Course Description

Urban Politics is an advanced offering in the American politics subfield. The course focuses on the politics of metropolitan areas and analyzes a variety of factors that explain how politics is practiced and policies are made at the local level. Urban politics is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor, and to make sense of it we will read the works of historians, sociologists, geographers, and economists as well as political scientists during the semester. The course employs a political economy approach: politics at the local level is best understood as the interaction between political and economic factors. The tension in local politics is between economic factors that move policymakers to act in one direction and political factors that may push them in another. Political authority at the municipal level is severely limited, and the demographic makeup of many metropolitan areas is highly heterogeneous. Governing ethnically, racially, and economically diverse regions under conditions of limited authority and significant economic constraint is the story of urban politics. We will investigate this tension from the nation’s founding until the present time to see the continuities in the urban politics narrative. Special attention will be given to the role that race has played in shaping urban politics and policies. Additionally, the concentration of vulnerable populations in inner cities has given rise to a host of public policies designed to ameliorate the conditions of America’s urban centers. Finally, we will evaluate the checkered past of federal urban policies and analyze whether President Obama’s efforts to date are similar or different than those of his predecessors.

Readings

Manuel Pastor, Jr., Chris Benner, and Martha Matsuoka, *This Could Be the Start of Something Big: How Social Movements for Regional Equity Are Reshaping Metropolitan America*, Cornell, 2009, (PBM)
Course Requirements

Two essay examinations (30%; each examination accounts for 15% of the course mark)
   In-class exam, Thursday, 21 February
   Out of class exam, due by 11:59 PM, Wednesday, 27 March

Comprehensive Final Examination (20%): Thursday, 25 April, NOON-2:30 PM

Class Participation: (20%). It is essential to be prepared for class. Questions will be posed to a select number of students on each day, and your responses to the question will constitute your mark in this portion of the class. Additionally, students volunteering to answer additional questions or making insightful comments will bolster their mark in this area of the course. Occasional in-class or out of class reading assignments (they make the form of pop quizzes, but this will not be a common practice, unless the Supreme Autocrat, known as your professor decides to exercise that option) will be given, and those, too, will be tallied as a portion of your class participation mark.

Learning Portfolio: (30%) See the Learning Portfolio Project Outline at the end of the syllabus. Projects due Friday, 19 April by 11:59 PM.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100-A</td>
<td>74-76-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94-A-</td>
<td>70-73-C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89-B+</td>
<td>67-69-D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86-B</td>
<td>64-66-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83-B-</td>
<td>60-63-D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79-C+</td>
<td>Below 60-F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules of the Game

(1) Incompletes will be given only in extenuating circumstances and with the advance permission of the instructor.
(2) No make-up exams will be given.
(3) Failure to take exams on scheduled dates will result in a zero (0) for that exam.
(4) Students must complete all work to receive course credit.
(5) Students are responsible for knowing the content of the Academic Integrity policy.
(6) Any student wishing to receive an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) needs to provide documentation from the University’s ADA officer.
(7) One unexcused absence is allowed; excused absences are those that are granted by Dean Gabbert’s office or are for documented, extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness) that prevent you from attending class.
(8) No computers or cell phones are allowed in class. All cell phones are to be placed in a basket at the beginning of class where they will remain until the end of class.
(9) Your professor’s pet peeve is students who leave the classroom during class. Do not leave the classroom during class unless it is absolutely necessary.
Course Topics and Reading Assignments

8 January—Introduction to course; the array of topics that will be covered in this course; the political economy approach to the study of urban politics

10 January—The Political Economy Approach
   Read: KJ, pp. 1-90

15 January—Early American Cities
   Read: JS, pp. 1-48

17 January—Political Machines and Reformers
   Read: JS, pp. 49-110

22 January—New Scholarship on Machines and Reform
   Read: T, pp. 1-106

24 January—New Scholarship on Machines and Reform
   Read: T, pp. 107-171

29 January—New Scholarship on Machines and Reform
   Read: T, pp. 172-236

31 January—Urban Voters and the New Deal Coalition
   Read: JS, pp. 111-136; KJ 47-90

5 February—City/Suburban Split
   Read: JS, pp. 138-206

7 February—Politics of Race
   Read: JS, pp. 207-233; KJ, pp. 156-225

12 February—Wilson’s Latest Work on Race
   Read: W, pp. 1-94

14 February—Wilson on Race, Part II
   Read: W, pp. 95-155

19 February—Rise of the Sunbelt and Suburbs
   Read: JS, pp. 234-255; KJ, 226-297

21 February—Exam #1
26 February—Urban Sprawl  
   Read: JS, pp. 287-319; KJ, pp. 332-363

28 February—Social Movements for Regional Equity  
   Read: PBM, pp. 1-58

12 March—Regional Equity, Part II  
   Read: PBM, pp. 59-143

14 March—Regional Equity, Part III  
   Read: PBM, pp. 144-218

19 March—City Finance and Development Strategies  
   Read: JS, pp. 320-384

21 March—Fiscal Strain and Federalism  
   Read: KJ, pp. 298-331

26 March—Rise and Fall of Inner Cities  
   Read: JS, pp. 258-286

27 March—Exam #2 (take-home format) due by 11:59 PM

28 March—Urban Fault Lines  
   Read: JS, pp. 385-413

2 April—Governance in Global Era  
   Read: JS, pp. 414-419

4 April—Politics of Urban Resilience  
   Read: KJ, pp. 364-402

9 April—Whither Urban Governance?  
   Read: EKM, pp. 3-57

16 April—Whither Urban Governance?  
   Read: EKM, pp. 61-139

18 April—Whither Urban Governance?  
   Read: EKM, pp. 140-211

23 April—Urban Decline  
   Read: EKM, pp. 215-282

Thursday, 25 April—Final Exam, NOON-2:30 PM
Learning Portfolio Assignment

The learning portfolio (LC) constitutes 30% of the course mark in PSC 208. The 100 points assigned to this project are apportioned in the following manner:

A. (30 points; each assignment carries equal weight of 15 points).

Read and summarize two (2) articles from Urban Affairs Review or an article on urban politics (approved by HN) from Journal of Politics, American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Publius, Perspectives on Politics, Polity, or Political Research Quarterly published since January 2011.

These summaries should be two-three pages, double-spaced, typewritten in length and state the research question, the theories be investigated, the data employed to answer the question, the conclusions reached, and an assessment of how this research advances our understanding of urban politics. The final assessment is best answered by seeing how the research reported provides further clarification of an issue identified as important in the reading materials assigned for the course.

B. (30 points; each assignment carries equal weight of 15 points)

Attend two (2) public meetings (City Council, County Council, Zoning Commission, School Board) and write a summary of your experience and integrate the readings from the course into your analysis of the meetings. The summaries should be approximately two-pages, double-spaced typewritten in length.

C. (20 points)

Write an abstract of three (3) articles on urban politics that have appeared in Governing, National Civic Review, US Mayor Newspaper, or American City and County. These abstracts should be approximately 50-100 words in length.

D. (20 points)

Design an assignment that is consistent with your learning goals for the course. The project can take any form you wish; the single requirement is that Professor Halva-Neubauer must approve it.

The portfolio is due on Friday, 19 April 2013 by 11:59 PM.