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. Going beyond simple service delivery functions, local and regional governments now deal with many complex 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, private sector and community-based actors as they 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 research, writing and oral presentation skills. 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 urban policy challenges and political responses to these challenges, in two or more American cities. An important objective of this course is to encourage students to explore the relationship between urban politics, 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 and planning 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

The Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution
Economic Development Quarterly
Community Development
Urban Affairs Review
Housing Policy
Cities
Journal of Urban Affairs
The International Journal or Urban and Regional Research
Environment and Planning (A, B, C)
Progress in Human Geography

You are encouraged to subscribe to:
The Atlantic Cities (daily newsfeed)
The Next City (online)
Planetizen

COURSE READINGS AND CANVAS

All of the course texts are available for purchase online and in the UNCG bookstore. Most of the remaining readings will be posted on Canvas (please be patient while I learn the new system), and are also available online from the UNCG library or on the internet (where indicated). I will make every effort to inform you by email but please check Canvas 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.
COURSE AT-A-GLANCE

Aug. 20  Introduction: Why Cities Matter
Aug. 27  Cities and Globalization
Sept. 3   NO CLASS – watch *Detropia*
Sept. 10  Cities That Lost OR Where the Jobs Were...
Sept. 17  Cities That Won OR Where the Jobs Are
Sept. 24  Economic Segregation and Sprawl – OUTLINE DUE
Oct. 1   Gentrification and Its Discontents
Oct. 8   Federal Policy and Urban Development
Oct. 15   The Challenge of Regionalism – LIT REVIEW DUE
Oct. 22  Local Government and Urban Policymaking
Oct. 29  Theories of Urban Politics (I): Cities for Profit?
Nov. 5   Theories of Urban Politics (II): Collaborative Prospects? – PAPER DUE
Nov. 12  Progressive Politics, Community Capacity and Local Democracy
Nov. 19  Resurgent Cities: Adaptability, Resilience & Civic Leadership

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 in-class workshops 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 (20%)**:

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 **ALL of 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 (very) brief summary of the main arguments and findings for each article, but should focus on integrating the readings according to the cross-
cutting themes you isolate 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 10 with two presenters for each class.

2. Short Thought Papers (3 x 5%)

Deeper engagement with the readings makes for more productive class discussions. You will write THREE short thought papers (no longer than two 2 single spaced pages each) based on the required readings from a week of your choice in which you draw out key themes, arguments, empirical findings, and/or particular points of interest. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive all three thought papers from each of you as the logistics of keeping track are above my pay grade.

3. CityLab comparative case study research project (50%):

This project will make up the majority of your grade and provides an opportunity for you to investigate in more depth some aspect of urban politics and/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, downtown or neighborhood revitalization, poverty reduction, immigrant settlement, gentrification and displacement, urban transportation, environmental sustainability, regional governance, or any other theme or concept covered in the course. Using a governance lens, your research should describe the particular process or policy challenge you have chosen to explore, draw from the relevant literature that explains the interaction between different actors, interests and institutions involved, build an analytical framework for comparing your cases, and assess the outcomes. You must compare at least two cities. 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 24 (5%)**

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) Annotated preliminary bibliography (5 - 7 sources, not including assigned course readings, cited using APSR format) of the scholarly literature (books, academic journals) you have consulted so far in designing your project. Well-chosen internet sources, primary documents and interviews (later in the research process) are also excellent sources of information.

b. **Literature Review DUE October 15 (10%)**

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.** Your literature review should make use of a combination of at least FIVE scholarly articles or book chapters 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. **Final Draft DUE November 5 (30%)**

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, as well as a brief overview of your findings and
how you intend to present them (read other scholarly articles to get a sense of how this is done).

- 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.

**d. Presentation DUE on your assigned day (5%)**

You have worked hard and learned much from your CityLab project! Presentations will provide an opportunity to hone your presentation skills and to share what you have learned with your colleagues. Presentations of your work 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. Presentations (with randomly assigned dates) will occur over the last 3 classes of the term on Nov. 12, 19, and 24.

**FORMAT, ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

This is a reading, speaking, and writing intensive class which will be run in a seminar format consisting primarily of class discussion, student presentations and guest speakers. Because the class relies on active discussion, you are encouraged to engage deeply with the material and to communicate your engagement through regular and thoughtful comments relevant to the readings. Every effort will be made to create a class environment where everyone feels comfortable making contributions. Incomplete or late assignments will not be accepted without my permission, which is typically contingent on an emergency. If you require accommodation for a disability registered with the university, please consult with me at the beginning of the semester.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation and attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal article review paper &amp; presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short thought papers (3 x 5%)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CityLab Research paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal and outline (5%)</td>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review (10%)</td>
<td>Oct. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft (30%)</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (5%)</td>
<td>as scheduled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Needless to say (but I will anyway), 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. 20)  Introduction: Why Cities Matter
Place Matters, Chp. 1
Glaeser, Intro, “Our Urban Species”.
Kantor and Judd, “Governing the Metropolis in the Global Era”, American Urban Politics in a Global Age

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

Week 2 (Aug. 27)  Cities and Globalization
Sassen, S. “Cities in Today’s Global Age” [BB]

Week 3 (Sept. 3)  NO CLASS
Watch Detropia. How do these dynamics unfold in Greensboro and/or your home town?

Week 4 (Sept. 10)  Cities That Lost OR Where the Jobs Were...

Workshop: How to Write an Outline
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]

**Week 5 (Sept. 17) 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]


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

**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**


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

**Week 6 (Sept. 24) Economic Segregation, Social Polarization, and Sprawl**

CityLab OUTLINE DUE

Place Matters, Chp. 2&3

Moretti, Chp. 3, “The Great Divergence”

Glaeser, “Why Has Sprawl Spread?”


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

**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**


**Week 7 (Oct. 1) Governing the Fragmented Metropolis: The Challenge of Regionalism**

**Workshop: How To Write a Lit Review**

Place Matters, Chp. 8

Oliver, E. “Suburban Politics” in The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics


**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**


**Week 8 (Oct. 8) The City as a Playground? Gentrification and Its Discontents**


Glaeser, “Is London a Luxury Resort?”

The Next City, “Separate and Unequal in D.C.” [BB].
Levine, M. (2000), “‘A Third World City in the First World’: Social Exclusion, Racial Inequality and Sustainable Development in Baltimore, Maryland”

**Assigned Reading A:** _______________________________________

**Assigned Reading B:** _______________________________________

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

**Week 9 (Oct. 15) Theories of Urban Politics (I): Cities for Profit?**

**CityLab LITERATURE REVIEW DUE**
Geddes, M. “Marxism and Urban Politics”, *Theories of Urban Politics* [BB].
Peterson, P. “The Interests of the Limited City” and Kantor and Savitch, Can Politicians Bargain with Business?”

**Assigned Reading A:** _______________________________________
Strom, E. “Rethinking the Politics of Downtown Development” in *American Urban Politics in a Global Age* [BB]

**Assigned Reading B:** _______________________________________

**Week 10 (Oct. 22) Municipal Actors and Institutions: Local Government and Urban Policymaking**

**Workshop: How To Write a Research Paper Your Prof(s) Will Love...**
Place Matters, Chp. 6

Svara, J. “Reexamining Models of Mayoral Leadership” in Svara, Ed., The Facilitative Leader in City Hall.


**Assigned Reading A:**


**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].


**Week 11 (Oct. 29) 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:**


Week 12 (Nov. 5)  Opportunity or Constraint? Federal (and State) Policy and Urban Development

CityLab FINAL PAPER DUE (!!)

Place Matters, Chp. 5.
Rich and Stoker, Chp. 1, “Federal Aid and the Cities”
P. Kantor, “City Futures: Economic Crisis and the American Model of Urban Development in American Urban Politics in a Global Age [BB]

CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Week 13 (Nov. 12)  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].

CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Week 14 (Nov. 19)  “Whose city is it, anyway”? Progressive Politics, Community Capacity and Local Democracy

Pierre, J. “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

CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

HAPPY THANKSGIVING 😊