



RIGHT TO THE CITY

IDEAS, MOVEMENTS, POSSIBILITIES

KRVIA Vacation Courses | November 2nd to 8th 2015

In collaboration with CSA and Studio X

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an important moment for urban struggles around the world. Displacement, privatization and commodification of urban space are everywhere defining the politics of cities and how they are lived, made, and reproduced. They are also increasingly the points of articulation of struggles around housing, education, livelihood, food, and around which people, in defense of and in search of renewed publics, forge a political commons. In 1967, Henri Lefebvre coined the phrase “right to the city” which he said is meant to gather “the interests...of the whole society and firstly of all who inhabit.” The right to the city, in Lefebvre’s formulation, was to be a rallying point for the urban masses to consider the city itself as both terrain and object of their larger struggles to upend the system of capitalist accumulation. It was a “cry and demand...a response to the existential pain of a withering crisis of everyday life in the city,” against the generalized conditions of social exclusion, marginalization, as well as alienation. Eschewing fragmented, reformist, or tactical maneuvers, it was a call for a fundamental restructuring of social relations in the city. Yet, despite the contemporary rise of urban struggles around the world, the radical content of this idea has been increasingly diluted by NGOs as well as state and private developmental agencies. Undeterred, urban social movements have renewed its radical vision and given it force and substance, making it a central formulation in

their calls for societal change, from the World Social Forums to the various Urban Forums since 2004. In 2010, The Social Urban Forum (SUF) that took place in Rio de Janeiro called for “the construction of different cities, receptive to its inhabitants instead of receptive to capital” by “the elimination of the great wealth and power inequalities in our societies” and “for reassuring the right to the city, understood as a collective right of all to a city without discrimination...” The SUF poured scorn over what they called the twenty-first century global city which is:

“...a transfigured city, transformed into an agglomeration of citadels for the wealthy, enclaves for middle classes, vulnerable quarters for working classes, and ghettos for the poor and marginalized groups.”

Their declaration calls for a city without discrimination, the refusal to accept relocations and displacements, land rights for the poor, social rights over property rights, decent living conditions for all, affordable and quality public transportation and sanitation, the refusal to accept monopoly in the mass media, food sovereignty, alternative energy, non-market methods for fulfilling social needs, and structures for participatory decision making. It also invites professionals and academics to join in:

“We believe academics and professionals should contribute to the construction of collective action processes and

should help workers and urban residents in general to take their destiny and the destiny of their cities into their own hands.”

With this in mind, we are organising this initiative to explore the concept, practice and possibilities of the Right to The City framework. Rooted in the history and socio-spatial development of the city of Mumbai, it will seek to understand how social movements have always claimed their right to the city, to resist, to create new imaginations and practical alternatives for urban life, based on solidarity and mutual aid. The program will also explore the origins and nature of urban struggles around the world, and explore the scope and scale of the movement towards the building of democratic, egalitarian and environmentally just cities. The program will include city walks, seminars, presentations and conversations – and is open students, researchers, activists, and anyone who is interested in these, and related questions.

FACULTY

Hussain Indorewala teaches social and political theory, research methods and humanities at the Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute of Architecture (KRVIA) in Mumbai. He writes regularly on urban politics, physical planning, and sustainability and works with community groups in the city on issues of urban development, affordable housing, waste management, transport and food planning. Actively involved in the Research and Design Cell at the KRVIA, he also works with various community groups on issues of urban development in the city.

Shweta Wagh is an Assistant Professor at Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVIA) and is involved with the Research and Design Cell at the school. As an urban researcher and activist her interests include research and advocacy in areas related to urban and environmental policy, heritage conservation, urban ecology and livelihoods, housing, urban commons and urban social movements. Some of her previous work involves framing conservation policy and guidelines, participatory area planning, and the up-gradation /self development of urban villages and informal settlements.

Malav Kanuga is a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, trained in studies of space, culture, and power as well as uneven development in an international

perspective by the late Neil Smith. He currently teaches urban theory as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVIA) in Mumbai. He has been involved in various social and political currents associated with the global justice movement for over fifteen years, participating in anti-war, pro-commons, autonomy and direct democracy, Zapatismo, queer, and anti-racist politics. As an urban researcher and as an activist, his interests include issues of value, commons, grass roots people’s movements, and urban development. Malav Kanuga is editor of Common Notions, an independent publishing platform he founded in 2010 in Brooklyn, NY.

Simpreet Singh is an activist based in Mumbai, presently working on a PhD at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) where he is developing people’s history of the city from a working class perspective through the collection of oral history narratives. Simpreet is currently affiliated with the Mumbai-based artist studio CAMP and steers the Right to the City Campaign-India.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The course is open to students, researchers, workers, activists, and those interested in the issues raised by the course description. A basic understanding of the issues concerned would be appreciated. The programme will be conducted in English. Registration fees are Rs 7000. Due to limited registration space, submission of applications are encouraged before October 30 2015.

ADMISSION PROCESS

[A] Interested students should send an email to rttc.mumbai@gmail.com and include the following

A cover letter with contact details

A short statement (about 400 words) of the applicant’s bio, interests and motivation for attending the programme

[B] Download an Application Form here.

[C] Once you get a confirmation of your application, submit a completed form with the registration fee of Rs. 7000 before 30th of October at the KRVIA office (address below).

VENUE

Studio X : 192, 4th Floor, Kitab Mahal, Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400001

KRVIA: Vidyaniidhi Bhavan 2, Vidyaniidhi Marg, J.V.P.D. Scheme, Juhu, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400049