In gentrification studies most of the empirical literature draws on in-depth analysis of single case studies or on multi-site and synchronic comparative analyses. One of the most important and recent attempts to frame local examples of urban transformation within a broader temporal scheme is Hackworth and Smith’s gentrification waves model, put forward in 2001 in order ‘to understand (at a minimum) the context for changes to the process as a whole’ (2001: 466). The process as a whole was gentrification. In the last decade this model was fruitfully used to ground spatial processes within a temporal matrix, each stage highlighting a different mix of market and public interventions. Yet, the definition of stages is not sufficient to make this matrix an historical one, thus providing a deep sociological understanding of how gentrification happens. The meaning of ‘market’ and ‘state’ is also problematic in that national and urban trajectories have often produced different ways of ‘being the market’ and ‘being the state’. The aim of this class is to frame gentrification stages within a broader urban transformation pattern and within a deeper historical account. Moreover, it will try to debunk the notions of both ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ as theoretical objects, highlighting the role of contact zones, liminal spaces and interconnections between the two in spite of their supposed distance and difference.

Giovanni Semi
University of Turin

Giovanni Semi is associate professor in Sociology at the University of Turin, Department of Culture, Politics and Society. His main research interests are international migrations, urban space transformations and gentrification issues. Forthcoming are two books on Consumption and the middle class (with R. Sassatelli) and on Gentrification, both published by Il Mulino.