COURSE OVERVIEW

For the first time in human history, most people live in cities. Because many policy dynamics play out most obviously ‘on the ground’, the city-region has begun to challenge the national scale as the most relevant level of analysis for understanding the political, economic, social, and environmental impacts of globalization. Local and regional governments deal with many core issues that affect our daily lives, ranging from economic development and land use planning, to public housing and homelessness, immigrant settlement, and public transit. Yet non-governmental actors such as organized business interests and community-based organizations also actively participate in urban politics and policymaking processes. This course examines the political process at the city-region level, exploring patterns of conflict and collaboration among governmental and community-based actors attempting to formulate solutions to complex 21st century urban problems. Using an urban political economy lens that draws attention to how globalization shapes urban fortunes, we examine questions of local political agency, framing out key local government structures and processes as well as major policy issues facing American cities. In particular, we focus on the prospects for policy innovation that integrates urban economic growth and social inclusion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

PSC 520 provides the opportunity for students to develop their self-directed and group learning skills, both written and oral. Through literature reviews and in-class presentations of selected topics, students will analyze and synthesize key themes, issues and debates in the field. Through a comparative case study research project, students will conduct in depth research and analysis of local politics and urban policy challenges as well as responses to these challenges, in two or more American cities. A particular objective of this course is to encourage students to explore the relationship between urban politics and public policy and administration, identifying key themes, cross-cutting challenges and opportunities for innovation. Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:
• Apply theoretical frameworks in urban politics to case study research
• Review, analyze and synthesize relevant literatures
• Communicate effectively orally and in writing
• Understand key urban policy challenges and emerging responses

REQUIRED TEXTS


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Aspen Institute
Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution
Economic Development Quarterly
Community Development
Urban Affairs Review
Housing Policy
Journal of Urban Affairs
The International Journal or Urban and Regional Research
Environment and Planning (A, B, C)
Progress in Human Geography
The Atlantic Cities (daily newsfeed)
The Next City (online)

COURSE READINGS AND BLACKBOARD

The course texts are available in the UNCG bookstore. The other readings are available online from the library, on the internet (where indicated), or posted on Blackboard. Please check Blackboard regularly for announcements and course updates as readings occasionally change. As indicated in the syllabus, all readings listed directly below the topic heading are required for each week. Additional sources posted under “Assigned readings” are only required for those
responsible for the Journal Article Review paper and presentation for that week but obviously, may be consulted for interest, the CityLab research paper, or the final exam.

FORMAT, ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The class will consist of part lecture, part class discussion, student presentations and guest speakers. This course is designed to encourage active discussion and every effort will be made to create a class environment where everyone feels comfortable making contributions. Because a significant portion of your grade depends on the quality of your class participation and attendance, those who keep up on their readings will be better prepared to contribute.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Learning to write clearly is critical to learning to think clearly. Learning to conduct research is an integral part of your academic training. Learning to communicate effectively orally and in writing is an essential professional skill. The majority of your grade in this course will be based on two writing assignments; an article review paper and a research paper. Essays will be graded according to three main criteria. First, the clarity, structure and coherence of the argument and findings that you present are critical. Essays that are assigned the highest grades present clear and convincing arguments. The second criterion is the amount and quality of research conducted for the paper. Sources must current and academically respectable, sufficiently diverse, and scrupulously cited. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with according to UNCG’s academic misconduct policy. Finally, your essay will be graded according to the overall quality of your writing, including diction, grammar, and sentence structure. Throughout the course, several class discussions will focus on writing skills, you are welcome to consult with me at any time, and If you require further assistance, please contact the Writing Center.

1. Journal article review paper and presentation:

Each student will write and present a journal article review paper corresponding to a concept or theme relevant to a weekly discussion topic. For this paper, you will analyze the required AND ONE of the sets of assigned readings for the week, drawing out key themes and debates for your particular topic. Your paper should include a brief summary of the main arguments and findings for each article, but should focus on integrating the readings. This involves identifying cross-cutting themes and discussing how the articles speak to each other and progress our understanding of the subject. In addition, you will find at least TWO examples that illustrate how your topic unfolds ‘on the ground’ in American cities, focusing on the conflicts and/or innovative policy solutions that result. Papers should be 8-10 double-spaced pages and are to
be submitted and presented in class on the day of your chosen topic. Presentations should be accompanied by clear and engaging Powerpoint slides and be no more than 10 minutes. You will also generate **TWO questions** to facilitate class discussion. Students will sign up for topics in the second class and presentations will begin on **September 4** with one or two presenters for each class.

2. **CityLab comparative case study research project:**

This project provides an opportunity for you to investigate in more depth some aspect of urban politics or local government that particularly interests you. Your topic can be any political process such as local elections, forms of government, or community power analyses, or an urban policy challenge such as economic development, immigrant settlement, downtown or neighborhood revitalization, poverty reduction, urban transportation, environmental sustainability, regional governance, or any other theme or concept covered in the course. Your research should describe the particular process or policy challenge, draw from relevant theoretical frameworks that explain the interaction between different actors, interests and institutions involved, and assess the outcomes. **REMEMBER**: this is an **urban politics** class, and as such, you need to consider how the patterns of conflict and collaboration surrounding your topic unfold in your chosen cities.

Whatever topic you choose, the task of your research project is to formulate a **clear research question** and **generate a clear argument** based on theoretical discussions and empirical evidence from your chosen cases. The final result of your research will be a 15 - 18 page paper (double spaced) on your research topic which you will present to the class in the second half of the course. Your grade will be based on the following **four elements** that make up the project:

**a. Research Proposal and Outline DUE September 25**

A clear research question and a well-structured proposal are critical to the effectiveness of your entire research paper. The purpose of the proposal is to focus and clarify your research question and to outline a strategy for conducting your research. The proposal (3-4 pages) must include the following:

a) Clear statement of your research question.
b) A preliminary indication of the possible explanations for the question you intend to explore and an outline detailing how you intend to proceed.
c) Short preliminary formal bibliography (5 - 7 sources, not including assigned course readings, cited using **APSR format**) of the literature you have consulted so far in designing your project. In addition to books, academic journals and internet sources, primary documents and interviews are excellent sources of information.
b. Literature Review/Theoretical Overview DUE October 9

All good research is informed by theory. A literature review provides an overview of the theory or theories that inform a particular piece of research and provides the basis for building an analytical framework to guide your analysis. The purpose of the theoretical overview (5-6 pages) is to provide an in depth discussion of the core theoretical ideas that you are working with in your research paper. It should take up an analytical theme or broad debate raised in the course. It can be two slightly different but complementary approaches, or two competing approaches to the same broad question. Either way, it is critical to demonstrate a clear understanding of the theoretical explanations you are using in your research before you can discuss your empirical evidence. Rather than a simple re-statement or description of these ideas however, this theoretical overview draws out core themes, similarities and differences, and strengths and weaknesses in terms of what the theories can and cannot explain. Your literature review/theoretical overview should make use of a combination of at least four book chapters or scholarly articles on your topic. You may use one article from the reading list as your starting point, but you must access all other sources on your own. The ability to integrate multiple ideas and sources and to communicate your analysis in a clear and organized way is critical to good writing. If you receive a grade of B+ or lower on the Literature Review, you are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss your writing and to re-submit your paper. I will re-grade your paper and average the two marks.

c. Presentation DUE the day you are scheduled to present

Presentations of your work (in progress) are to be accompanied by engaging and professional Powerpoint or Prezi slides and should not exceed 10 minutes. You will be graded on the organization, clarity, delivery and overall “polish” of your presentation. CityLab presentations will begin October 9.

d. Final Draft DUE November 13

Your final draft will include the following elements:

- Clear introduction with a clear statement of the thesis or argument that you intend to present based on your research findings, and a brief overview of your findings and how you intend to present them.
- Literature review (already completed) but edited and updated to reflect feedback and additional sources.
- Detailed analysis of the empirical findings on your chosen cities in relation to the analytical framework outlined in your theoretical overview.
- Complete bibliography using APSR format
3. Take home final exam:

The exam will draw from the assigned readings, lecture material and class discussions. There will be no make-up exam and in the event of a university approved absence, your final grade will be based on existing completed course work. The exam will be given out on December 1 and due on December 3.

GRADING

Class participation and attendance 15%
Journal article review paper & presentation 25%
  • Paper (20%)
  • Presentation (5%)
CityLab Research paper 40%
  • Proposal and outline (5%) Sept. 25
  • Literature review (10%) Oct. 9
  • Final draft (20%) Nov. 13
  • Presentation (5%) as scheduled
Final exam (take home) 20%

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating or plagiarism of any kind is an academic offence and will not be tolerated. Students who are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism should consult the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s statement on plagiarism at:

http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/violation/plagiarism/

DISCUSSION AND CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug. 21) Introduction: Why Cities Matter

Place Matters, Chp. 1
Kantor and Judd, “Governing the Metropolis in the Global Era”, *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*
Glaeser, Intro, “Our Urban Species”.

PART I   THE GREAT DIVERGENCE: GLOBALIZATION, URBANIZATION & UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Week 2 (Aug. 28)   Cities and Globalization

Sassen, S. “Cities in Today’s Global Age” [BB]
P. Kantor, “City Futures: Economic Crisis and the American Model of Urban Development in American Urban Politics in a Global Age” [BB]

Week 3 (Sept. 4)   Cities That Won OR Where the Jobs Are

Moretti, Chp. 2, “Smart Labor: Microchips, Movies and Multipliers”
Milliken Institute, Best Performing Cities 2013: Where America’s Jobs are Created and Sustained [BB]

Assigned Reading A: _________________________________________________________


Assigned Reading B: _________________________________________________________

Powers, P. “Building the Austin Technology Cluster: the Role of Government and Community Collaboration in the Human Capital” [BB]

Week 4 (Sept. 11)   Cities That Lost OR Where the Jobs Were...

Glaeser, “Why Do Cities Decline?”
Moretti, Chp. 1 “American Rust”

Next City, “Can Urban Planning Save Detroit?” [BB]


Assigned Reading A: ____________________________________________________________


Assigned Reading B: ____________________________________________________________


Schlictman, J.J. “Temp Town: Temporality as a place promotion niche in the world’s furniture capital” in Bell and Jayne, Eds. *Small Cities: Urban Experience Beyond the Metropolis* [BB]

**Part II URBAN POLICY CHALLENGES & THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SPATIAL CHANGE**

**Week 5 (Sept. 18) Economic Segregation and Sprawl**

Place Matters, Chp. 2&3

Moretti, Chp. 3, “The Great Divergence”

Glaeser, “Why Has Sprawl Spread?”


The Next City, “Separate and Unequal in D.C.” [BB].

Assigned Reading A: __________________________________________________________________


**Assigned Reading B:**


Brookings Institution, “Common Bond Communities: Expanding Affordable Housing Opportunities in Suburban Communities” [BB]

**Week 6 (Sept. 25) The City as a Playground? Gentrification and Its Discontents**


Glaeser, “Is London a Luxury Resort?”


**CityLab Proposal/Outline DUE**

**Assigned Reading A:**


Levine, M. (2000), “‘A Third World City in the First World’: Social Exclusion, Racial Inequality and Sustainable Development in Baltimore, Maryland”

**Assigned Reading B:**


**Week 7 (Oct. 2) Opportunity or Constraint? Federal Policy and Urban Development**

Place Matters, Chp. 5.

Rich and Stoker, Chp. 1, “Federal Aid and the Cities”


Burns, P. and Thomas, M.O. “Politics, Federalism and the Recovery Process in New Orleans” in *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*


**Week 8 (Oct. 9) Governing the Fragmented Metropolis: The Challenge of Regionalism**

Place Matters, Chp. 8
Oliver, E. “Suburban Politics” in *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics*
Savitch, H. and R. Vogel, “Regionalism and Urban Politics” in *Theories of Urban Politics* [BB].

**CityLab Literature Review DUE**
**CityLab Presentations begin**


Rusk, D. “Growth Management” in *American Urban Politics in a Global Age* [BB]

**CityLab Presentations:**
PART III GOVERNING URBAN ECONOMIES: WHO GOVERNS? WHO DECIDES?

Week 9 (Oct. 16) Municipal Actors and Institutions: Local Government and Urban Policymaking

Place Matters, Chp. 6
Svara, J. “Reexamining Models of Mayoral Leadership” in Svara, Ed., The Facilitative Leader in City Hall.
http://www.spiritandplace.org/spwebResources/pdf/Fetterman%20RS%20article.PDF

Kirst, M.W. “As Mayors Take Charge: School Politics in the City” in American Urban Politics in a Global Age [BB]

Assigned Reading B: Hambleton, R. “Place-based leadership and the inclusive city: an international analysis”, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association [BB].

CityLab Presentations:

Week 10 (Oct. 23) Theories of Urban Politics (I): Cities for Profit?

Geddes, M. “Marxism and Urban Politics”, Theories of Urban Politics [BB].
Assigned Reading A: ___________________________________________________________


Assigned Reading B: __________________________________________________________


CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Week 11 (Oct. 30) Theories of Urban Politics (II): Collaborative Prospects?

Place Matters, Chp. 7.
Mossberger, K. “Urban Regime Analysis” in Theories of Urban Politics [BB]

Assigned Reading A:_____________________________________________________________


Assigned Reading B:_____________________________________________________________

CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Week 12 (Nov. 6)  “Whose city is it, anyway”? Progressive Politics, Community Capacity and Local Democracy

Pierre, (forthcoming) “Whose city is it anyway? Tension in urban governance, good and otherwise” [BB]
Stone, C. “Who is Governed? Local Citizens and the Political Order of Cities”, in Theories of Urban Politics
Rich and Stoker, Chps. 4, 6, 7, 8

Assigned Reading A:


Assigned Reading B:


CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Part VI  URBAN FUTURES

Week 13 (Nov. 13)  Resurgent Cities: Adaptability, Resilience & Civic Leadership

Moretti, Chp. 6, “Poverty Traps and Sexy Cities”
Savitch and Kantor, “Strategies for the International Marketplace”, Cities in the International Marketplace [BB].
Assigned Reading A:


Assigned Reading B:


Week 14 (Nov. 20) Urban Innovations: Social and Environmental Sustainability

Place Matters, Chp. 10
Glaeser, “Flat World, Tall City”
Moretti, Chp. 7, “The New ‘Human Capital Century’”

Assigned Reading A: __________________________________________________________________________


Assigned Reading B: __________________________________________________________________________


HAPPY THANKSGIVING 😊

Final Exam handed out December 1 and DUE December 3.