OVERVIEW: This course will examine challenges and opportunities associated with life in the 21st century city -- first by looking globally and then, in the latter weeks of the semester, by focusing on Los Angeles. We will begin by discussing the headlong, unprecedented pace of urbanization around the world and the rise of the megacity. We’ll then turn to case studies in cities as diverse as Medellin, Mumbai and Atlanta, learning how architecture and urban design are pointing the way to more sustainable and more equitable futures. Then we will turn to the city at our feet -- Los Angeles -- looking at its efforts to wean itself from the private car and specifically at the future of its freeway system, as both synecdoche and urban artifact, and life along its boulevards.

ASSIGNMENTS: Each student will be responsible for making a presentation on one selection from the reading. There will be a small number of events/field-work projects students will be asked to attend, and after each one I will expect a short write-up on their experiences. Each student will produce one paper of 6-8 pages on a sustainable-urbanism initiative not covered directly in class (and selected in consultation with me). There will also be a take-home final with essay questions covering the course’s major themes.

CALENDAR:

Monday, January 23. Introduction to major topics, including green urbanism, urbanization, the megacity and how these ideas relate to contemporary Los Angeles and the L.A. of the immediate future.


Wednesday, Feb. 1. NO CLASS. During the next week and a half, in addition to the assigned reading, you have two bits of homework. The first is to visit the Elysian Valley and 2 Freeway (details in class). The second is to choose a major boulevard and walk a stretch of at least three miles (details in class).

Monday, Feb. 6. NO CLASS

Wednesday, Feb. 8. NO CLASS


Monday, Feb. 20. NO CLASS: Holiday

Monday, Feb. 27. Discussion of “Urbanized” and its themes.


Monday, March 5. Case Study: Medellin.

Wednesday, March 7. Case Study: New York City.

March 12 and 14. NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK.


Monday, March 26. L.A. Freeway 2: The rise (and fall?) of the freeway in Southern California.


Wednesday, April 4. L.A. Freeway 5: Systematic changes. The fate of the 710 extension.


Wednesday, April 11. L.A. Boulevard 2: Western Ave.


Wednesday, April 18. L.A. Boulevard 4: Ciclavia &c.

Monday, April 23. L.A. Boulevard 5. Field Trip: Colorado Blvd.

Wednesday April 25. L.A. Boulevard 6: Looking ahead.

Monday, April 30. Wrap-up: Semester in review.

Wednesday, May 2. Take-home final handed out and discussed.
GRADES will be determined as follows:

- **20%** Class participation, measured in particular by readiness to discuss the readings.
- **10%** Fieldwork
- **15%** Class presentation on readings.
- **20%** Case study paper.
- **35%** Take-home final.

READING:

Along with links to pieces from various periodicals, students will read selections from the following titles:


Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums*. Verso, 2006


