

INS504 – IR Topics: Human Security and Urban Violence

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Slakmon

Schedule: Intercession - Winter 2010 / Monday to Friday, 13h30-17h15

Office hours: by appointment (office #321, Ferré building)

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Course Description

This course employs a multidisciplinary approach and a comparative methodology to study theoretical, empirical, and normative dimensions of human security in urban environments plagued with high levels of violence. Focusing on the city as the main unit of analysis and case-studies in Latin America, we will examine the root causes of urban violence and discuss citizen, community, and policy responses to daily insecurity. While its paradigmatic value can and will be questioned, human security presents an interesting and useful conceptual framework to study security from a people- rather than state-oriented perspective, and to understand daily issues of urban violence as experienced by ordinary citizens across the class spectrum. To identify, quantify, and explain multi-faceted aspects of human (in)security in selected city case-studies, course lectures and readings will draw from diverse development-related fields as well as film and fiction.

Evaluation

I. Participation (25%): Based on daily attendance and active participation in class discussions.

II. Oral presentation and short paper (40%): You will select one of the ten course topics (listed below) for which you will submit a short review paper (**2-pages**, single-space) and do a **30-minutes** presentation with power-point slides. In both the paper and the presentation, you are required to answer the following five questions for the *mandatory readings* assigned that day:

1. Identify and define key words and concepts
2. Summarize the authors' main arguments and findings
3. Identify and explain the methodology employed
4. Assess the readings' analytical value (e.g. *So what?*)
5. Give one major critique for each reading

The short paper is due at the beginning of class on the day of your oral presentation.

III. Take-home exam (35%): You will be required to answer one question (out of a choice of five) based on material discussed in class and course readings exclusively (mandatory and recommended). The exam will be distributed at the end of class on **Friday, January 15** and is **due Monday, January 18** by 16h00. You must provide a **hardcopy** (in my departmental mailbox in the Ferré Building) **and** send me an **electronic copy** at: catherine.slakmon@gmail.com

Course Topics

1. 01/04 *Introduction: The Human Security Agenda*
2. 01/05 *Paradigmatic Shift or Policy Fad? Theoretical Debates & Measurement Issues*
3. 01/06 *Insecurocracy? Fear, Crime, & Violence in the City*
4. 01/07 *Uh Oh, It's The Police: Corruption, Violence, & Vigilantism*
5. 01/08 *Police Reform and Community Policing*
6. 01/11 *Kids, Gangs, Guns, & Drugs (Part 1)*
7. 01/12 *Kids, Gangs, Guns, & Drugs (Part 2)*
8. 01/13 *Urban Fearscales & Walls: From Gated Homes & Communities to Gated Borders*
9. 01/14 *Home Sweet Home? Insecurity and Gendered Violence*
10. 01/15 *Making Human Security Work*