Urban Studies

The Urban Studies program teaches students to analyze the city, urban life, and urbanization through a variety of disciplinary lenses. Students learn where cities come from, how they grow, thrive, and decline, how they are organized, and how to construct meaningful, inclusive, secure, and sustainable places. The curriculum examines how urban problems arise, how they have been previously addressed, and how to plan cities of the future. Concentrators enjoy the breadth of courses in American Studies, economics, history, literature, history of art and architecture, political science, sociology, and planning as well as provide in-depth courses integrating those perspectives. We introduce the fundamentals of Urban Studies scholarship as well as intense examination of an urban problem in focused seminars. These advanced seminars offer opportunities to write extensive and synthetic interdisciplinary analyses that serve as capstones to the concentration. The program’s 10-course curriculum provides sufficient flexibility to allow students to pursue specific urban interests or to take courses in urban focus areas of Built Environment; Humanities; Social Sciences; and Sustainable Urbanism. The Program insures that students master at least one basic research methodology and perform research or fieldwork projects, which may result in an honors thesis. Fieldwork training includes working with local agencies and nonprofit organizations on practical urban problems. Capstone projects entail original research papers in Urban Studies seminars; academically supervised video, artistic, or community service projects; and Honors Theses for eligible concentrators.

For a concentration, the program requires ten courses selected from four course groups:

- **Introduction (choose one):**
  - POLS 0220 City Politics
  - URBN 0210 The City: An Introduction to Urban Studies
  - URBN 0230 Urban Life in Providence: An Introduction

- **Research Methods (choose one):**
  - APMA 0650 Essential Statistics
  - APMA 1650 Statistical Inference I
  - APMA 1660 Statistical Inference II
  - CLPS 0900 Quantitative Methods in Psychology
  - ECON 1620 Introduction to Econometrics
  - EDUC 1110 Introductory Statistics for Education Research and Policy Analysis
  - POLS 1600 Political Research Methods
  - SOC 1020 Methods of Social Research
  - SOC 1100 Introductory Statistics for Social Research
  - URBN 1500 Understanding the City through Data

- **Core Courses (3 courses required, in at least 3 disciplines, such as American studies, anthropology, economics, education, English, history, history of art and architecture, political science, and sociology, as well as urban planning when staffing allows):**
  - AMST 1612D Cities of Sound: Place and History in American Pop Music
  - ANTH 1236 Urban Life: Anthropology in and of the City
  - ANTH 1255 Anthropology of Disasters
  - ECON 1410 Urban Economics
  - ENGL 1760K Reading New York
  - ENVS 1400 Sustainable Design in the Built Environment
  - ENVS 1580 Environmental Stewardship and Resilience in Urban Systems
  - GEOL 1320 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems for Environmental Applications
  - HIAA 0074 Nineteenth-Century Architecture
  - HIAA 0840 History of Rhode Island Architecture
  - HIAA 0850 Modern Architecture
  - HIAA 0860 Contemporary Architecture
  - HIAA 0861 City and Cinema
  - HIAA 1103 Introduction to Architectural Design
  - HIAA 1850D Film Architecture
  - HIST 1550 American Urban History, 1600-1870
  - HIST 1551 American Urban History, 1870-1965 (HIST 1550: American Urban History to 1870)
  - JUDS 1620 Jerusalem Since 1850: Religion, Politics, Cultural Heritage
  - POLS 0220 City Politics
  - POLS 1320 Urban Politics and Urban Public Policy
  - SOC 1330 Remaking the City
  - SOC 1340 Principles and Methods of Geographic Information Systems
  - SOC 1640 Social Exclusion
  - URBN 1200 The United States Metropolis, 1945-2000
  - URBN 1210 Regional Planning
  - URBN 1220 Planning Sustainable Cities
  - URBN 1230 Crime and the City
  - URBN 1240 In Search of the Global Black Metropolis

- **Seminar courses (choose three):**
  - AMST 1903E City of the American Century: The Culture and Politics of Urbanism in Postwar New York City
  - EDUC 1650 Policy Implementation in Education
  - ENGL 1760F City, Culture, and Literature in the Early Twentieth Century
  - HIAA 1850H Berlin: Architecture, Politics and Memory
  - HIAA 1910A Providence Architecture
  - HMAN 1971A City Spaces, City Memories
  - PLCY 1700J GIS and Public Policy
  - POLS 1822S Politics of Urban Transformation
  - URBN 2220 Urban Politics
  - SOC 1870Q World Cities
  - SOC 1871W Geographical Analysis of Society
  - SOC 2960C Urban Sociology
  - URBN 1000 Fieldwork in the Urban Community
  - URBN 1010 Fieldwork in Urban Archaeology and Historical Preservation
  - URBN 1870A American Culture and the City
  - URBN 1870C The Environment Built: Urban Environmental History and Urban Environmentalism for the 21st Century
  - URBN 1870D Downtown Development
  - URBN 1870F Housing and Homelessness
  - URBN 1870H Rivers and Cities
  - URBN 1870I The Changing American City
  - URBN 1870J The Politics of Community Organizing
  - URBN 1870M Urban Regimes in the American Republic
  - URBN 1870N The Cultural and Social Life of the Built Environment
  - URBN 1870P Representing the Twentieth-Century City
  - URBN 1870Q Cities in Mind: Modern Urban Thought and Theory
  - URBN 1870R Bottom-up Urbanism
  - URBN 1870S The City, the River, and the Sea: Social and Environmental Change at the Water’s Edge
  - URBN 1870T Transportation: An Urban Planning Perspective
  - URBN 1870U Critical Urban Theory
  - URBN 1900 Land Use Planning: The Future of the I-195 Parcels
  - URBN 1910 Drawing and Creating in 2D, 3D and CAD for Architecture and Urban Design
  - URBN 1920 Introduction to Urban Design and Planning: The City as System
URBN 1930  Brown in Providence

Complementary Curriculum (Total of 2 courses required):  

1. Any course from the Introductory or Core Curriculum options above not used to fulfill another requirement

2. OR Any of the following:

- AFRI 0600  Race, Gender, and Urban Politics
- AFRI 0620  African-American Life in the City
- AMST 0150B  Boston: A City Through Time
- AMST 0190D  Popular Music and the City
- AMST 1611A  Making America: Twentieth-Century U.S. Immigrant/Ethnic Literature
- AMST 1903G  Oral History and Community Memory
- AMST 1904M  Charles Chapin and the Urban Public Health Movement
- ANTH 0450  Inequality; Sustainability, and Mobility in a Car-Clogged World
- ANTH 1301  Anthropology of Homelessness
- ARCH 0400  City and Sanctuary in the Ancient World
- ARCH 1150  Cities and Urban Space in the Ancient World
- ARCH 1155  Cities, Colonies and Global Networks in the Western Mediterranean
- ARCH 1200F  City and the Festival: Cult Practices and Architectural Production in the Ancient Near East
- ARCH 1600  Archaeologies of the Near East
- ARCH 1720  How Houses Build People
- ARCH 1900  The Archaeology of College Hill
- COLT 0811Q  Mediterranean Cities
- COLT 1810H  Tales of Two Cities: Havana - Miami, San Juan - New York
- DEVL 1650  Urbanization in China: Megacities, Mass Migration, and Citizenship Struggles
- EDUC 0410E  Empowering Youth: Insights from Research on Urban Adolescents
- EDUC 1150  Education, the Economy and School Reform
- EDUC 1720  Urban Schools in Historical Perspective
- ENGL 1710I  Harlem Renaissance: The Politics of Culture
- ENGN 1930S  Land Use and Built Environment: An Entrepreneurial View
- ENV S 0520  Wild Literature in the Urban Landscape
- ENV S 1410  Environmental Law and Policy
- ENV S 1555  Urban Agriculture: The Importance of Localized Food Systems
- ENV S 1929  The Fate of the Coast: Land Use and Public Policy in an Era of Rising Seas
- ETHN 1890A  Seminar on Latino Politics in the United States
- GRMN 1660B  Berlin: A City Strives to Reinvent Itself
- HIAA 0012  Theories of Architecture from Vitruvius to Venturi
- HIAA 0550  Gold, Wood and Stone: Painters and Bankers in Renaissance Tuscany
- HIAA 0560  Constructing the Eternal City: Popes and Pilgrims in Renaissance Rome
- HIAA 0770  Architecture and Urbanism of the African Diaspora
- HIAA 1560C  Renaissance Venice and the Veneto
- HIAA 1910D  Water and Architecture
- HIAA 1910F  City Senses: Urbanism Beyond Visual Spectacle
- HIST 1140  Samurai and Merchants, Prostitutes and Priests: Japanese Urban Culture in the Early Modern Period
- HIST 1310  History of Brazil
- HIST 1741  Capitalism, Land and Water: A World History: 1848 to the present
- HIST 1961B  Cities and Urban Culture in China
- HIST 1970R  Colonial Modernities: Europe & the Middle East
- HMAN 1971B  Paris Archive: The Capital of the Nineteenth Century, 1848-1871
- JAPN 0910B  Japanese Cities: Tokyo and Kyoto
- JUDS 1718  Modernity, Jews, and Urban Identities in Central Europe
- PLCY 1200  Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation
- PLCY 1700Q  Urban Policy Challenges
- PLCY 1700R  Urban Revitalization: Lessons from the Providence Plan
- PLCY 1910  Social Entrepreneurship
- POLS 1310  African American Politics
- POLS 1760  Infrastructure Policy
- POLS 1824D  Power and Prosperity in Urban America
- SOC 0130  American Heritage: Democracy, Inequality, and Public Policy
- SOC 1270  Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the Modern World
- SOC 1540  Human Needs and Social Services
- 3. RISD courses approved by the Urban Studies Program each semester as applicable to the Urban Studies concentration. 
- 4. Any course taken at another university in the US or abroad and approved by the Urban Studies Program each semester (2 maximum)

Total Credits 10

1 There are also other statistics courses offered by other departments (e.g., Applied Mathematics, Cognitive Sciences, and Psychology). On occasion, an alternative research skills course may be approved for a specific concentration.

2 The courses provide opportunities to undertake research or fieldwork projects and all qualify as "capstone" experiences.

3 No more than two may be used to satisfy the requirements of this concentration. The RISD course is identified in the student's record at Brown by a RISD course code.

Off-Campus Courses: Some courses taken outside Brown (e.g., in study abroad programs) may be used for credit towards the concentration if the material covered directly corresponds to that taught in Brown courses, or is relevant to the complementary curriculum. Such courses will be approved each semester by the concentration advisor.

Honors

Candidates for Honors must have above average grades and shall apply for this distinction in writing to the Director of the Program by the middle of the second semester of their junior year. They shall include a cover letter with a brief statement of the intended research proposal as well as the name of the member of the Urban Studies faculty who would serve as their advisor and with whom they must work closely. Twelve courses are required for Honors concentrator, two in addition to the ten courses required for a standard program. In fall semester, honors thesis students shall enroll in an independent reading and research course with their adviser (URBN 1970 in their adviser’s section) or take an additional research skills course, and in the Spring, they shall take the Honors Thesis Workshop (URBN 1981). The candidate's final thesis must be of outstanding quality, in order to qualify for honors.