Course Syllabus: Contemporary Barcelona and Its Cultural History

**Language of Instruction:** English  
**Professor:** Stephen Jacobson (stephen.jacobson@upf.edu)  
**Room:** TBA  
**Professor’s Contact and Office Hours:** Mondays, 11:00 – 11.30 (office 20.255).  
**Course Contact Hours:** 45  
**Recommended Credit:** 6 ECTS credits  
**Course Prerequisites:** None  
**Language Requirements:** None

**Course Description:**

Throughout its history, the city of Barcelona has undergone dramatic and intriguing changes. From an industrial city characterized by textile factories and low life expectancies that gained an international reputation as a hotbed of anarchist and working-class agitation, it became transformed into a cosmopolitan city within a globalized world. It boasts an enviable urban plan adorned with gems from the fin-de-siècle modernist movement to contemporary international architects. This course will penetrate and analyze this glossy and gritty city by focusing on its cultural history during the past two centuries. In so doing, we will employ cross-disciplinary methods. In addition to readings in history, we will survey perspectives from urban, Hispanic, and cultural studies as well as anthropology and sociology. We will combine the critical study of "high" or "bourgeois" culture with an analysis of popular, working-class, immigrant and consumer culture. The course will include a number of on-site visits so that students interact dynamically with the urban environment. We will also discuss contemporary issues facing the city today.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the course, the student:

- will have acquired survey knowledge of the history of Barcelona from the Enlightenment to the present.
- will have developed critical skills needed to analyze high and popular culture, art, and architecture in an urban environment.
- will have become versed in contemporary issues facing Barcelonese today.

**Course Workload:**

The course is divided into lectures, discussions, and field studies. Since this is an intensive summer course, students should be prepared to read between 100 to 200 pages per week.

**Methods of Instruction:**

The course includes both lectures and field studies. Two-hour class sessions are normally divided into one-hour lecture and one-hour seminar. Students are expected to treat field studies in the same manner as lectures, by taking notes and assuming the requisite academic responsibilities.
In addition, students will be required to undertake one field study on their own. They will be required to take a guided tour of the Palau de la Música (http://www.palaumusica.cat/ca/) or visit the Hospital Sant Pau (http://www.santpaubarcelona.org/en/visits) for which they will be reimbursed. Failure to attend will be counted as a classroom absence.

**Books for Purchase:**

All required readings will be contained in a coursepack available for purchase.

**Method of Assessment**

Class Participation: 33 percent  
Paper: 33 percent  
Final Exam: 33 percent

**Topics Covered:**

1. The Barcelona Model  
2. The Making of a Nation  
3. The Industrious City  
4. The Industrial City  
5. The Metropolitan City  
6. The Cosmopolitan City  
7. The Defeated City  
8. The Resurgent City

**Absence Policy:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>No penalization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE for the course</td>
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The UPF Summer School attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences. Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency, etc.) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the UPF Summer School.

**Classroom Norms:**

- No food or drink is permitted.  
- There will be a ten-minute break during the class.  
- Students may not consult mobile phones or use computers in class, except for taking notes and following powerpoint presentations.

**Course Contents and Required Readings:**

**Session 1: Course Description** (Mon, 25 June)  
Review of syllabus, classroom requirements, and expectations.  
Overview of course contents.

**Session 2: The Barcelona Model I** (Tues, 26 June)  
Introduction to the Barcelona Model.  
Is there a relationship between the Barcelona Model and Catalan secessionism?

**Session 3: The Barcelona Model II (Wednesday, 27 June)**
Urban planners and the Barcelona Model. Balancing cosmopolitan ideas and local identities.


**Session 4: The Barcelona Model III (Thursday, 28 June)**
Globalization and commodification: Barcelona in a post-industrial economy and the problem of tourist-dependency


**Session 5: The Barcelona Model IV (Monday, 2 July)**
Critiquing the model: poverty and immigration.
Movie: Alejandro González Iñárritu, Biutiful, 2 hours, 28 minutes.

**Session 6: The Barcelona Model V (Tues, 3 July)**


**Session 7: The Barcelona Model VI (Wed, 4 July)**
Complicating the Model: the inner city versus the outer barris; the twentieth versus the twenty-first century; environmental issues and the problem of sustainability.


**Session 8: The Making of a Nation (Thurs, 5 July)**

Medieval and early modern roots of contemporary modernity.
Field Study: Museu d’Història de Catalunya (http://www.mhcat.net)
Hand in papers.

**Session 9: The Industrious City (Mon, 9 July)**
Enlightenment Barcelona: textiles, prints, coffee, tobacco, and sugar. 
Urban romanticism in poetry, art, and architecture. 

Session 10: The Metropolitan City  (Tues, 10 July) 
The bourgeois spatial and cultural transformation of the city. 
From revolutionary liberalism to bourgeois industrialism to Catalan nationalism 

Session 11: The Industrial City I  (Wed, 11 July) 
Visit to the Barcelona Industrial Museum, Oliva Artés (http://museuhistoria.bcn.cat/ca/node/1071) 

Session 12: The Industrial City II  (Thurs, 12 July) 
Barcelona industry becomes cosmopolitan: The World's Fair of 1888. 

Session 13: The Cosmopolitan City I  (Mon, 16 July) 
The architectural and artistic boom. 

Session 14: The Cosmopolitan City II  (Tues, 17 July) 
The "roaring twenties" in Barcelona. 

Session 15: The Cosmopolitan City III  (Wed, 18 July) 
The zenith of the cosmopolitan era: The World's Fair of 1929 
Field Study: Visit to the World's Fair site of 1929. 

Session 16: The Cosmopolitan City IV  (Thur, 19 July) 
"The Rose of the Fire": Anarchism and republican popular culture in the bourgeois city. 

Session 17: The Defeated City  (Mon, 23 July) 
Barcelona, the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist Repression. 
Street, youth, and immigrant culture amid urban poverty.

**Session 18: The Resurgent City** (Tues, 24 July)
Student, popular, and immigrant culture during the transition to democracy
The Barcelona Model in Historical Perspective.
Catch-up day, lecture, and review for final exam.

**Session 19: Final Exam** (Wed, 25 July)

**Session 20: Concluding Matters** (Thurs, 26 July)

**Recommended bibliography:**
In addition to the articles, chapters, and books cited above, students are encouraged to consult the following sources on their own.


*Last revised, January 2018*