FALL 2025 SNOC

**Urban Resilience and Inclusive Prosperity**

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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 urbanization can be an accelerator of growth and development, it also poses profound challenges: Cities continue to be characterized by deep-rooted and increasingly widening social, environmental, and economic divides. A recent McKinsey report succinctly notes: “Cities are essential to global economic growth and productivity. They are where most of the world’s population live, work, and play, and they are important to everyone else, too. They are the world’s economic engine, consuming the majority of global power and resources, while generating 80 percent of GDP and 70 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions. Making cities great is the critical infrastructure challenge of this century.”

In the aftermath of COVID19, it is increasingly apparent that building resilience 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.

# 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 supplely 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 a range of organizations, 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.

Drawing on the view of urban resilience 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, the purposes of this course are to help students across the Global Network for Advanced Management:

* Evaluate how local and regional context shapes the challenges and opportunities facing global cities, and how cities can be a leverage point for other SDGs
* Describe the holistic and integrated nature of resilience and its key drivers in bridging urban divides, with a special focus on informal settlements
* 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.

# Course Timeframe

The SNOC will be offered in Fall 2025. It will run from 11 Sept 2025 to 11 Dec 2025, and meet for two 90-minute sessions per week – from 8:30 to 10:00pm Eastern US time on Tuesdays and Thursdays.