

UNIVERSITY TOUR 2013



THERESA WILLIAMSON, Ph.D.

Stand-alone lecture or full-day campus visit: 1-hour presentation on topics related to urban studies, citizen journalism, housing rights, community and international development.

After decades of stagnation marked by poor governance and disinvestment, Rio de Janeiro is now one of the fastest growing cities in the Americas. Pricier than New York and receiving more than double the international investment of São Paulo, the city is eager to take advantage of recent offshore oil discoveries and having been selected to host the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics to reconstitute itself as “a global city.”

Yet despite initial optimistic press coverage and significant work on the part of the city administration to engender a positive international image, there is growing debate about whether the city’s boom can actually serve to reduce the city’s infamous inequal-

ity. Known as the “Marvellous City” for its geologic beauty, Rio is also known as the “Divided City” by locals as rich and poor live side by side yet face historic segregation and stark disparities in access to public services.

How is Rio’s “coming of age” unfolding? What is happening in 600 plus favela communities? What exactly are favelas? How is the city currently handling these communities and its deep historic divides? Will Rio take advantage of this unique opportunity to grow and consolidate its economy without compromising its unique cultural heritage, and in a way that reduces inequality?

HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT!

From October 14 to November 1, 2013, Dr. Theresa Williamson, founder and executive director of **Catalytic Communities**, will be conducting a tour of universities across the United States and Canada, offering presentations along three themes:

Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: The Dynamics of Urban Change

Community Responses to Eviction, Gentrification and Police Violence in Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro

Favelas at the Vanguard: Rethinking Our Assumptions in Sustainable Development

Each talk will offer a contextual overview of the city, its recent history, and that of the favelas. It will then target itself towards one of these three topics. Please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) for further details or modifications regarding a specific talk subject.

Williamson is available for a 1-hour class or public lecture or a full-day campus visit (allowing for classroom visits, individual or group meetings, and/or an additional talk). There is also an option of showing our

award-winning film, *Favela as a Sustainable Model*. All honoraria are donated to the organization, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, to further efforts on behalf of Rio de Janeiro's favelas.

Few are in Williamson's position to offer a community perspective on the current transformations unfolding in Rio -- a perspective rarely available at a distance. The presentation incorporates the very latest in breaking news and community responses. It is highly informed by the experience of favela residents and up-to-date research. Audience members are left with a full understanding of the context which is shaping Rio today.

This is Dr. Williamson's final speaking tour before the 2014 World Cup to be held in Rio. Since 2010 Williamson has spoken at the following colleges and universities: Berea, Brown, Georgetown, Georgia State, Goucher, Pratt, Roger Williams, Stanford, Swarthmore, U. Pennsylvania, Villanova, and Wellesley. 2013 Talks have already been arranged at MIT and Villanova Universities. Ten more slots are available.



MORE ABOUT THERESA WILLIAMSON

*Founder and Executive Director,
Catalytic Communities*

Winner of the 2012 NAHRO John D. Lange International Award for her contribution to the international housing debate, with two Opinion pieces published in *The New York Times* in 2012, featured in *O Globo* and *Marie Claire*, and quoted in *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *NPR's Worldview*, *SBS Dateline* (Australia), *CBC Radio* (Canada), *Next American City*, *The Independent* (UK), *El Mundo* (Spain), *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil), *O Globo* (Brazil), *Places: The Design Observer*, *Architectural Record*, *Revista Piauí* (Brazil), *45 Minuuttia* (Finland), and *Cyberpresse* (Canada), Catalytic Communities (CatComm) founder Theresa Williamson has become an outspoken and respected advocate and informant on behalf of Rio de Janeiro's favelas in the face of current fast-paced transformations.

In May 2004 Theresa received her Ph.D. from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Entitled *Catalytic Communities: The Birth of a Dot Org*, her dissertation won the 2005 Gill-Chin Lim Award for Best Dissertation on International Planning and was one of three finalists for the 2004 Barclay Gibbs Jones Award for the Best Dissertation in Planning. She has published articles from this dissertation and related research in *Progressive Planning*, *The Journal of Urban Technology*, and *Cidadania.org*. Theresa received her undergraduate degree in Biological Anthropology from Swarthmore College. Raised in the Washington, DC area, she is a dual Brazilian and British citizen and lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



MORE ABOUT CATALYTIC COMMUNITIES



Since 2000, Catalytic Communities (CatComm) has provided capacity-building and technology training, media exposure, meeting spaces, and global networks of support to over 1500 leaders from over 250 low-income communities across Rio de Janeiro. As a result, the tide is beginning to turn on the stigma these communities historically face. They are increasingly recognized as creative, self-built neighborhoods that comprise an important niche within the urban fabric, one worthy of recognition, respect and investment.

Winner of a 2006 Tech Award from the Tech Museum of Innovation in Silicon Valley, and recognized for its 'actionable ideas' by the UN, CatComm makes strategic use of media and networks to link grassroots community groups in Rio de Janeiro with networks of exchange and support. CatComm is the only organization in Rio working at the intersection of urban planning, community development, social media, and global networks, providing community organizing workshops, strategic communications and advocating on policies on behalf of Rio's favelas. Our largest current project, RioOn-Watch, targets journalists and researchers focused on Brazil with favela perspectives to ensure they are included in the dialogue and direct the future of Rio. The project's site, RioOnWatch.org is Rio's only English-language community news site and has become a one-stop tool among journalists from around the world.

For further information or to book, please contact:

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CatComm.org