital) mapping tools and techniques. In order to do so, you will work in small groups of three to four students throughout the course. You will work through basic tutorials that will enable you to complete a set of spatial mapping exercises in a collaborative context, and then complete a final project for the course that will be developed in consultation with myself, and Anne Carlson, who is the TA for the course.

PLEASE NOTE: This course requires willingness to work collectively and collaboratively. In addition to learning about the colonial and postcolonial history of a major metropolis, you will master basic spatial mapping techniques through online tutorials and in consultation with the Empirical Reasoning Lab (Barnard). We will host four tutorials outside of class to allow you to become familiar with QGIS, MapBox and other technologies that allow you to work with historical maps, create spatial narratives, and think about the relationship between space and politics throughout the course.

About the Structure and Expectations of the Course

- 1) The course will follow a broad chronology by tracing the effect of planning, policy, colonialism, and labor-capital relations in shaping Bombay. The course is essentially divided into a study of the colonial and postcolonial city, with relevant themes such as planning, the organization of social difference, housing and the slum, and political violence forming important arcs of consideration.
- 2) A large number of essays, visuals, and other materials for the course are available online, and will be noted as such with the provision of a weblink. Otherwise, essays and book extracts are PDF'ed and posted on Courseworks (and marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (“*”). Books are on order at Book Culture.
- 3) The readings for each week in your syllabus are organized not alphabetically, but in the order in which I think you should read them
- 4) We will be viewing one film in class. Our sessions will extend beyond 8PM on that day, most probably until 8:30 or 8:45 PM. Screening occurs Week 8. If you are unable to stay beyond class time due to other commitments, you will be expected to get to Barnard Media to watch the film on your own time.

What I Expect From You

This course has no pre-requisites, though previous exposure to South Asia, urban studies, global history and/or social theory would be a great plus. Healthy curiosity and a willingness to explore abstract ideas and concepts will do just as well.

You will read approximately a book a week, or about 250 pages/week.

You are allowed one absence during the semester. Further absences will result in the loss of a half grade per missed session.

Grading and Course Evaluation

The grading system is as follows:

Class participation: 30%

Spatial mapping exercises (2) and group work: 30%

Final paper or project: 40%

-Academic integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Plagiarism or dishonesty and unethical behavior is unacceptable and you will face punitive measures. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Barnard, or Columbia.

-Classroom Etiquette constitutes best practices of your academic and social lives: be considerate in class; listen well; interact with respect and compassion; turn off your phone; and turn off your computing devices.

-Disability-Related Accommodations:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). Faculty must be notified of registered students' accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion.

Emails: <http://barnard.edu/disabilityservices> OR disability@columbia.edu.

Books on Order at Book Culture for the course

Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*

Last Man in Tower

Gyan Prakash, *Mumbai Fables*

RESOURCES

Films for the Seminar

Satya

Majlis, I Live in Behrampada

Anand Patwardhan, *Bombay: Hamara Shahar*

Surabhi Sharma, *Jari-Mari* (informalization)

Paromita Vora, *Q2P* (gender, infrastructure)

Literature

Ravan and Eddie

Shantaram

Maximum City

Bombay Meri Jaan

Last Man in Tower

Websites

1) SARAI

2) UDRI (Urban Development Research Institute:

http://www.udri.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=6

3) Tax Mahal Foxtrot:

<http://www.tajmahalfoxtrot.com/>

4) URBZ:

<http://urbz.net/>

5) Pad.ma - short for Public Access Digital Media Archive - is an online archive of densely text-annotated video material, primarily footage and not finished films. The entire collection is searchable and viewable online, and is free to download for non-commercial use.

pad.ma

6) Mumbai photos:

<http://www.oldindianphotos.in/search/label/Bombay>

7) Bombaywalla:

<http://bombaywalla.org/>

8) Brief histories of cities: Bombay and Delhi, in *The Guardian*:

<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/30/story-cities-11-reclamation-mumbai-bombay-megacity-population-density-flood-risk>

<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/20/story-cities-23-delhi-india-modernist-fantasy>

More specific Bombay/Mumbai data:

9) Mumbai Mapping:

<http://www.citylab.com/housing/2016/03/the-much-needed-land-use-map-of-mumbai/474951/>

10) Castemopolitan:

We are pleased to announce the preview of our latest webarchive ***CasteMopolitan Mumbai***. This is a part of the family of webarchives entitled ***DiverCity***, SMCS (www.smcs.tiss.edu) has developed based on the multimedia work of its students and faculty. The other webarchives that we have launched earlier are ***Remembering 1992*** (www.mumbairiots.tiss.edu) and ***Giran Mumbai*** (www.millmumbai.tiss.edu).

11) SRA:

<http://www.sra.gov.in/pgeResult2.aspx?ID=K-E>

12) Need to navigate to details on high rise, high-emd constructions in Mumbai

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/forumdisplay.php?f=1234>

13) Maps of Dharavi and else:

<https://issuu.com/gsapponline/docs/dharavi-web-preview2/79>

14) Licensed base map datasets for Mumbai:

<https://geodata.library.columbia.edu/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=mumbai>

We also have some Census boundary files (down to the District level - I am not sure how useful this will be for urban analysis) here:

https://geodata.library.columbia.edu/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&_id=1509470537093&f%5Bdct_provenance_s%5D%5B%5D=Columbia&q=infomap

I have a GIS data guide that may have some links to resources that may be useful to you -

<http://guides.library.columbia.edu/c.php?g=715646&p=5092297>

Look especially to the ASTER links at the top - ASTER provides global elevation coverage at a 90 meter resolution. And the Geofabrik site, which will allow you to download all of the Open Street Map data for India. This should include all of the streets for Mumbai as well as other features (building footprints, water ways, rail lines etc.).

You can also get gridded population and densit information from SEDAC here:

<http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/collection/gpw-v4>

Data Basis has a version of a USGS Mangrove coverage data-set (made from Landsat imagery) available here:

<https://databasin.org/datasets/d214245ab4554bc1a1e7e7d9b45b9329>

Week One: Introduction

*Sunil Khilnani on the Indian city, *The Idea of India*

Spatial Humanities:

Todd Presner, [HyperCities: A Case Study for the Future of Scholarly Publishing](http://www.altruists.org/static/files/The%20Metropolis%20and%20Mental%20Life%20(Georg%20Simmel).htm)
file:///Users/anu/Downloads/hypercities-a-case-study-for-the-future-of-scholarly-publishing-3.pdf

Week Two: 'City theory'

Simmel, Georg, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

[http://www.altruists.org/static/files/The%20Metropolis%20and%20Mental%20Life%20\(Georg%20Simmel\).htm](http://www.altruists.org/static/files/The%20Metropolis%20and%20Mental%20Life%20(Georg%20Simmel).htm)

David Harvey, "Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53, September-October, 2008.

<http://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>

Introductory QGIS Workshop

Week Three: Locating/Situating Bombay

Prakash, "The Colonial Gothic," in *Mumbai Fables* pp. 25-74

*Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities* [Chapters 1-3; plus Dickinson's Survey, and "Law and Acquisition of Land, 1830-1860" from *Theatre of Conflict, City of Hope*]

Weeks Four: Colonial Urbanism

*Prashant Kidambi, *Making of an Indian Metropolis* [excerpts]

http://books.google.com/books?id=N2O76-0buuUC&pg=PA270&lpg=PA270&dq=Prashant+Kidambi&source=bl&ots=Lh2B1e8Wsb&sig=Eb31v5fMeb14aRfxq02nA_pe6Qg&hl=en&sa=X&ei=C-4IT-6WMIrF0AGbyYXLCA&ved=0CB4Q6AEwADgK#v=onepage&q=Prashant%20Kidambi&f=false

On the Bombay Improvement Trust, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd8CpjR0lak>

Georeferencing workshop

Week Five: Labor and/in the City

*Early Bombay cinema [screening]

Week Six:

*Housing Types, CRIT

*Vanessa Caru, “The BDD Chawls: A Case Study”

*Radha Kumar, “City Lives: Workers’ Rent and Housing in Bombay 1911-1947,” *Economic and Political Weekly*

*Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India* [excerpts]

Georeferencing workshop

Week Seven: Social groups and social life

* Gail Omvedt, “Non-Brahmans and Communists in Bombay,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Volume 8, No. 16, April 21, 1973

*Nile Green, *Bombay Islam*

*Ashwini Tambe, on prostitution

Week Eight: The Intended and Unintended City

Gyan Prakash, “Planners as Dreamers,” in *Mumbai Fables*

Screening: *Bombay, Hamara Shahar*

Georeferencing workshop

Week Nine: Subaltern Life

*Thomas Blom Hansen, *Wages of Violence* [excerpts]

*Arjun Appadurai, Appadurai, Arjun. “Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai”, *Public Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 2000), 627-51

Week Ten: Dharavi and M Ward

Banerjee-Guha, Swapna. “Shifting Cities: Urban Restructuring in Mumbai,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37.2 (2002), 121-28.

Dharavi:

Patel, Sheela and Jockin Arputham. "Plans for Dharavi: Negotiating a Reconciliation between a State-driven Market Redevelopment and Residents' Aspirations," *Environment and Urbanization*, 20.1 (2008), 243-53.

Patel, Shirish B. "Dharavi: Makeover or Takeover?" *Economic and Political Weekly*. 45.24 (2010), 47-54.

M Ward:

Navtej Nainan, "Building Boomers and Fragmentation of Space in Mumbai," *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 24, 2008: 29-34.

Lisa Weinstein, Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organized Crime and Land Development, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Volume 32, Issue 1, March 2008: 22-39.

Week Eleven:

*Dilip Chitre, "Namdeo's Mumbai"
One Hundred Years, One Hundred Voices

Weeks Twelve and Thirteen: Slum Urbanism

Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*

OR

Last Man in Tower

Fourteen: Urban Futures

TBD