

The Politics of the Inner City
GOVT 4232

Spring 2015 (Cornell University)



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Class Time: 8:40am-9:55am
Class Location: White Hall B02
Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30pm to 2pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the actors, institutions and processes that shape political life in urban areas. With a particular focus on poverty, we will assess the political roots and implications of the problems facing disadvantaged residents of the urban metropolis. Drawing on a diverse array of readings in political science and sociology, this course will bring an empirical and intellectual perspective to bear on salient and sometimes controversial topics that pervade public discourse about the “inner city.” Special emphasis will be placed on policies related to race, education, immigration, crime, gangs, gentrification, neighborhood context and homelessness.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (What You Can Expect to Learn in This Class)

- To develop insights on political life in a U.S. urban metropolis
- To think critically, speak effectively and write clearly about complex social and political issues
- To use writing as a tool for communicating ideas, thinking through various perspectives and asserting oneself in society and politics.
- To be a better citizen

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Cornell Store and via Library Course Reserves)

- Strom, Elizabeth A. and John H. Mollenkopf. 2007. *The Urban Politics Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sugrue, Thomas. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [Available Online @Cornell]
- Peterson, Paul. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kozol, Jonathan. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: the Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York, NY: Random House
- Jones-Correa, Michael. 1998. *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. [Available Online @Cornell]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

Since this is a small seminar, the true success of the class will hinge on comments and insights offered by the students. Participation includes three components. First, coming to every class. Second, carefully reading all assigned material. Third, being ready and willing to discuss the readings. I am a proponent of the Socratic method, so I will call on students (sometimes randomly) in class. Generally, I expect widespread engagement that goes beyond your consumption of information to include your production of ideas.

Assignments

You will be expected to complete one group project, two written responses to the documentaries that we view in class and a final paper. The deadlines for the group project and final paper are detailed in the COURSE SCHEDULE (below). ***Please read the schedule carefully and repeatedly in order to stay on top of the due dates.*** Even if an assignment is not verbally mentioned in class, you must still follow the schedule as presented below (unless otherwise noted by the instructor). Please note that the responses to in-class films are due on a rolling basis. You may select any two films and provide a two page written response anytime within two weeks after our in-class viewing. I will provide specifics on my expectations for these assignments in class. It is your responsibility to submit them within the 2-week window. All assignments must be submitted via blackboard.

All writing assignments must follow these guidelines:

- Use Times New Roman 12 point font
- Double space with 1-inch margins
- Number all pages
- Stick to the word limit or page requirements indicated in the instructions
- Follow the instructions on what to write and how to write it
- At the top of the first page indicate your name, the date, the assignment number and a title (if applicable). Please do not attach a title page.
- Citation is not optional. Do not forget to appropriately cite any sources you use or reference preferably using the Chicago Style Citation method (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

GRADING/COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be based on the following distribution:

Participation.....	20%
Group Project	10%
Response #1	15%
Response #2	15%
Final Paper.....	40%

COURSE POLICIES AND DETAILS

Communication: For simple administrative or clerical matters students should feel free to contact me via e-mail. You can generally expect a reply within 24 hours (and only during regular working hours). For more important matters, speak to me in person. Office hours are on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2pm. To ensure that you have a slot during these hours, sign up in advance online: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0945ADAC2CA6F85-office

Blackboard: All course documents will be made available via blackboard (blackboard.cornell.edu). Please familiarize yourself with the blackboard site and its various capabilities (bbhelp.cit.cornell.edu). Important messages and updates will be posted to blackboard. Students should enable their accounts such that blackboard announcements are sent directly to their e-mail.

Electronic devices: Use of phones is prohibited. Students are free to use laptops in a limited fashion for tasks relevant to the class (taking notes, looking up relevant information when asked to do so). If laptops are misused, students will lose points from their participation grades and will be prohibited from bringing laptops to future class meetings.

Late Assignments: Late work will not be excused unless unavoidable circumstances arise (e.g. a family emergency). Having multiple assignments due in the same day or the same week is not a permissible justification for tardiness. Late papers will be downgraded per day of tardiness.

Appealing Grades: If you feel an assigned grade does not reflect your performance please submit a one page appeal (in writing) no more than one week after the grade has been issued.

Plagiarism and Ethics: Students should review Cornell's policy towards plagiarism (plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu). Your work must be yours and yours alone. Although this course will sometimes encourage students to review one another's writing and to work together collaboratively *in class*, I expect that the writing done outside of class will reflect the independent efforts of each student. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be sent to the appropriate university officials for further review. If you are not sure whether something counts as plagiarism, please ask me. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for ethical violations.

Accessibility Needs: I am committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students. If you have a documented learning disability or any condition that affects your ability to participate in this class and you will need assistance, you should request accommodation(s) from me as early as possible and no later than the third day of the term. Additional information about the policies and procedures for accommodation of disabilities is available on the web: <http://sds.cornell.edu>

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Articles that are starred (*) can be found in the *Urban Politics Reader*. All other articles/books will be posted on Blackboard or Course Reserves.

Week 1: Introduction (January 22nd)

- First Class, no readings

Week 2: Conceptualizations of the City (January 27th/29th)

- Mumford, "What Is a City?"
- Millington, "The Outer-Inner City"
- Gans, "Involuntary Segregation and the Ghetto" (in *Symposium*)
- Small, "Four Reasons to Abandon the Idea of the Ghetto" (in *Symposium*)

Group Assignment: Make additions and/or revisions to the Wikipedia page entries for "Inner City" (group 1) and "Ghetto" (group 2). I will provide more details in class. Due on February 5th.

Week 3: Conceptualizing Urban Politics (February 3rd/5th)

- Dahl, "Who Governs"*
- Geddes, "Marxism and Urban Politics"
- Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine"
- Mollenkopf, "How to Study Urban Political Power"*

Week 4: Federalism and the Political Economy of the City (February 10th/12th)

- Peterson, *City Limits* (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 9, 11)
- Eisiger, "City Politics in an Era of Federal Devolution"
- Weir, "Central Cities' Loss of Power in State Politics"
- Kron, "How the Urban-Rural Divide is Splitting America"

Week 5: Political Machines & Urban Regimes (February 19th)

Note: No class on February 17th

In Class: Watch "Street Fight"

- Wolfinger, "Why Political Machines Have Not Withered Away"*
- Stone, "Reflections on Urban Regime Analysis"*
- Jones-Correa and Wong, "Whose Politics?"

Week 6: Urban Crisis and Declining Cities (February 24th/26th)

- Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Introduction, chapters 2-6, chapter 9)
- Downs, "The challenge of our declining big cities"

Week 7: Educating the City (March 3rd/5th)

In Class: Watch "Separate and Unequal"

- Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation* (Introduction, Chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 11)
- Hirschfield, "The Criminalization of School Discipline in the USA"
- Meier et al. "Educational Access as an Urban Service"

Week 8: Gangs, Crime and Justice in the City (March 10th/12th)

In class: Watch "Crips and Bloods: Made in America"

- Howell, "The History of Gangs in the United States"
- Brown et al. "The Ghettoization of Blacks in LA: The Emergence of Street Gangs"
- Goffman, "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto"
- Fagan et al., "Street stops and broken windows: Terry, race, and disorder in New York City"

Week 9. Segregation (March 17th/19th)

In Class Exercise: Parable of the Polygons

- Schelling, "Dynamic Models of Segregation"
- Massey, "American Apartheid"
- Macuse, "The Enclave, the Citadel, and the Ghetto: What has Changed in the Post-Fordist U.S. City"
- Caldeira, "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation"

Week 10. Gentrification (March 24th/26th)

In class: Watch "Flag Wars"

- Beauregard, "The Chaos and Complexity of Gentrification"
- Lees, Slater and Wyly, "Gentrification: Positive or Negative"
- Hartman, "The Right to Stay Put"
- Goetz, "Gentrification in Black and White"

****Note: No Class March 31st/April 2nd****

Week 11. Housing and Homelessness (April 7th/9th)

In class: Watch "The Pruitt-Igoe Projects"

- Goetz, "The Transformation of Public Housing Policy, 1985–2011"
- Deluca et al., "Segregating Shelter How Housing Policies Shape the Residential Locations of Low-Income Minority Families."
- Feldman, "State Power and the Polarities of Homeless Politics"
- Feldman, "Housing Diversity and Democratic Pluralism"

Week 12. Urban Neighborhoods and Political Engagement (April 14th / 16th)

- Cohen and Dawson, "Neighborhood Poverty and African-American Politics"
- Alex- Assensoh, "Race, Concentrated Poverty, Social Isolation, and Political Behavior"
- Gay, "Moving to Opportunity"
- Michener, "Neighborhood Disorder and Local Participation"

Week 13. Political Power in the City (April 21st / 23rd)

- Go, "The Power of Participation: Explaining the Issuance of Building Permits in Post-Katrina New Orleans"
- Drier, "Community Empowerment Strategies: The Limits and Potential of Organizing in Low-Income Neighborhoods."*
- Hajnal and Trounstein, "Who Or What Governs?"

Week 14. Race, Immigration and Urban Political Incorporation (April 28th / 30th)

- *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City*
- Rufus, "Can People of Color Achieve Equality in City Government?""*
- Reed, "Demobilization in the New Black Political Regime""*

Week 15. The Future of the City (May 5th)

- Katz, "A Progressive Agenda for Metropolitan America"
- Drier, "The Struggle for Our Cities"

Final Exams due May 16th!