In 2011, Barcelona's city council launched the ‘Barcelona as a People City’ project, introducing new technologies to foster economic growth and social welfare. The city uses the ‘Internet of Things’ (the connection of people, process, data and things) for such schemes as LED street lights with motion detectors, and smart parking spaces that let drivers know when they are empty. In 2014 the city was named the European Capital of Innovation, winning the European Commission’s first iCapital Award. It is also one of the few European cities to be running a budget surplus and is expecting to generate more than $3B from smart city innovations over the next ten years.

Barcelona is also a major participant in the sharing economy, a socio-economic system built around the sharing of human and physical resources. Many people from Barcelona supplement their incomes by offering accommodation through Airbnb, dinner parties through EatWith or car travel through BlaBlaCar. In addition to the economic benefits of sharing, these initiatives also reduce the environmental impact of city life, and build social capital. Such schemes are not without their critics, however, since they allow operators to evade tax and safety regulations and reduce the income of existing service industries.

On this study tour you will work with various individuals and organisations in Barcelona to develop a range of media and communication narratives (including documentary and short drama), to further investigate the value of Barcelona's social, economic and environmental initiatives. You will bring an Australian perspective to the interpretation of the ‘People City’ project and contrast the experience of living in both Barcelona and Melbourne. Against the backdrop of this unique metropolis on the Mediterranean coast, you will explore how innovative solutions may contribute to sustainability, climate change, unemployment, well-being and prosperity. You will also investigate how to communicate and advocate for positive environmental and social change.

Master by coursework students with media production and communications skills will be ideally placed to join this Field Trip, however, places may also be available for students without these skills.

Costs: $937 (estimated for in country program). Students also have to pay for their airfare, meals, local transport, entertainment, departure taxes, and travel insurance (approximately $3800).
Eligibility: Masters by coursework students
Apply by: 23 February 2015 (places are limited)
For more information contact: rebecca.young@rmit.edu.au