

THE CITY AS TEXT: MAPPING CULTURAL HISTORIES IN BARCELONA AND MADRID



KEY DATES

Academic Pre-Departure Sessions: Mon Apr 1, 6:30-8:30
Mon Apr 15, 6:30-8:30
Mon Apr 22 6:30-8:30

ALL ARE REQUIRED

Travel dates SPAIN: May 11-20, 2019

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is framed as “City as Text” because the city becomes our laboratory and our classroom - an extended text not limited to what is housed in a library; rather we will learn first-hand through direct encounters with each city’s public places and often more hidden histories. Each day will provide a structured exploration of the city as socio-cultural system. The city is a source and outgrowth of invention and creativity. Why is it designed as it is? How has it evolved, and in response to what factors? What has worked, or where have things gone awry? We will delve critically into how each city has sought to market or cultivate its carefully constructed image or “brand”, and what constitutes genuine tradition versus touristic or nationalistic myths. We will study these cities as “urban imaginaries,” that is as spaces defined both by their “imagined” identities and by very real historical and social forces that converge to shape and contest these representations. In this course, we will consider the social and political history of both cities by actively examining the characteristics and innovations of their urban spaces – including art, architecture, urban design, film, music, and cultural events. Through active learning, students will collaborate in small teams to explore designated sectors as social scientists –

closely observing the design of neighborhoods, the social dynamics, economic environment and infrastructure, challenges and innovations.

IN THIS COURSE, YOU WILL:

- Experience first-hand the differences between the major cities of Madrid and Barcelona in terms of culture, politics, and commerce.
- Gain an understanding of how the development of urban space relates to and affects political, economic, and social realities.
- Engage actively with the city as a social scientist – practicing skills of observation, documentation, and critical analysis.
- Investigate the city and its production as spaces of creativity, innovation, and experimentation.
- Collaborate with team members to navigate the city and to make independent discoveries.
- Learn from architects, artists, writers, consultants, social entrepreneurs and others about the cultural, historical and political design of these cities and why they have so markedly diverged.
- Develop a broad picture of Spain's diversity and regional differences.
- Examine closely the design of the city and specific neighborhoods to interrogate the touristic surface image and to better understand these formations as constructed and contested spaces.

Babson's Learning Goals

Babson's learning goals outline a diversity of skills that foster personal and intellectual growth, and prepare you well for your professional lives. While this course supports all of Babson's seven learning goals in one way or another, the following goals are especially emphasized:

Global and Multicultural Perspectives:

- In this course, you will experience first-hand the historical and cultural context of Spain. You will have the chance to reflect on your own identity and cultural assumptions and to experience a diversity of perspectives that may stretch your world view.

Rhetoric

- You will strengthen your skills in communicating effectively. You will have the opportunity to actively observe, reflect, analyze, and to interact hands-on with the culture we are studying. Importantly, you will be encouraged to synthesize these experiences and to communicate them effectively and persuasively in your presentations and final portfolio/journalistic projects.

Entrepreneurial Thinking & Acting

- This course actively fosters your abilities to think about innovation and creativity in a variety of contexts and its role as an agent of social change -- in how people live their lives. You will be approaching the city and its urban spaces as social scientists. What have been the challenges and opportunities? How and why have these cities diverged? How has the imagined view of

these cities as touristic destinations re-mapped the city for some of its citizens? How does the “real” city compare to what is being sold? What have been the challenges of the recent economic crisis, and what sorts of innovative solutions have emerged?

Leadership and Teamwork

- A very unique part of this course is the freedom to roam and to demonstrate initiative. There will be plenty of opportunity for guided instruction, but also the chance to work in teams and to decide independently of direction what to observe and what interests you. As well, the final journalistic portfolio will be a group project. If sufficiently well done, we will hope to promote this beyond Babson.

Critical and Integrative Thinking

- This course supports an integrated approach to understanding the interconnections among urban life and political, economic, social and historical contexts. The framework for this course assumes an increasingly global and interconnected world, and one of the aims of this course is to prepare you more fully for this environment. As well, this course encourages you to think critically about the “architecture” of these cities as symbolic spaces designed by diverse and often conflicting social forces and ideologies.

Graded Evaluation

Your grade in this course will depend upon the following:

Attendance and Participation 25%

- I see being an involved, considerate, and *professional* member of the course as a huge part of your grade. Showing up on time, being “present” – not only physically but also mentally, intellectual curiosity, asking questions, collaborating and being a good team player – these are all critical to making the course a positive and fun experience for all of us.

Six “Mapping” Assignments in Madrid and Barcelona (30%) - Described below in the syllabus.

You will compile these into a Tumblr blog individually throughout the course, which you can build along the way. You can also use the data that you collect individually and as a group for your presentations.

You will be graded on:

Timeliness of your deliverables (received before the next day)

Accuracy in addressing the central questions of the prompts

Thoughtfulness and intellectual heft (going beyond the obvious)

Careful editing of spelling, grammar, and other aspects of clearly communicating your thoughts

Intellectual risk-taking; willingness to navigate new ideas and experiences

Capacity for self-reflection

Two Presentations in Spain (2) 20%; each

- **Design Thinking & Ways of Knowing the City: Innovative Mapping Assignment**

Urban space presents us with a range of issues to consider – economic, political, but most of all *human*. How are the urban centers you explored being experienced by their inhabitants (the end users of these spaces)? Both urban environments provide complex objects of study generating vast quantities of data for analysis. We can “map” the urban experience through traditional maps, but we can also think of new ways to convey the design of the city, its innovations, challenges and changes over time? You will decide how you will measure and represent your “mappings”, and what they suggest about the neighborhoods and cities you have visited. In teams, you will pick a theme for each city, and concentrate your findings around that area of focus: food markets, fashion and retail, architecture and design, tourism and urban life; etc

For both presentations, you will be graded on:

- Quality of presentation: well-conveyed and carefully edited, content, visuals)
- Data and analysis (how can the knowledge you gained be implemented and displayed for understanding?)
- Thoughtful analysis of the material you have gathered
- Innovative thinking. Have you been creative and willing to take intellectual risks?

Attendance and Participation: You will be expected to attend all pre-departure sessions, to participate and be well prepared for all meetings and activities in Spain, to be a good team member, to present thoughtfully on your research, and to contribute positively to the overall experience. Preparation, courteousness, engagement with other cultures, and overall intellectual curiosity are weighed very heavily in determining this grade.

Deadlines are important in business and in life. Showing up on time, being prepared, and submitting work on time are essential to your success in this course. See Professionalism for further clarification.

Professionalism

I expect all students traveling on this course to behave in a professional manner in their interactions with other students, our partners in Spain, the professor and administrator, and speakers. Be prepared and on time for all departures, meetings, and other interactions. Be engaged – not checking email or texts. Ask thoughtful questions, and show interest in what others have to say. In a sense, the professionalism component of your grade is like a performance appraisal that you will routinely receive throughout your career; everything you do or do not do creates an impression. Professional behavior is expected from all students and a lack thereof will adversely affect your grade. Deadlines are important in business and in life more broadly. Students who are late (or worse, absent!) for a meeting, activity, or deadline will miss that opportunity and will be docked accordingly. Don't be that person.

WORKING/TENTATIVE ITINERARY

Date	Content	Assignment
Mon Apr 1	Pre-departure session 1	Overview, Syllabus, Theorizing the spaces of cities (mapping, design thinking, measuring), What are “urban imaginaries”?

"Imaginaries are historical constructions defined by the interaction of subjects in society... and the set of values, institutions, laws and symbols that are common to a particular social group." (Jean-Paul Sartre)

Please bring to our meeting your laptop, a notebook (and pen/pencil of course), enthusiasm and sense of humor. This is going to be fun!

Tonight we will get acquainted with one another (and you'll meet me and Alana Anderson, our administrator, if you haven't met us already!). I am still solidifying meeting times while in Spain, but we'll go over the general itinerary, our hotels, any specific interests, the methodology of "City as Text", and what to expect. Readings are posted on Bb, but will include the following:

- King, Anthony. "Boundaries, Networks and Cities: Playing and Replaying Diasporas and Histories," in *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*, ed Alev Çınar and Thomas Bender, 1-15.
- Gies, David, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. Introduction.
- Also, image barometer of Spain at home and abroad

Questions:

1. Of the cities we'll be exploring, Madrid and Barcelona. What do you know about them so far? How do *your* current images of them conform or differ from the perceptions reported in the image barometer?
2. Is there such a thing as objective "mapping"? How can maps be subjective or discursive (power-influenced) constructions? We'll virtually investigate a neighborhood - and begin to think about how we will explore a neighborhood once we're in Spain.
3. How can we observe, collect, and evaluate data to create different types of "mappings" and to better understand the communities we are going to explore? What are some possible strategies?

Monday Apr 15

Pre-departure session 2

Assignments

"Culture rests uneasily at the juncture of past and future. Rather than some sort of objective reality, culture- a people's culture, a national culture, a mode of expression, a way of being – is a mental construct which fuses together elements of myth, history, desire and projection, imagination and accomplishment." (David Gies, introduction to *Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*.)

As noted for pre-departure Session I, all readings will be posted in Bb, to include the following:

- Luna-Garcia, Antonio. "Cities of Spain, Localities on the edge of an identity breakdown," *Cities: The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 20.6, Dec 2003.
- Larson, Susan. "Shifting modern identities in Madrid's recent urban planning, architecture, and narrative," *Cities: The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 20.6, Dec 2003.
- Chislett, William. *A New Course for Spain: Beyond the Crisis*. Real Institute El Cano, 2016 (specific sections will be assigned to groups, with report outs).

Each group will also be assigned a neighborhood to research in Madrid and Barcelona. Please research this neighborhood and be prepared to share some key highlights with the class, with images. Map out some potential places you would like to see. These should include at least 1) restaurant; 2) cultural site; 3) unexpected location (not the most obvious landmark(s). While you may touch upon them, avoid

focusing on the most recognized landmarks or tourist destinations. Neighborhoods in Madrid to include: Lavapiés, Chueca/Malasaña, Barrio de Las Letras, La Latina, City Center, Salamanca & Retiro

In Barcelona: Eixample, Gothic Quarter, Gracia, Barceloneta, Born, Raval/Sarria (two extremes)

Monday April 22

As noted for pre-departure sessions I and II, all readings will be posted in Bb. For this session, we will divide up readings on current topics related to Spain and groups will report out and lead discussion on these topics to include:

- The status of an independent Catalunya. Why do some Catalans want it? Why does the central government in Madrid oppose it? How does this debate impact life in Barcelona?
- The legacy of the 2008 economic crisis in Spain. What is the current situation for young people, especially as youth unemployment (25 and under) had been as high as 60% during the crisis?
- Political life in Spain. What are the major political parties? What are some current debates in the Spanish democracy? What is the status of the constitutional monarchy and the role of the king?

Each person will also be asked to “map out” a few things that they want to make sure to see and/or do in each city. We will discuss and look over the overall plan for our time there.

Sat May 11 Depart for Spain (Individual Flights – arrive in Madrid by 12 noon May 12)

Sun May 12 Arrive Madrid by noon. Bus transfer to hotel Roommate Oscar, unpack and refresh, lunch in neighborhood

3 pm Afternoon – Scavenger Hunt around the City (in small groups of 4-5). Post images to our Whatsapp.

Tentative (TIME TBD) Atlético Soccer Game (light dinner pre- or post, depending upon time)

Assignment 1 - Post on your Tumblr/Blog in response to the following prompts (before you go to bed)

Something unexpected you discovered today:

An unusual or interesting find (image & caption):

Something you hope to learn about over the next few days:

GO TO SLEEP AT REASONABLE HOUR so that you can function on Monday

Mon May 13 Urban Localities and Cultural Change – From Historic Madrid to the Present Day

8:30 am Breakfast and briefing for the day

9-12 am: Guided Architectural Tour of the city: Students will visit various neighborhoods in the city with an architect who will explain the evolution of the city, the urban environment, and those buildings that have become iconic features of Madrid's urban imaginary. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate perspective and design and to perceive the city with an artist's eye/creative vision.

How was Madrid's formation as a city unique? As you will see, Madrid developed as it did, as the seat of Spanish political life/power, but not as a place where the foreign nobility and other nobles who led it wanted to live when the city was first formed. It was in many ways a façade or simulacra (terms we'll discuss), as the buildings were just given the veneer of ornate style and most of the luxury was dedicated to things that could be easily moved to their country estates and palaces outside the city. What are the fictions at stake in imagining the city as both a center of power *and* a temporary locus or waystation?

1-5 pm: Field Study with lunch in small groups – [Chueca](#) and [Malasaña](#)

Assignment 2: Food, Markets, and the Urban Imaginary. There are two main parts to this assignment.

- a) What is typical "Spanish" cuisine in the local culinary space and how does this coincide or compare with tourists' imaginaries and what is marketed to tourists as "Spanish" cuisine? Go to a few restaurants that you think are marketed to tourists. Take a picture of a sample menu. Try something off the menu. Where is the restaurant located? Why do you think this is? Go, as well, to a restaurant that you think is more authentically "Spanish" and that caters to locals. Have lunch there. How does the cuisine differ (assuming it does)? The ambiance? What other observations can you make?
- b) There are many different food markets in Chueca. Go to at least two of these. Observe and take pictures. Who is shopping there? What are the prices like? What sorts of foods are being sold? If you lived there, where would you shop?

b2) If you have time, look at signs for rent or sale. See if you can find out local real estate prices. Who lives here, do you think (professionals, working class etc)?

POST before bed: A picture of your "tourist" menu. Where is it located? Why? What was the experience like? A picture of your more "authentic" restaurant menu and of the food (or you/friends enjoying the food). What did you like? Write a short REVIEW for the more authentic restaurant.

Then, post a few pictures from the markets you visited today. Where would YOU shop, do you think, if you lived in Chueca? Is it a "foodie" neighborhood? How expensive do the prices seem?

Finally, post a picture of your DREAM apartment in the neighborhood. Try to find out what a similar apartment might cost.

6 pm – Gather in hotel, debriefing from day

8:30 pm – Welcome Dinner (Location TBD)

Tuesday May 14 Mapping Cultural Change: Moda (Clothing & Design), Markets, and Immigration

8:30 am Breakfast and briefing for the day

10 am Prado Tour

12-2:00 pm Stroll through Parque de Retiro to Barrio de las Letras (lunch)

2-5 pm Field Study, Lavapiés & La Latina

Assignment 3: Cultural Mapping & Community Organizing

Using the maps that I have given you, try to find all of the sites on the map. What other spaces can you add in? Are there any elements that seem missing from the neighborhood? What sort of street art do you see? Who lives here? Take pictures to document your walk. Given our discussion earlier, what aspects of gentrification do you see? Of resistance to gentrification?

6-8 pm Conversation & Workshop with writer, José Ovejero: Visual Mapping and Storytelling. Narrating a Neighborhood

Dinner on own.

Post in your blog (before bed)

Your favorite painting or sculpture at the Prado. Who is the artist? What inspired you about this work of art?

Your experience in Lavapiés. What did you discover? What surprised or excited you to find? What challenges did you experience?

Then post about the talk with José. What did you learn? What interested you?

Wed May 15: Designing the City/Sectors of Power & Privilege

8:30 am – breakfast/briefing (Reading TBD)

Studio Time/Discussion

10:00 am [DesignIt Madrid](#) (strategic consulting & design)

12:00-4:00 Field Study – Retiro, Barrio de las Letras and Salamanca Neighborhoods

Assignment 4: This assignment has three components.

- 1) In Retiro Park. Who do you see using the park? Is it mostly tourists? Locals? A mix? Is the park an effective use of green space preservation? Are there local gardens or other sustainability efforts in the park that you can find? What would you add to the park if you could add a feature, or is anything missing?

- 2) In Retiro and into Salamanca, conduct a few interviews in the style of “Humans of New York” (in this case, Madrid!) Decide what you are going to ask them, and if they mind a picture – you can also do this at the restaurant where you have lunch.
- 3) In Salamanca neighborhood, decide on a four block radius (four blocks in either direction) and closely study the design of the space. Is it marked by businesses? Residential space? How are they divided? Are there are major street divisions or other barriers? Who lives there or works there? Take pictures of things that interest you. Go into small shops. Let yourself get a little bit lost

4-7 pm Work on group presentations with your team members

Presentations:

- **Food Markets**
- **Fashion, Design, & Style**
- **Architecture & Design (From street art to buildings to parks)**
- **Other? (You decide)**

7:30-10 Tapas & Tastings in La Latina

Before bed: Post in your blog: a video – Humans of Madrid style interview

STYLE section type piece on either Retiro Park OR Salamanca neighborhood. What should people visit? What’s cool? Trending?

Thursday May 16 From Madrid to Barcelona

9:30-11:30 Presentations on Madrid and Barcelona Prep

Request 12:30 checkout, luggage downstairs; travel to Atocha Train Station

2 pm train (AVE) to Barcelona. Arrive 4:30, Transfer to hotel [Roommate Carla](#)

Reading for Train: Agustín Cocola Grant, “The Invention of the Barcelona Gothic Quarter” in *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 18-34. + Additional readings

The Barcelona Gothic Quarter was reconstructed in the 20th century, and in fact the new Gothic Quarter seems to be a space which is completely medieval but was actually rebuilt between 1927-1970. This recreation was meant both as an outgrowth of Catalan nationalism and as a way to promote the city through historic monuments, whether or not they were materially authentic. We will examine the commodification of heritage alongside city marketing, stressing the relationship between touristic promotion and the production of urban space.

6-8 pm Walking tour of Gothic Quarter ([Barrio Gótico](#))

9 pm Dinner on own

Reading: Juan Ramón Resina, “Barcelona’s Vocation of Modernity: Rise and Decline of an Urban Image.” And Teresa Vilarós: “A Cultural Mapping of Catalonia.”

Friday May 17 Barcelona and Reinventing the Urban Imaginary – A Modern City/City of Modernism

8:30 am Breakfast and briefing,

Studio Time: Discussion on Gothic Quarter from yesterday, and From Catalan Modernism to Modern Day (discussion)

10:00 am: Meeting (To be confirmed) **Morillas** Branding Agency

12 noon-3:30 Walking tour **Gracia neighborhood** & lunch

Assignment 4: Meandering- Food, Markets, Restaurants & Plazas

Find as many as you can of the sites listed on the map. Go to a restaurant for lunch. Take pictures of what you find especially interesting. Are the restaurants more touristy or local? Take a picture of the menu where you decide to eat. What sorts of food can you find? Prices? How does it compare to what you found (in terms of types of restaurants, food, markets) to Madrid?

4:00-7 pm The Eixample: Walking Tour Catalan Modernism

Includes visit to Sagrada Familia (staggered entrance times 6-7)

Dinner on your own

Make sure to post in your blog before bed. Include something interesting that you learned from your tour of Catalan modernism/architecture as well as your earlier exploring.

Sat May 18 Selling or Selling Out? Opportunities & Challenges of Tourism & Gentrification in Barcelona

8:30 am breakfast, briefing: discussion of Tourism in Barcelona – Opportunities and Opposition. What is the authentic Barcelona? Challenges of immigration/diversity alongside the marketed image of a global city.

10 am-2 pm Neighborhood Field Study **Born**

Have lunch in Born

Assignment 5 Part A. Fashion & Retail

Mapping a 5 block or so area in Born, map the fashion trends you see. What kinds of stores are there? Are they chains? (Zara, Mango etc) or smaller boutiques? What are the trends you see in the fashion? What about the people shopping there? Are they locals? Tourists? What languages do you hear? Pretend you are a buyer for an apparel, furniture, jewelry, or other company, looking for creative inspiration and/or products to expand your product line. What inspires you? What would you put on your inspiration board? What do you think is up and coming?

2-5 pm **Barceloneta**

Assignment 5 Part B Tourism vs Authentic Barcelona Map Barceloneta in terms of local and tourist areas. What divides them? How close to the beach does the local population live? How does this image differ from the touristic images? Are there areas where they blend? Are there signs of friction or positive co-existence?

Optional trip to Montjuic (Miró museum, Olympic Stadium) via the Funicular

Optional trip to Parque Güell

Dinner on own

Make sure to post in your blog before bed! (Assignments above)

Sunday May 19 Presentations/Sitges/Final Dinner

8:30 am breakfast

9-11 presentations

As in Madrid, organized on the basis of your sectoral focus (in teams).

11:30 – Leave for Sitges

5:30 – Return from Sitges

8:30 pm Final Dinner

Assignment 6: Sitges

Wander around the town a little bit during lunch. What are the stores like? The restaurants? Who is frequenting them? Go on line. How is Sitges marketed? What would you compare it to in the U.S? To a location in another country you're from? Write a recommendation/commentary for a sample Travel Guide regarding your visit. What to see? Do? Where to eat? Post an image or two.

Monday May 20 Depart