URSP 3050
Special Topics in Urban Studies 1

Welcome

What’s the course about?
Course structure
Workshop 1

Something’s amiss …

Income inequality
China’s poverty fell fastest during the early 1980s and mid-1990s, spurred by rural economic reforms, low initial inequality, and access to health care and education opportunities. In 1981, China was one of the world’s poorest nations with 84 percent of the population living on less than $1.25 a day. By 2008, 13 percent were in poverty. India has also reduced poverty, although at a slower rate than China. In 1981, 60 percent of Indians lived on less than $1.25 a day, fewer than in China. By 2010, the share fell to 33 percent, but was two and a half times higher than in China.

However, inequality has increased in both countries. According to official estimates, China’s Gini (where zero represents the most equal income distribution and 100 the most unequal) increased from 37 in the mid-1990s to 43 in 2008. India’s Gini ticked up from 33 in 1993 to 37 in 2010, according to the Asian Development Bank (2012).

This is a new phenomenon for the region and contrasts starkly with its dramatic period of economic takeoff in the three decades before 1990. “Growth with equity” was the mantra during this period, as Japan and the Asian tigers were able to combine fast growth with relatively low—and in many cases falling—inequality. Asia’s recent dismal record on inequality is therefore a stunning turnaround.

Something’s amiss...

Income inequality

Environmental degradation


South Pacific climate activists blockade Australia port

Australia is the world’s largest exporter of coal from a cold country, sending three quarters of its mined coal to countries including Japan, China, India and Korea.

Billie Laster, the 25 year old daughter of the president of the Marshallese nation, Chris Laster, said plans to expand the mine would have a "definite going to have an effect" on Pacific islands.

"I just want to share our stories and make sure that people are aware that the decisions that are being made over here are directly affecting our islands and our future.

In July, the Australian government accepted a tax aimed at limiting more than 100 of the nation’s biggest polluters to pay for their carbon dioxide emissions.

2014 was Australia’s third warmest year BoM

http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015‐03‐04/bo‐evidence‐of‐global‐warming/6407086

The Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that 2014 was Australia’s third warmest year since national records began in 1910.

Australian maximum and minimum temperatures remained well above average for most of 2014. February was the only month that recorded below average temperatures.

That continued a pattern of near‐average temperatures seen throughout 2013, which was Australia’s warmest year on record.

The Bureau’s full weather breakdown of 2014 has now been released, and reveals Australia’s area‐averaged mean temperature last year was 0.91 degrees above the benchmark 1961‐1990 average.

Maximum temperatures were 1.15 degrees above average, and minimum temperatures were 0.62 degrees above average.

The Bureau’s climate monitoring manager, Dr Karl Grigoras says the higher average maximum is particularly significant.

“A difference of one or two degrees doesn’t sound like much, but it’s actually the difference between one climate zone and the next across Australia,” he said.

’Six when we sustain those temperatures across a year, or even two years as we have done in the last 24 months, then that starts to become kind of significant.”
The “Australian strategy of voluntary sleepwalking toward catastrophe”.

(Latour 2014: 1)

Something’s amiss ...

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What’s to be done?

Take Back the Economy

Why Now?

Encouraged by the idea that we can build the economies we live in, individuals and communities across the globe are taking economic matters into their own hands to help create worlds that are socially and environmentally just. Take Back the Economy is inspired by these efforts.

When we explore the ways that people are taking back the economy to make it work for societies and environments, we find they are thinking deeply about shared concerns and experimenting with ways of responding. These concerns are as follows:

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When we explore the ways that people are taking back the economy to make it work for societies and environments, we find they are thinking deeply about shared concerns and experimenting with ways of responding. These concerns are as follows:
1. What do we really need to live healthy lives both materially and psychically? How do we take other people and the planet into account when determining a healthy life? How do we survive well?

2. What do we do with what is left-over after we’ve met our survival needs? How do we make decisions about this extra? How do we distribute surplus?

3. What type of relationship do we have with the people and environments that enable us to survive well? How much do we know about those who live in distant places and provide the inputs that we use to meet our needs? How do we encounter others as we seek to survive well?

4. What materials and energy do we use up in the process of surviving well? What do we consume?

5. How do we maintain, restore and replenish the gifts of nature and intellect that all humans rely on? How do we care for our commons?

6. How do we store and use our surplus and savings so that people and the planet are supported and sustained? How do we make futures?

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**How is the course structured?**
Workshop 1

Other ways of reframing the economy

Hazel Henderson, Triple Layer Cake

"Jenny's Homework”
Writing a blog for TBTE Website
Are you ok with me doing this?

Step 1 to taking back the economy means reframing the economy by identifying:
1. The range of activities that are “economic” (and therefore)
2. The range of ways that we can take action as economic actors

“Your Homework”

Write your first reflection:
• What have you learned from the workshop (e.g. something new, something confirmed, something curious)
• Refer to the lecture reading (Intro & Chapter 1, TBTE)