Course #s  CRN 86598; Architecture, AHST 6910-01
Satisfies upper division elective requirement for the SLA Urban Studies Minor

Title  Latin American Urban Imaginaries

Time  Tuesdays, 3:30 – 6:00 pm, Greenleaf Conference Room, 100 Jones Hall

Course Type  Upper-division seminar; at minimum, junior standing required to register

Instructors  Carol Reese, Favrot Professor, School of Architecture,
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Course  This seminar-style class studies a select number of Latin American cities—eg, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Havana, and Panama City—that have been considered unique symbols of Latin America’s urbanity. The illumination of their urban histories unfolds through a variety of images—imaginaries—that produce disparate visions of urbanity from the colonial era to the present. Our focus is the built environment, and the imaginaries that we analyze include maps, buildings, and city- and park-scapes, as well as representations in films, literature, paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and musics. Through thematic readings, illustrated lectures, and group discussions, students develop an understanding not only of the urban “personalities” associated with cities over time, but also of the singular historical conditions that created distinctive urban settings.

Pedagogical Goals  A primary emphasis of the course is to explore how visual and other expressive images construct our assessment of the qualities of life that cities offer. Additional goals of the course are to encourage participants (1) to gain broad general knowledge of Latin American urban history and development, as well as detailed understanding of specific local conditions; and (2) to think critically about the roles of distinctive classes of media and genres of representation (whether, for example, architectural drawing, photography, political rhetoric, caricature, literature, or festival) in the construction of historic and contemporary images of cities. Within an interdisciplinary framework of investigation, the course considers the ways in which architectural and urbanistic ideas are presented and disseminated for national and international consumption.

Requirements  Students are responsible for leading and contributing to lively class discussions based on assigned readings and their own research. Course requirements include weekly interpretive assignments and a final research project, to be prepared both as a written paper and an in-class presentation.