



EL COLEGIO
DE MÉXICO



INTERNATIONAL
SUMMER
PROGRAM

Urban Ethnography: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Latin American Cities

The rapid and massive urbanization of populations the world across has stood as one of the most important social processes of the recent past, reshaping political formations, economic hierarchies, and cultural productions. Latin America in particular has been characterized by the emergence of immense urban agglomerations and an extreme centralization of power, wealth, and people, a revolution that has remade previously largely agricultural societies. In this course, we will draw on classical and contemporary ethnographic studies of some of the region's greatest cities to examine three vital dimensions of Latin American societies at present: the reconfiguration of socioeconomic structures under the sign of late-capitalism and neoliberalism, evident in processes of segregation, displacement, and dispossession; the Latin American city as a stage for social and political conflicts, violence, criminality, and the governance of marginalized populations; and, finally, urban space as a site for particular forms of sociality, encounter, and diversity.

By reviewing “thick” ethnographic writings, the course aims to dive deep into the lived realities and quotidian interactions that shape Latin American cities, familiarizing students with the concrete challenges that they face, while maintaining throughout an active dialogue with the theoretical perspectives that frame these studies and the broader debates in which they aim to intervene.