Global Urban Lab (GUL)
Sample Research Questions

The participating students need to design a research topic in relation to the city of their choice (London, Istanbul), and incorporate a comparative aspect with another city (London, Istanbul, Houston).

**URBAN SPORTS**
- What are the people of Istanbul saying about the possibility of hosting the 2020 Olympics?
- What are the functions and meanings of sports for ____(_name of city__)____ and their residents?
- How do urban sports teams affect the identity of major cities such as Houston, London and Istanbul?
- What are the implications of having several professional soccer teams in the city—who roots for which team (do they differ by class for example), how do residents of ____(_name of city__)____ decide which team to root for, how do people pick their teams?
- Who owns the major sporting teams in ____(_name of city__)____, how did they come to be the owners, and why did they make such a large investment?  How does this compare to other cities?
- Do certain pubs become the gathering spots for particular teams?  Why?
- What sports are important in ____(_name of city__)____?  Which are not?  Why?
- What do host cities/countries do towards preparation and development of their athletes when they are selected to host the Olympics?
- How does being selected to host the Olympics affect the preparation and development of athletes in that city/country?

**TRANSPORTATION**
- How do residents of ____(_name of city__)____ get around the city?
- What transportation challenges does the city face?
- What is the history of the London Tube?  How did it come to be?  What were the political and engineering challenges behind its creation?
- What is the history of the two Istanbul Bosporus bridges and the new Marmaray tunnel?  How did they come to be?  What were the political and engineering challenges behind their creation?  What are the challenges vs proposed benefits for the third Bosporus bridge?
- What transportation challenges Istanbul needs to face for their 2020 Olympics bid?
- What changes to London’s transportation system were made in preparation for the 2012 Olympics?
- How effective was the transportation system during the 2012 Olympics?
- Did the Olympics increase the effectiveness of the transportation system post-Olympics in London?
- What transportation policies shape transportation in ____(_name of city__)____?
- What are ____(_name of city__)____ residents’ views on mobility and transportation in their city?
IMMIGRATION

• Who are the immigrants in ___(name of city)___—where do they come from and why do they come? How does this compare to the immigrants in ___(name of second city)___?
• What has been the history of immigration to ___(name of city)___?
• What immigration policies effect immigration to ___(name of city)___?
• Where do the immigrants of ___(name of city)___ live? Why do they live there?
• What types of immigrants come to ___(name of city)___—for example, mostly working class, mostly highly educated, a mix of both?
• How do native ___(name of city)___ residents view immigrants?
• What is life for immigrants like?
• What are their hopes—do they wish to become residents of ___(name of city)___, or are they just there to make a living to return home?

DEVELOPMENT

• What are the implications of hosting a major event like the Olympics on urban development?
• What are the factors that contribute to urban transformation?
• What cultures exist in ___(name of city)___? How did these cultures come to be?
• What do Londoners say is the core of being a “true Londoner?”
• Comparing to Houston or other large U.S. city to ___(London or Istanbul)___, what culture differences do you see?
• What is the political culture of ___(name of city)___?
• What immigrant cultures are most influential in ___(name of city)___?
• Selecting a time 100 or more years ago, what was the culture of ___(name of city)___ like?
• What major cultural changes have occurred in ___(name of city)___ over its history?
• Are ___(name of city)___ cultures evolving? Where do you see them heading—for example, will the role of sports expand or decline? Will consumption increase or become less important?