

SMALL NETWORK ONLINE COURSE FALL 2020

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## **CITIES IN A POST-COVID19 WORLD: FROM CRISIS & RECOVERY TO REINVENTION & RESILIENCE**

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DRAFT COURSE OUTLINE

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## Course background

The world continues to urbanize. In the 100 years starting 1913, the proportion of the world's population that lives in cities grew 5-fold from 10% to 50%, and estimates suggest that 75% of the world's population will live in cities in 2050. Though history reveals that it has always been an accelerator of growth and development, urbanization poses profound challenges. Indeed, while cities are where the majority of the world's population live, work and play, generating more than three-fourths of the world's GDP, they are also at the frontlines of many disasters and risks. As the [World Bank](#) notes, "... recent examples show how economic crises, health epidemics, and uncontrolled urbanization can also affect the ability of a city to sustain growth and provide services for its citizens – underscoring the need for a new approach to resilient urban development."

COVID-19 is offering the world a particularly stark reminder that a focus on long-term resilience is crucial for citizens, communities, corporations, cities and countries. At a fundamental level, this crisis has driven societies, urban and rural, to greater isolation. Several intersecting lines of thought have surfaced from this forced isolation, three of which frame this course. First are questions about the very reason cities exist – agglomeration of talent, exchanges and spaces that underpin creativity, innovation, prosperity and vibrancy of societies. Second is the growing recognition that the crisis is presenting us an opportunity to not just recover and move back to how things were; rather, that this may be a time to reimagine and reinvent individual and collective engagement within the complex system of systems that cities are. Third is the striking manner in which the crisis has laid bare deep-rooted and increasingly widening urban social, environmental and economic divides and disparities.

As we emerge from the long shadow of this crisis, it is increasingly apparent that resilience, reinvention and the bridging of urban divides require greater multilateralism, inclusion and collaboration from which globally-informed and locally-relevant solutions may surface. The need for inclusive approaches is perhaps the greatest for informal settlements and slums that house the world's most vulnerable people. Though informal settlements evidence an amazing capacity to self-organize and fashion innovative low-cost solutions, COVID-19 has vividly surfaced the need to mobilize innovative models of global partnerships, and develop holistic strategies to find solutions to the very challenges that underpin the vulnerability of informal settlements.

This course is a collaborative offering across the schools in the Collaborative for Urban Resilience and Effectiveness (CURE) and the Global Network for Advanced Management. It brings together faculty from schools across these networks, World Resources Institute (WRI), Rockefeller Foundation's Global Resilient Cities Network (GRCN), and Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), as well as practitioners from business, government, and civil society to engage with the topic of urban resilience. This is fifth year that this course is being offered for students in GNAM.

## Course purpose

Despite the global nature of the challenge, cities across the globe evidence great complexity and differences. Local, national, and regional context matters, and the resilience-building effort will require leaders who understand how markets and organizations work in diverse and complex contexts, and who can move supply from a global perspective to specific local understanding. Leaders will also need to be able to call on expertise and resources from all parts of the globe and all sectors of society, and not assume that any one organization or perspective has the final answer.

By partnering across universities, and with organizations like WRI, GRCN, and SDI, this GNAM Small Network Online Course (SNOC) represents an important step in a global collaborative learning pathway for students to help prepare them for complex leadership contexts. These are contexts that are characterized by messy and ‘wicked’ problems, the involvement of multiple stakeholders (across business, government and civil society), each with different motivations and constraints, low decision-making authority, and the potential for high conflict across stakeholders in approach, strategic decision-making, and implementation.

For the purposes of this course, we draw on the view of urban resilience articulated by Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) initiative as the ability of individuals, communities, businesses, institutions, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow in response to acute shocks and chronic stresses they may experience. Shocks and stresses can bring opportunities for cities to evolve and in some circumstances transform.

The purposes of this course are to help students across the Global Network for Advanced Management:

- Articulate resilience challenges and opportunities facing global cities in the post-COVID19 world, with a focus on informal settlements
- Describe the holistic and integrated nature of resiliency and its key drivers in bridging urban divides
- Work in remote and borderless teams to design collaborative approaches involving business, government and civil society to address urban resilience challenges

## Course participants

This course is primarily geared towards graduate-level students in business with no prior background in urban resilience. Given the broad nature of the topic, however, and to facilitate the integration of business with concepts from environmental studies, journalism, urban design and architecture, land and food systems, and public policy, students from these related areas are also being encouraged to take the course.

The course will be capped at 40 students. If more than 40 studies are interested in taking the course, preference will be given first to students in the final year of their program and second to those with relevant experience in these topics. It is anticipated that we will have up to 8 teams of students, with each team having students from diverse fields of study across multiple locations.

## Course partners

### Academic partners

As in past offerings of the SNOC, the Fall 2020 SNOC will draw on faculty expertise (as guest speakers and/or project supervisors) from several universities around the world. These include UBC-Sauder, Yale, Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore, Tec de Monterrey, University of California-Berkeley, University of Cambridge, Sciences Po, University College London, Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, University of Ghana, and Osaka University.

## Non-academic partners

The key non-academic partners in the course are WRI, GRCN, and SDI.

- **World Resources Institute (WRI)** -- <https://www.wri.org/>. WRI is a global research organization that spans more than 60 countries, with offices in the US, China, India, Brazil, Indonesia and more. Their more than 1,000 experts and staff work closely with leaders to turn big ideas into action to sustain natural resources—the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being. The work focuses on seven critical issues at the intersection of environment and development: climate, energy, food, forests, water, cities and the ocean.
- **Global Resilient Cities Network** -- <https://www.rockpa.org/project/global-resilient-cities-network/>. The new Global Resilient Cities Network (GRCN) emerges from the 100 Resilient Cities Program with a unique reach, strength and legacy to understand and support the challenges of the ever-growing urban society. GRCN is the city-led organization that will drive urban resilience action to protect vulnerable communities from climate change and other physical, social and economic urban adversities and challenges. With support from The Rockefeller Foundation and other funding partners, the Network aims to continue supporting cities and their Chief Resilience Officers in future-proofing their communities and critical infrastructure.
- **Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI)** -- <https://skoll.org/organization/slum-dwellers-international/>. SDI is a network of community-based organizations of the urban poor in 33 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It was launched in 1996 when federations of the urban poor in countries such as India and South Africa agreed that a global platform could help their local initiatives develop alternatives to evictions while also influencing the global agenda for urban development. In each country where federations operate, they mobilize around core SDI practices and principles to build a voice and collective capacity in urban poor communities. This is SDI's Know Your Community work. Organized federations throughout the SDI network profile, map, and enumerate their settlements to gather invaluable planning data and catalyze community action and partnerships. SDI's Know Your City website combines hard data and rich stories from urban poor communities in 224 cities across the Global South. Federations use their data and collective capacity to co-produce solutions for slum upgrading. These projects make up the third category of SDI's work—Improve Your City.

## **Course timeframe**

The SNOC will be offered in Fall 2020. It will run for 16 weeks, and meet for two 90-minute sessions per week – from 8:30 to 10:00am Eastern US time on Tuesdays and Thursdays (see details of a draft schedule in Appendix A).

Given the number of schools involved and the variations in their academic schedules, it is likely that a few course sessions will be held during some school's holidays, breaks, exam periods, etc. Students are expected to make their best efforts to attend each class session. If they are not able to do so, they should let the teaching team know in advance and watch the recording of the class session afterwards.

## Course structure

This course is built around the four key dimensions of city resilience advanced by the 100RC initiative – health & wellbeing, economy & society, infrastructure & environment, and leadership & strategy. It provides a vehicle for students to explore the ways in which resilience is driven by the active consideration of each of these dimensions, in an integrative and holistic manner.

Within each dimension of city resilience, we will consider two drivers:

<i>Dimension of city resilience</i>	<i>Key drivers considered in this course</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
<b>Health &amp; well-being</b>	1. Meeting basic needs	Ability to access resources to ensure survival and wellbeing – housing, water and sanitation, food, and energy
	2. Ensuring public health services	Ability to access healthcare and emergency services
<b>Economy &amp; society</b>	3. Fostering economic prosperity	Availability of funding, business investment, and integration with regional and global economy
	4. Promoting engaged communities	Social support, local identity and culture, and community participation
<b>Infrastructure &amp; environment</b>	5. Reducing physical exposure	Environmental policy, safeguards for critical infrastructure
	6. Ensuring continuity of critical services	Emergency response and contingency plans, physical infrastructure design, and flood risk management
<b>Leadership &amp; strategy</b>	7. Fostering long-term and integrated planning	Access to data and monitoring, strategies and plans, and land-use planning
	8. Promoting leadership and effective management	Multi-stakeholder alignment, collaboration and empowerment, decision making and leadership

The eight drivers will constitute the main themes for the course, and will together serve as the organizing framework for the assignments in the course.

## Class interactions

Class interactions will take place virtually on Zoom, and the language of instruction and interaction will be English. Class materials – text, reports, videos, etc. – will be posted to Canvas. MBA students are expected to have completed the equivalent of the traditional core curriculum at their business school, or to have taken prior coursework in finance, marketing, operations, business and society or other business-related subjects.

Each session will be 90 minutes long, and will be facilitated by mini-lectures from subject matter experts, conversations with practitioners, discussion forums triggered by cases from target cities in the GRCN network and other leading performance examples in the resilience area.

The course delivery will be facilitated by Teaching Assistants from one or two GNAM schools.

## Individual reflections

Each student will submit written reflections (2 pages) on each of the four resilience dimensions addressed in the course. For each reflection, students will respond to specific questions and apply learnings to a city of their choice.

## Team project – Resilience challenge

A significant learning platform in this course is the Resilience Challenge. Students will work in global virtual teams to engage with a challenge posed by a city or a partner associated with WRI, GRCN or SDI. The challenge, presented as ‘raw’ cases, will cover several dimensions of resilience that will be covered in the SNOC, and will require students to adopt a holistic and integrated perspective while addressing the dilemma.

Projects for the Fall 2020 SNOC are currently being finalized.

In the past four years, student teams have engaged in Resilience Challenges for cities in **Asia** (Chennai, Semarang), **Europe** (The Hague, Rotterdam, Manchester), **North America** (Juarez, Norfolk, Pittsburgh, San Juan, Calgary, Montreal, and Vancouver) and **South America** (Quito (Ecuador), Salvador and Porto Alegre (Brazil), and Santa Fe (Argentina)).

## On project solutions

The situations presented in the class have yet to be solved. Students will be asked to draw on the fundamental business and other analytical tools to which they have been exposed in their studies – finance, strategy, marketing, operations and others – and work with colleagues from other disciplines to develop new and innovative approaches to addressing these situations. In the spirit of continuous improvement, students are expected to offer constructive feedback on the course structure and materials, giving students in this next cohort the opportunity to continue to shape the course and related efforts for the future.

## Course flow

The course is delivered over 28 class sessions, and is divided into three modules:

### Module 1: Introduction and agenda setting

- What is urban resilience, why is it important?
- How does resilience thinking help to define more meaningful responses to urban challenges and divides?
- How has COVID19 impacted cities and how are cities thinking about the post-COVID19 world?
- What are the unique challenges faced by informal settlements?
- An introduction to resilient project planning

### Module 2: City resilience dimensions

- Health & well-being
- Business & economy
- Infrastructure & environment
- Leadership & strategy

### Module 3: Integration & student presentations on projects

- Bringing it all together
- Student teams present solution trajectories to Resilience Challenges

Each session will be facilitated by mini-lectures from subject matter experts, conversations with practitioners, discussion forums triggered by cases from target cities in the GRCN network, and other leading performance examples in the resilience area.

## Course deliverables and grading

The final grades for the course will be based on the following deliverables:

- Your individual reflections on four selected drivers of resilience (5% each; 20% total)
- Final project interim report (10%)
- Your group's final team project (20%)
- Your teammates' evaluations of your contributions to the cases and final project – peer evaluation (20%)
- Your reflections on how the learning from this course might apply to your career (10%)
- Your overall level of participation as evidenced by synchronous class participation, discussion board participation and quality of contributions (20%)

## Course schedule

In order to accommodate time zones across the GNAM schools, the course will be offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30am to 10:00am, US Eastern Time, starting on Thursday, 3 September 2020 and ending on Thursday, 17 December 2020. The draft course schedule is included in Appendix A. Actual on-line interactions will consist of: same-time video discussions with faculty, TAs and guests; moderated on-line discussion threads; group sessions – both video and on-line – and; other methods as fit the class best.

**PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE STARTING NOVEMBER 1**  
**WHEN CLOCKS GO BACK IN NORTH AMERICA BY ONE HOUR**



## Appendix A – Draft course schedule

Session	Week day	Date	Topic
0	Th	03-Sep	“Strategy and leading change” overview for non-MBA students
1	Tu	08-Sep	Course introduction and kick-off
2	Th	10-Sep	Urbanization and resilience
3	Tu	15-Sep	Resilience Strategy Process
4	Th	17-Sep	Perspectives on Resilience
5	Tu	22-Sep	Working in Global Virtual teams
6	Th	24-Sep	Resilience challenges – Advancing the project
7	Tu	29-Sep	Public health systems
8	Th	01-Oct	Water resilience
9	Tu	06-Oct	Affordable Housing
10	Th	08-Oct	Student reflections on Dimension 1 – Health & Well-being
11	Tu	13-Oct	Investment in cities
12	Th	15-Oct	Engaged communities and Circular Economy
	Tu	20-Oct	NO CLASS
	Th	22-Oct	NO CLASS
13	Tu	27-Oct	Social cohesion
14	Th	29-Oct	Student reflections on Dimension 2 – Economy & Society
15	Tu	3-Nov	Reduced physical exposure
16	Th	5-Nov	Mobility and infrastructure
17	Tu	10-Nov	Climate
18	Th	12-Nov	Student reflections on Dimension 3 – Infrastructure & Environment
19	Tu	17-Nov	Long-term integrated planning
20	Th	19-Nov	Leadership
21	Tu	24-Nov	Asset Management
22	Th	26-Nov	Student reflections on Dimension 4 – Leadership & Strategy
23	Tu	01-Dec	Teams 1 and 2 Resilience Challenge presentations
24	Th	03-Dec	Teams 3 and 4 Resilience Challenge presentations
25	Tu	08-Dec	Teams 5 and 6 Resilience Challenge presentations
26	Th	10-Dec	Teams 7 and 8 Resilience Challenge presentations
27	Tu	15-Dec	Bringing the projects together – Next steps
28	Th	17-Dec	Course debrief and wrap up