

Circular Cities Summer Workshop in London



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What is a Circular City?

A circular economy aims to go beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model to redefine growth and regenerate natural systems. It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources through a transition to renewable energy sources and designing waste out of the system (Rizos, Tuokko and Behrens, 2017).

The principle goal of adopting a circular approach within city-regions is to reduce resource consumption and waste production. It is also to ensure the long-term sustainability of the city-region's natural ecosystem and urban infrastructure.

In a circular city, resource flows are cyclical and localized through closed-loop, integrated systems, often resulting in reduced resource consumption, waste and CO₂ production (UCL Circular City Hub, 2017). The built fabric is adaptable, flexible and recyclable. Resources are re-used, recycled, recovered and shared. There is a shift towards non-resource based economies and renewable energy makes a significant contribution to the energy mix.

Systems integration, flexibility, intelligence, cooperative behavior, localization, recycling and renewable resources are the key concepts under-pinning the circular city concept (UCL Circular City Hub, 2017).

Summer Workshop Purpose

As traction and momentum around the circular economy builds globally, it will be important for planners and policy makers to understand its implications for urban systems and city residents.

The primary question this workshop will seek to explore is “How can the principles of circular economy be applied across the main urban systems (mobility, built environment, water, energy, food) and what are the interlinkages across these systems?”

Partnering with the [Ellen Macarthur Foundation](#), a leading initiative for circular economy transitions in the UK, this workshop aims to provide students with an opportunity to dive into the mechanisms and tools by which governments, businesses and institutions are adopting a circular economy perspective to building cities.

Goals

- Identifying the main circular economy principles and processes through an analysis of business cases, government strategies and stakeholder feedback
- Examining circular economy applications in different sectors and its resulting economic, social and environmental impacts
- Developing a framework for circular economy design related to a particular urban sector— mobility, built environment, water, energy and food
- Investigating potential pathways for interlinking circular economy principles across city systems

Methodology

Lead faculty: *Malo Hutson*

Teaching Assistant: *Gayatri Kawlra*

Location: *London, UK*

Travel Dates: *June 16-21st, 2019*

Students: *5 -7 GSAPP students*

Our methodology will be a comparative case study analysis (Robert K. Yin, 2012). This will allow students to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept of circular cities and develop insights into current gaps in implementation and possibilities for future application.

In London, students will conduct interviews, visit businesses and city agencies that are focused on circularity, and eventually compare that to what is happening in New York City. Some potential businesses and city agencies we will look at are London Waste and Recycling Board, Greater London Authority, Carbon Trust, Whole Earth Futures, M&S, and IDEO. We will also speak with other research institutions working in this space such as UCL's Circular Cities Hub and LSE Cities.

In New York City, we will talk to NYC officials, business leaders and nonprofits doing this work. Some potential contacts in NYC are NYC Economic Development Corporation, NYC Mayor's Office of Sustainability, Eileen Fisher and Closed Loop Partners (Kate Daly is good contact).