Urban Innovation and Policy (STEP0009)

**Description**

More than half the world’s population now lives in cities, making them a key site for innovative change. Yet many cities are saddled with outdated infrastructure, pressing resource problems and increasing social and economic divisions. City leaders need to innovate and transform urban life, but where should they turn for advice? How do different types of urban expertise matter to effective policymaking? What contributes to the success of an innovative urban idea and a disruptive urban experiment? And, conversely, how can urban experts, in academia and beyond, effectively engage city leaders? Urban Innovation and Policy focuses on these key questions with the goal of encouraging students to go beyond disciplinary divides and to appreciate how to apply urban thinking to complex urban challenges. The key goal of this course is to appreciate different ‘modes’ of urban thinking and their relationship with urban policy practice, and to understand how to source and interpret different types of urban expertise across academia in relation to complex urban challenges. This is done by engaging with a series of UCL centers specializing in urban research, like the Bartlett, the Departments of Geography or Civil Engineering (CEGE), as well as engaging individual experts from both other disciplines (e.g. the arts and business studies) as well as the practice (e.g. by discussion how to engage with public intellectuals, consultants or the real estate industry). The module’s investigation of different sources of expertise and innovation in urban policy is centered on a real issue for today’s city leaders. This is the ‘innovation challenge’ of the module, devised by the instructors in partnership with key partners of the UCL City Leadership Laboratory. The challenge presents students with an unusual and not easily unpacked issue that tests conventional modes of thinking and requires creative solutions. This year, students have the choice of two innovation challenges, which have been developed in collaboration with the Greater London Authority (GLA) as well as the C40 cities Women4Climate campaign. Students, instructors and experts are tasked with engaging the challenge of either (a) Innovation and...
technology or (b) gender and climate policy. Whilst cities have in the past years been an exciting locus of experimentation, and the promises of the ‘smart city’ agenda as well as a city gender lens have fast risen to wide popularity in urban research and policy, there remain many areas in which complex urban challenges test our contemporary understanding of the ‘urban age’. Overall, then, the module enables students to experience an urban policy curriculum that cuts across architectural, planning, business and economics, engineering and political tools, amongst others. Students draw on the unique breadth of UCL urban research expertise, and test cutting edge technical and policy approaches to urban innovation. At the end of the module students will be able to recognize, consider limits and possibilities, as well as effectively mobilize a variety of different disciplinary approaches to urban policymaking.
Urban Innovation and Policy (STEP0009)

**Description**

More than half the world’s population now lives in cities, making them a key site for innovative change. Yet many cities are saddled with outdated infrastructure, pressing resource problems and increasing social and economic divisions. City leaders need to innovate and transform urban life, but where should they turn for advice? How do different types of urban expertise matter to effective policymaking? What contributes to the success of an innovative urban idea and a disruptive urban experiment? And, conversely, how can urban experts, in academia and beyond, effectively engage city leaders? Urban Innovation and Policy focuses on these key questions with the goal of encouraging students to go beyond disciplinary divides and to appreciate how to apply urban thinking to complex urban challenges. The key goal of this course is to appreciate different ‘modes’ of urban thinking and their relationship with urban policy practice, and to understand how to source and interpret different types of urban expertise across academia in relation to complex urban challenges. This is done by engaging with a series of UCL centers specializing in urban research, like the Bartlett, the Departments of Geography or Civil Engineering (CEGE), as well as engaging individual experts from both other disciplines (e.g. the arts and business studies) as well as the practice (e.g. by discussion how to engage with public intellectuals, consultants or the real estate industry). The module’s investigation of different sources of expertise and innovation in urban policy is centered on a real issue for today’s city leaders. This is the ‘innovation challenge’ of the module, devised by the instructors in partnership with key partners of the UCL City Leadership Laboratory. The challenge presents students with an unusual and not easily unpacked issue that tests conventional modes of thinking and requires creative solutions. This year, students have the choice of two innovation challenges, which have been developed in collaboration with the Greater London Authority (GLA) as well as the C40 cities Women4Climate campaign. Students, instructors and experts are tasked with engaging the challenge of either (a) Innovation and

**Key information**

- **Year**: 2020/21
- **Credit value**: 15 (150 study hours)
- **Delivery**: PGT L7, Campus-based
- **Reading List**: [View on UCL website](#)
- **Tutor**: Dr Ellie Cosgrave
- **Term**: Term 2
- **Timetable**: [View on UCL website](#)

**Assessment**

- Coursework: 30.0%
- Coursework: 25.0%
- Coursework: 25.0%
- Coursework: 20.0%

**Find out more**

For more information about the department, programmes, relevant open days and to browse other modules, visit [ucl.ac.uk](http://ucl.ac.uk)

Disclaimer: All information correct as of March 2020. Please note that aspects of the module may be subject to change. UCL will make best efforts to inform applicants of major changes.
technology or (b) gender and climate policy. Whilst cities have in the past years been an exciting locus of experimentation, and the promises of the ‘smart city’ agenda as well as a city gender lens have fast risen to wide popularity in urban research and policy, there remain many areas in which complex urban challenges test our contemporary understanding of the ‘urban age’. Overall, then, the module enables students to experience an urban policy curriculum that cuts across architectural, planning, business and economics, engineering and political tools, amongst others. Students draw on the unique breadth of UCL urban research expertise, and test cutting edge technical and policy approaches to urban innovation. At the end of the module students will be able to recognize, consider limits and possibilities, as well as effectively mobilize a variety of different disciplinary approaches to urban policymaking.