URBAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS
PSC 520, Fall 2016
Thursdays 6:30 – 9:20 p.m. in Curry 309

Dr. Allison Bramwell   afbramwe@uncg.edu   Office: Curry 320

Office hours before class or by appointment

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 further develop the research, writing, and oral presentation skills so crucial to professional life. 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 explore the relationship between urban politics, public policy, and administration to identify 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, and 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
Progress in Human Geography

You are encouraged to subscribe to:
The Atlantic Cities (daily newsfeed)
The Next City (online)
Planetizen – *they list jobs here!*

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 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 I encourage you to consult them for interest or for the CityLab research paper.
COURSE AT-A-GLANCE

Aug. 25  Introduction: Why Cities Matter
Sept. 1   NO CLASS – watch Detropia and Portlandia
Sept. 8  Cities and Globalization
Sept. 15 Cities That Lost OR Where the Jobs Were...
**Sept. 22** Cities That Won OR Where the Jobs Are – OUTLINE DUE
Sept. 29  Economic Segregation, Social Polarization, and Sprawl
Oct. 6   Gentrification and Its Discontents
**Oct. 13** the Challenge of Regionalism - LIT REVIEW DUE
Oct. 20   Local Government and Urban Policymaking
**Oct. 27** Theories of Urban Politics (I): Cities for Profit? – 2nd LIT REVIEW DUE
Nov. 3   Theories of Urban Politics (II): Collaborative Governance?
**Nov. 10** Federal Policy and Urban Development – CityLab FINAL PAPER DUE
Nov. 17  Resurgent Cities: Adaptability, Resilience & Civic Leadership
Dec. 1   CityLab De-brief & Course Wrap

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Learning to write clearly is critical to thinking 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 your paper is critical; the best essays are clear, well organized, and present convincing arguments. The second criterion is the amount and quality of research conducted for the paper. Sources must be current, 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 so be sure to carefully edit your work. 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 (20%) and presentation (5%)**

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 an analysis of the main arguments, key takeaways and cross-cutting themes for the required articles, followed by a deeper discussion of how the two assigned readings speak to the themes you identify to progress our understanding
of the topic. In addition, you will find **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 (yes...I will time you!). 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 15** with two or three presenters for each class.

2. **CityLab comparative case study research project (55%)**:

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 literature relevant to your topic 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 some time during the last three classes 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 22 (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 (2 pages) must include the following:

- Clear statement of your topic and research question.
- A paragraph outlining a preliminary indication of the possible explanations for the question you intend to explore.
• An outline detailing how you intend to proceed.
• Annotated preliminary bibliography of at least SIX sources (of which ONE can be drawn from the syllabus) of the scholarly literature (books, academic journals) you have consulted so far in designing your project, and cited using APSR format. Well-chosen internet sources, primary documents and interviews (later in the research process) are also excellent sources of information. NOTE: This is a preliminary indication of the sources you will be working with to which you are expected to add additional sources as your research progresses.

b. Literature Review DUE October 13 (15%)

All good research is informed by theory. The ability to integrate multiple ideas and sources and to communicate your analysis in a clear and organized way is critical to good writing. A literature review provides an overview of the theory or theories that inform a particular piece of research and key findings in the field, 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 themes and ideas you are working with in advance of an analysis of 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 must make use of at least SIX 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. NOTE: If you receive a grade of B+ or lower on the Literature Review, you are required 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 10 (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 8 minutes (yes…I will time you!). You will be graded on the organization, clarity, delivery, and overall “polish” of your presentation. **Presentations will take place over the last 3 classes of the term on Nov. 10, 17, and Dec. 1.**

**COURSE POLICIES: ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND LATE PENALTIES**

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 occasional guest speakers. Because the class relies on active discussion, you are encouraged to engage deeply with the material (taking notes as you read is an excellent practice and prepares you well for class!) and to communicate your engagement through regular and thoughtful comments directly relevant to the readings. Every effort will be made to create a class environment where everyone feels comfortable making contributions but please come and speak with me in person if you expect this to be a challenge for you. If you require accommodation for a disability registered with the university, please consult with me at the beginning of the semester.

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

**PLEASE NOTE:**
- Incomplete or late assignments **will not be accepted** without my permission (in advance of the due date), which is typically contingent on an emergency.
- All written assignments are due in **HARD COPY IN CLASS** on the day they are due.
- Missing more than 2 classes will result in a 0 on your participation grade.

**GRADING**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation and attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal article review paper &amp; presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CityLab Research paper</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal and outline (5%) - September 22</td>
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<td>Literature review (15%) – October 13</td>
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<td>Final draft (30%) – Nov. 10</td>
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<td>Presentation (5%)</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE


Who cares about urban politics?

Place Matters, Chp. 1
Glaeser, Intro, “Our Urban Species”.
Benner, C. and M. Pastor, “Can’t We All Just Get Along?”, in Equity, Growth and Community: What the Nation Can Learn from the Nation’s Metro Areas.

Week 2 (Sept. 1)  NO CLASS

Watch Detropia and a few episodes of Portlandia. How do these dynamics play out in Greensboro? In your home town?

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

Week 3 (Sept. 8)  Cities and Globalization

What is globalization? What does it have to do with cities?

Workshop: How to Write an Outline

Sassen, S. “Cities in Today’s Global Age”

Week 4 (Sept. 15)  Cities That Lost OR Where the Jobs Were...

Why do some cities decline? Can they “bounce back”? If so, how?

Glaeser, “Why Do Cities Decline?”
Moretti, Chp. 1 “American Rust”, Chp. 6 “Poverty Traps and Sexy Cities”
Safford, “How Allentown Got It’s Groove Back”, *Why the Garden Club Couldn’t Save Youngstown*.


**Assigned Reading B:** Norman, J. (2013). “The Divergent Fates of Small Cities”, in *Small Cities USA: Growth, Diversity and Inequality*.
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*

**Week 5 (Sept. 22) Cities That Won OR Where the Jobs Are**

What makes cities grow?

**CityLab OUTLINE DUE**

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

Moretti, Chp. 2, “Smart Labor: Microchips, Movies and Multipliers”
Milliken Institute, Best Performing Cities 2015: Where America’s Jobs are Created and Sustained.
Powers, P. “Building the Austin Technology Cluster: the Role of Government and Community Collaboration in the Human Capital”.

**Assigned Reading A:**

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

Week 6 (Sept. 29) Economic Segregation, Social Polarization, and Sprawl

What is the ‘great divergence’ and how does it play out in urban regions?
What intersecting dynamics shape urban policy and politics?

Place Matters, Chp. 2&3
Moretti, Chp. 3, “The Great Divergence” and Chp. 6, “Poverty Traps and Sexy Cities”.
Glaeser, “Why Has Sprawl Spread?”

Assigned Reading A: ____________________________________________

Assigned Reading B: ____________________________________________

Week 7 (Oct. 6) The City as a Playground? Gentrification and Its Discontents

What is gentrification? Why is it such a complex urban policy challenge?

Glaeser, “Is London a Luxury Resort?”

Assigned Reading A: ____________________________________________
The Next City, “Separate and Unequal in D.C.”

Assigned Reading B: ____________________________________________

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

**Week 8 (Oct. 13) Governing the Fragmented Metropolis: the Challenge of Regionalism**

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<th>What is regionalism and why does it matter (so much) for urban fortunes?</th>
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**CityLab LITERATURE REVIEW DUE**

Place Matters, Chp. 6
Oliver, E. “Suburban Politics” in *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics*
CityLab, Sept. 14 2015, “One Way Forward for Ferguson is Clear – and Still Impossible”

**Assigned Reading A:**

**Assigned Reading B:**

**Assigned Reading C:**

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

**Week 9 (Oct. 20) Theories of Urban Politics (I): Cities for Profit?**

| Can politicians “bargain with business”? Why or why not? |


**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**

Fainstein, S. (2010), “Justice and Urban Transformation: Planning in Context” and “Conclusion: Toward the Just City” in *The Just City*


**Week 10 (Oct. 27) Municipal Actors and Institutions: Local Government and Urban Policymaking**

**CityLab LIT REVIEW 2nd draft DUE (if applicable)**

**Workshop: How to Write a Research Paper Your Prof(s) Will Love...**

Place Matters, Chp. 5.


**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**


**Assigned Reading C:**


**Week 11 (Nov. 3) Theories of Urban Politics (II): Collaborative Urban Governance?**

**So what can cities do? What are the challenges & prospects for new forms of governance?**


**Assigned Reading A:**


**Assigned Reading B:**


**Assigned Reading C:**

Rich and Stoker, Chps. 4, 6, 7, 8

**Week 12 (Nov. 10) Opportunity or Constraint? Federal Policy and Urban Development**

**CityLab FINAL PAPER DUE**

Place Matters, Chp. 7

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


Kantor, P. “City Futures: Economic Crisis and the American Model of Urban Development in *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*”

**CityLab Presentations:**
Week 13 (Nov. 17)  Progressive Politics & Local Democracy: Challenges, Prospects and Next Steps


CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

Week 14 (Dec. 1)  Course Wrap & CityLab De-Brief

So...what did we learn about urban politics and policy...in the U.S.?


CityLab Presentations: __________________________________________________________

HAPPY HOLIDAYS 😊