Growth and Structure of Cities (Bryn Mawr)

Statement of Purpose

Since its foundation in 1971, the Program in Growth and Structure of Cities at Bryn Mawr College has built on a deep commitment to the city as an object of study and action and to interdisciplinary teaching and research within our classes and in the program as a whole. These twin concerns shape our teaching and mentoring as we guide students through their liberal arts education towards various kinds of professional and academic citizenship. We seek to integrate many disciplines and analyses of spaces and histories of the built environment with the issues, methods and theories of politics, economics and socio-cultural change. Moreover, the Cities Program is concerned that students develop both multicultural issues and global perspectives in their work. Thus, we combine exposure to the unique urban laboratory that is Philadelphia with comparative classes that draw on our expertise in the U.S., Europe, East Asia and Latin America. We also encourage concentrated study of individual cities and problems through advanced seminars, JYA choices and the senior thesis.

While growing within the liberal arts traditions of the Bi-Co, we also want our students to develop critical perspectives toward the urban-related professions that they may choose to pursue after graduation. We incorporate diverse settings in our classes and in cross-listed work in other Bryn Mawr and Haverford departments, in colloquia, field research and internships. In these, multidisciplinary approaches are discussed, compared, tested against diverse values and experiences. We also take them beyond the classroom: Future architects learn to talk to community organizers and to consider public finance as well as aesthetics; future planners learn to question the tools and categories of their field as social constructs that may blind them to people and solutions. We especially welcome involvement from students — and faculty — beyond the major, who join us in classes, events, discussions and other fora.

First-year Advising

Two annual introductory courses, City 185: Urban Culture and Society, (in 2011-2013 Fall MW 1-2:30-4:00pm) and City 190 Form of the City (in 2012-2014, Spring MW 2:30-4:00). These classes introduce students to complementary foundations of the major. Urban Culture and Society focuses on social sciences (anthropology, political economics, history, geography, sociology, environmental studies and planning) while Form of the City treats studies of the built environment and visual representation (history of art, archaeology, architecture, planning). City 185 concentrates on contemporary linkages and differences, using ethnographic and other readings on Philadelphia and other American cities as well as global perspectives. City 190 takes on a broad sweep of history from the foundations of cities to their future through the prism of global urban form and the decisions of urban planning.

Either of these classes opens the student to the theoretical and methodological foundations for work to follow throughout the major. Both introduce methods for other research and writing in social sciences and humanities, and expose students to Philadelphia through field trips, class discussion of news, and problems requiring observation in the city. They can serve as more general introductions to social sciences, visual humanities and also to Bryn Mawr (for HC first-year students). While City 185 reserves spaces for HC first year student, many HC students begin the major in the spring or in their second year.

In City 185 and 190, Bryn Mawr graduate students may serve as Teaching Assistants, aided by Bryn Mawr and Haverford undergraduates who act as liaisons, guiding students in issues of planning and time management as well as helping with reading and writing. This praxis has been of special value to first-year students as it provides another, supplemental level of attention in writing and problem-
solving. While 185 is limited in enrollment to 60 (in two sections) and 190 to 50, at least 60% of those spaces are reserved for first and second-year students.

Two other requirements can be met at the 200-level by a survey of architecture course and an advanced exercise in social research. The first category includes City 253 (Survey of Western Architecture), City 254 (Survey of Modern Architecture) and City 255 (Survey of American Architecture). In these classes, students learn to analyze formal and functional aspects of the built environment and to investigate the forces that shape it. They also become familiar with specific buildings, styles and architects that are referents for many future discussions. In 2009-2013, students may fulfill the major requirement by either taking City 254 (Fall) or City 255 (Spring-Fall). These classes would also be appropriate for first-year students and transfers with some background in visual studies.

Students are required to do advanced work in urban social sciences as well that introduces them to extended theory and research. City 217 Research Design (Karriem) and City 229 Comparative Urbanism (McDonogh), both offered in the spring, introduce the students to a research seminar format around social theory and specific issues. Both demand the development of a long original research paper (20-25 pages). This is equivalent to a Writing Intensive course at HC and hence generally are not appropriate for first-year students. Topics for Comparative Urbanism vary from year to year; the theme for 2012-2014 is cities through crime literature, ranging from depictions of criminality (across race, class and gender) to visions of form and movement. The key cities for comparison this year will be Barcelona, Los Angeles, Havana, Buenos Aires and Shanghai. Readings will include literary sources, films and social histories of colonial and post-colonial cities working with materials from Belfast, Hong Kong, French North Africa and the Mexican-American border. In City 217, students develop their own research agenda and proposal based on individual interests. All these classes presume prior knowledge of the field and would be inappropriate for first year students, although they are good transitional classes for transfer students.

CONCENTRATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND LATIN AMERICAN, LATINO AND IBERIAN PEOPLES AND CULTURES: In the fall, EnvSt 101 (Introduction to Environment and Society) serves as a springboard for social science participation in the ES concentration as well as a Cities course. Students interested in ES should also consider taking GEO/CITY 103 as a lab science in the spring (Consult ES advising). Cities also provides an anchor for the Concentration in Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures. Here, a general intro course GNST 145 is offered in the spring and welcomes first year students; many Cities classes are also cross listed with LALIPC.

First-year students considering a Cities major may also want to reflect on other courses across the Bi-college system that will intersect with Cities. Introductory classes in Earth Systems Sciences, Environmental Studies, Physics (for pre-architecture students), Economics, Statistics and Languages all lay the foundations for work in Cities and may, in some cases be counted toward the major. Classes in Political Science, History and Anthropology, among other fields, prepare students for advanced urban courses in these areas. In the case of questions, students should also feel free to contact the primary major advisors for the year, Carola Hein, Gary McDonogh, Ellen Stroud, and Jeff Cohen. Junior and senior Haverford majors are also generally willing to talk about their own choices and plans.

**Looking Ahead: Intermediate Courses**

At the intermediate level, Daniela Holt Voith (BMC ’76) offers an intensive design studio program in Rockefeller Studio. This is a central part of preparation in pre-architecture and for students trying to determine if architecture is the right trajectory for them. This course, however, demands a
background and commitments of time which are not wise for first-year students. It may be taken in the second year and may include non-majors, although priority is given to majors. Other regularly scheduled intermediate courses deal with American, European, or Japanese architecture and planning, global cities, mass media, and American social history/planning, including classes on urban spatial organization and gender.

The Cities Program, however, does not believe that its students should take all their courses within a rigid departmental framework. In collaboration with colleagues in other departments at both colleges, some of whom also serve as affiliated faculty/advisors, we have developed a series of regularly scheduled courses that tend to constitute “tracks” for students to follow. Each student must work out his or her own program under the relatively strict tutelage of Cities Program advisors, including eleven courses and four auxiliary courses which develop and make coherent a students’ overall work plan. STILL, THOSE WHO ARE PLANNING TO MAJOR SHOULD CONTACT MAJOR ADVISORS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR TO DISCUSS COURSEWORK. This is especially important given the increased attention of students and colleges to first semester JYA.

Ultimately, each major work plan differs, but these may give you some ideas:

**PLAN 1: URBAN SOCIAL RESEARCH AND POLICY**
- Core intro classes (4)
- Introduction to Economics; Urban Economics or Public Finance; Econ Stats or some other work with statistics
- Classwork in Sociology, Anthropology and/or Political Science (which will also define areas of additional expertise).
- Research Design (CITY 217)
- Techniques of the City (CITY 365); Rights to the City
- Center City Development at Penn or some appropriate planning class
- Senior level internship
- Senior Thesis

**PLAN 2: PRE-ARCHITECTURE/ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY/PLANNING**
- Core introductory classes (4)
- Architecture and Urban Design Studio (CITY 226 and 228)
- Ancient Greek Cities and Sanctuaries (CNEA 203)
- Medieval Architecture (HART 212)
- Japanese Architecture (CITY 270)
- American Architecture (CITY 255)
- Topics in Modern Architecture (CITY 377)
- Senior Thesis
- Additional courses would be met with Physics and Calculus required by Architecture Graduate Programs.

**PLAN 3: ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES, with BMC ES Concentration**
- Core introductory courses (4)
- EnvSt Introduction to Environment and Society
- Introduction to Earth Systems Science (GEO 103)
- Ecology (BIO 220)
- Classes such as U.S. Environmental History, Environmental Movements (POLI SCI 220), Research Methods (City 217), Environmental Economics (ECON), etc
- Advanced Topics in Environment and Society
- Techniques of the City (CITY 365)
• Senior Sem in Cities and ES
• As additional courses, the student might complete appropriate courses in biology, geology, chemistry and psychology as well as other classes in environmental studies as available.

ANY CONCENTRATION, MINOR OR SECOND MAJOR AUTOMATICALLY FULFILLS THE ALLIED COURSES REQUIREMENT.

THESE DO NOT REPRESENT ALL POSSIBLE MAJOR FOCl. In recent years, students have also worked out plans that allow them to develop specific interests in development studies, public health, mass media and communication, criminology and area studies. Double majors with Economics, Languages and other programs are also appropriate, as are programs that involve development of a concentration like East Asian Studies. Again, these must be done in consultation with the major advisors. Cities students may also participate in the HC concentration in Latin American and Iberian Studies.

Advanced Courses:

Cities requires that all students complete a senior thesis in the fall term of their final year. This intensive writing class, co-taught by Cities faculty each year, has produced a legacy of important original work, some 500 senior theses now held in the Bryn Mawr libraries. The thesis also prepares students for collegial participation in the 300 level courses, which will vary from year to year. These range from Environmental Justice, Collegiate Architecture or Techniques of the City and City and Mass Media. Senior students are also encouraged to pursue appropriate classes at Penn.

Praxis is also an important facet of the major. Students are encouraged to explore the city and area and to become engaged in volunteer work. Internships (450) may also be set up for advanced students, although numbers are limited while others are encouraged to explore their pedagogical futures through acting as teaching assistants in introductory courses (415).

Graduate Study

The 3/2 program with City and Regional Planning at Penn remains an ongoing option. It now has been approved as a Haverford plan, with its first students enrolling in 2007-8. Students who are interested should talk with the chair of Cities in their sophomore year. One Haverford student also has just completed a B.A./M.A. program in Art History as well.

Cities graduates have often gone into fields related to architecture, planning, policy and community organizations, as both academic and civil careers. Others have gone on in environmental work, law, business and medicine. Our graduates also include journalists, filmmakers, fashion designers, clergy, and many others who contribute to their communities as informed and committed citizens.

Concluding Note to Haverford College Faculty Advisors:

While roughly half the students and majors in Cities come from Haverford, as you know, we have no formal faculty affiliations among the Haverford faculty despite strong individual intellectual ties. We are always willing to work with you and recognize that the Haverford experience for our students goes beyond the choice of the major. For those of you unfamiliar with the program, we will be more than happy to answer questions from faculty as well as students, and to learn about Haverford courses that will be especially appropriate for Cities students (we count many more than are cross-listed by working on a case to case basis). We will be represented at HC first year orientation but please feel free to contact us or have students reach us via e-mail (chein, gmcdonog, estroud, jcohen - all @brynmawr.edu)