

**THEME SEMINAR**

**Empire Cities: Urban Histories and Geographies of Power in Asia, The Indian Ocean, & Beyond  
HIS 516**

**Professor Eric Beverley**

**Th 4:45-7:35 - N-303**

From the early modern era to the present, cities have consistently expanded in size, density, and as nodes in regional and global networks of political, economic, and social power. Urbanization on a global scale has been particularly intense from c. 1900 onwards. As metropolises and capitals, cities have been central articulation points for imperial and emergent postcolonial-national forms of power. In recent years historical scholarship has trained increasing focus on cities, urban migration, planning, housing, and built form, often viewed in relation to questions of landscape & environment, capital & infrastructure, transregional connections, geography & scale, and as part of what has been touted as a broader ‘spatial turn.’ This seminar takes urban history as a vantage point on these themes, examining conceptually-driven and empirically-grounded approaches to writing historical scholarship about cities as material and imagined spaces. We will spend the first weeks of the semester getting a handle on varied approaches to urban historical scholarship, drawing also from adjacent fields (geography, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, literature). Subsequent units will develop case studies of specific cities and urban migrations. The majority of our case studies will focus on Asia and the Indian Ocean world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, there will be ample scope for expanding beyond this domain temporally (early modern antecedents, contemporary trends) and geographically (flows of people, things, and ideas beyond Asia to Africa, the Americas, and Europe) both in our coverage and in student work. Requirements include regular reading, attendance, and participation; in-class presentations; and two writing assignments (one short review essay, one longer historiographic term paper on a topic of the student’s choice determined in consultation with the instructor). **Pre-requisite: Enrollment in a History Graduate Program or permission of the instructor. MAT students must request permission from the instructor and will enroll under the HIS course number.**