O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE
A Private University Promoting Public Service

I.D.E.A.S.
OFFICE of INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Online Certificate Course

"URBAN FUTURES: DATA, SPACE, AND POLICY IN INDIA AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH"

This four-week interdisciplinary certificate course explores urban transformations in the Global South, focusing on labour, inequality, and governance. Combining critical urban theory with GIS, ethnography, and spatial data science, it examines how caste, gender, informality, and precarity shape urban life and work. Co-taught by Dr. Shamindra Nath Roy and Dr. Nayanjyoti at IDEAS, JGU, the course equips students with conceptual and analytical tools to understand how capital, labour, and data reshape cities.

1 Nov - 30 Nov 2026 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (IST)

INSTRUCTORS



Dr. Shamindra Nath Roy
ASSISTANT DIRECTO &
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, IDEAS, JGU



Dr. Nayanjyoti
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR & ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR, IDEAS, JGU

Register Now the QR Code

Total Sessions: 8 (Mondays and Wednesdays), approximately 16 contact hours.
Eligibility: No specific academic qualifications are require

Participants who complete all evaluation components and maintain the required attendance will receive an official Certificate of Completion issued by the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS), O.P. Jindal Global University.

COURSE STRUCTURE

SESSION 1: WHAT IS A CITY? RETHINKING URBAN IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

This opening module unsettles the taken-for-granted idea of the "city" and asks participants to think about urban life as a social, economic, and political condition — not merely a physical form. It draws on multidisciplinary perspectives from economics, geography, sociology, and political science, and introduces the idea that Indian urbanisation does not fit neatly into Western templates. The concept of *subaltern urbanisation* — the proliferation of census towns, peri-urban settlements, and ordinary small towns beyond the metropolitan core — is introduced as a lens for the rest of the course. Participants also engage with how India officially defines urban, and why that definition matters for policy and data

DR. SHAMINDRA NATH ROY

SESSION 2: FROM VILLAGE TO CITY: RURAL-URBAN TRANSITIONS, MIGRATION, AND THE URBAN PERIPHERY

This module traces how people, livelihoods, and land move between rural and urban spaces — and how that movement produces the particular texture of Indian cities. It examines circular and seasonal migration, the growth of peri-urban and extended urban zones, and the emergence of new urban settlements on city edges that are neither fully rural nor formally urban. The module also interrogates the political economy of urban land on the periphery — who benefits, who is displaced, and how infrastructure investment shapes settlement patterns. The thread connecting migration, informality, and the urban edge is carried forward into subsequent modules.

DR. NAYANJYOTI

SESSION 3: FROM VILLAGE TO CITY: RURAL-URBAN TRANSITIONS, MIGRATION, AND THE URBAN PERIPHERY

This module traces how people, livelihoods, and land move between rural and urban spaces — and how that movement produces the particular texture of Indian cities. It examines circular and seasonal migration, the growth of peri-urban and extended urban zones, and the emergence of new urban settlements on city edges that are neither fully rural nor formally urban. The module also interrogates the political economy of urban land on the periphery — who benefits, who is displaced, and how infrastructure investment shapes settlement patterns. The thread connecting migration, informality, and the urban edge is carried forward into subsequent modules.

DR. SHAMINDRA NATH ROY

SESSION 4: LABOUR IN THE CITY: INFORMALITY, PRECARITY AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

This module examines the everyday realities of urban labour. Drawing on labour process theory, feminist political economy, and ethnography, it analyses how informality, subcontracting, and migration structure the lives of urban workers. It explores the hidden labour of social reproduction that sustains cities, the role of caste and gender in shaping occupational segregation, and the ways in which workers navigate and resist precarious conditions

DR. NAYANJYOTI

SESSION 5: GOVERNING THE UNGOVERNABLE? URBAN POLICY, INFORMALITY, AND THE HOUSING QUESTION

This module turns to the policy and governance architecture of Indian cities. It examines the gap between the promise of the 74th Constitutional Amendment — decentralised, democratically accountable urban local bodies — and the fiscal and functional reality of weak municipalities. It then enters the terrain of urban informality: slums, unauthorised colonies, street vending, and informal housing markets as the dominant mode through which a large share of urban residents actually live and work. The module treats informality not as a failure of planning but as a product of it — examining how planning frameworks in cities like Delhi have systematically produced illegality while selectively tolerating it. Urban flagship programmes (JNNURM, Smart Cities Mission, PM Awas Yojana) are assessed against these realities.

DR. SHAMINDRA NATH ROY

SESSION 6: URBAN AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY: CASTE, GENDER AND THE EVERYDAY

This module examines how social hierarchies are reproduced and contested in urban space. It draws on feminist and anti-caste perspectives to analyse how gender and caste shape access to housing, public space, employment, and mobility. It explores the politics of urban social reproduction, the invisibilisation of care work, and the everyday forms of resistance and negotiation employed by marginalised groups in the city

DR. NAYANJYOTI

SESSION 7: READING THE CITY THROUGH DATA: GIS, URBAN INDICATORS, AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

This methods module introduces participants to the core tools and datasets used to analyse Indian cities spatially and quantitatively. No prior technical background is assumed. Participants are introduced to the logic of spatial data — what a shapefile is, how to read a thematic map, and how GIS layers can represent urban realities such as service access, population density, land use, and environmental risk. Working with open data sources (Census Town-level data, NUIS, Bhuvan, Urban Observatory, ward boundary datasets), participants produce a simple multi-indicator spatial profile of an assigned city or urban area. The session also covers how to critically interpret urban data — understanding classification biases, coverage gaps, and the political choices embedded in what gets counted and what does not.

DR. SHAMINDRA NATH ROY

SESSION 8: LABOUR IN THE CITY: INFORMALITY, PRECARITY AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The concluding module brings together the technological, political-economic and social perspectives developed across the course. It examines policy and governance responses to urban inequality and current transformations. The module will encourage students to critically examine who benefits from urban change, who bears its costs, and what more equitable and socially responsible futures of urban work and life might look like.

DR. NAYANJYOTI & DR SHAMINDRA NATH ROY

TENTATIVE READING LIST

1. Roy, S. N., Zérah, M. H., & Denis, E. (2025). Subaltern Urbanization and rural-urban linkages in India. In Handbook on Rural-Urban Linkages in the Global South (pp. 70-84). Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. Denis, E., & Marius-Gnanou, K. (2010). Toward a better appraisal of urbanization in India. A fresh look at the landscape of morphological agglomerates. Cybergeo: European Journal of Geography; accessible from https://journals.openedition.org/cybergeo/24798
3. Bhagat, R. B. (2005). Rural-urban classification and municipal governance in India. Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 26(1), 61-73.
4. Heller, P., Mukhopadhyay, P., Banda, S., & Sheikh, S. (2015). Exclusion, informality, and predation in the cities of Delhi. Centre for Policy Research
5. Mukhopadhyay, P. (2018). Engines without Drivers: Cities in India's Growth Story. Working

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Critically evaluate competing definitions and theories of urbanisation, with particular reference to Indian and Global South contexts.
- Trace the structural drivers of rural-urban transition, migration, and peri-urban growth in India.
- Analyse the governance architecture of Indian cities — including the role of urban local bodies, municipal finance, and flagship urban programmes — and identify key institutional failures.
- Interpret urban informality as a structural condition shaped by planning, law, and political economy rather than as a residual or aberrant category.
- Apply computational and spatial methods – including GIS, big data analytics, and quantitative analysis – to analyse urban inequalities and labour market trends at scale.
- Integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches to develop nuanced, evidence-based perspectives on the futures of urban development and social justice.

ELIGIBILITY AND PREREQUISITES:

No formal prerequisites. Participants are expected to have some familiarity with development issues, whether through professional experience or prior study. No background in economics or GIS is required.

DATES AND SCHEDULE:

Duration: 4 weeks, with two approximately two-hour sessions per week (8 sessions; approximately 16 contact hours). Each session will combine conceptual discussion, demonstrations, applied examples and guided hands-on exercises. Participants will begin identifying a capstone question or dataset by the middle of the course and develop it incrementally. The final session will be conducted as an interactive capstone workshop focused on analysis, interpretation, visual/spatial communication, methodological limitations and feedback.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Anyone with a bachelor's degree curious about urban development, inequality, and political economy seeking a rigorous analytical introduction. Civil society practitioners and development sector professionals. Policy researchers and analysts in government or think tanks. Journalists covering economy, development, or public policy. Postgraduate students and early-career researchers in social sciences.

INSTRUCTORS



Dr. Shamindra Nath Roy

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
IDEAS, JGU

Shamindra Nath Roy is an Assistant Professor in the IDEAS Program in JGU. He works at the interface of urbanization and public policy. He is a mixed-methods researcher whose research covers rural-urban transformations, urban local governance, internal migration in India, labor and employment issues, and socio-spatial inequalities in basic services in Delhi. His work is published in *World Development*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, and in a number of book chapters, policy briefs and opinion pieces. Shamindra holds an M.Phil and Ph.D in Regional Development with a specialization in geography from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.



Dr. Nayanjyoti

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR & ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
IDEAS, JGU

Dr. Nayanjyoti is a social anthropologist working on global value chains, automation, precarity, cultural production and subjectivities. His doctoral research focused on industrial transformations in Delhi-NCR. He brings a long experience of engagements with the field in a diversity of settings, and has worked over the years in research, teaching, editorial and consultancy capacities with academic institutions like Ambedkar University, Delhi University, and Azim Premji University, research organisations, publication houses, and socially engaged practices in various interdisciplinary projects and initiatives. Before joining IDEAS, he taught sociology in Sri Venkateswara College, DU. He is also an Associate Researcher at the Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) Delhi.

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ABOUT US

The Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDEAS) at O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) serves as a university-wide platform for fostering interdisciplinary teaching, research, and community engagement across the social sciences. It brings together scholars, students, and practitioners to co-create knowledge and develop innovative responses to complex real-world challenges.

At its core, IDEAS operates as an intellectual incubator, supporting collaborative scholarship, experimental pedagogy, and research that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. Through its initiatives and field-based programmes, it promotes critical inquiry, applied learning, and engagement with pressing development concerns.

With a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary dialogue, global academic exchange, and community-linked research, IDEAS aims to cultivate a dynamic academic environment that connects theory with practice and advances socially relevant scholarship

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