

## **Urban Politics**

Politics Science 505

Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-2:18

Caldwell Laboratory 277

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:30 &  
Thursday 2:30-3:30 Main Library  
Wednesday 10-11 Starbucks

### **Course Description**

This is an advanced undergraduate course concerning the issues and development of America's cities. Throughout the course we will focus on the institutions and problems currently facing various metropolitan areas and how those issues and problems have developed. The general goals of this class are to think critically and analytically about urban politics, discuss political problems in a productive manner, and understand the interconnected nature of American cities and the various political institutions that surround and encompass them. We will satisfy these goals through readings, lectures, discussion, and debates, and the satisfaction of these goals will be evaluated through two exams, reading quizzes, a paper, and individual debates.

### **Requires Texts**

Browning, Marshall and Tabb. 2003. *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Longman Publishers.

Judd and Kantor. 2002. *The Politics of Urban America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Longman Publishers.

Judd and Swanstrom. 2002. *City Politics: Private Powers and Policy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Longman Publishers.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Readings**

#### **Discussions**

Readings are to be completed before the class meeting. In addition, a group of 2-3 students will lead discussion of the readings once in the quarter. These students will present the readings and lead discussion. These students should not be the only ones that we hear from that day; they are responsible for facilitating discussion. They should be prepared to present the objectives, relevance, and low and high points of the reading. You will be able to choose which day you present on the second day of class. This section of the class will be judged by how well-prepared a student is, and the assumption will stand that you will be very well prepared for your discussion day. If this is not the case, you can lose up to 5% points.

#### **Reading Quizzes**

In addition to leading discussion, in order to ensure you are doing the readings, you will have daily reading quizzes. There will be 15 quizzes throughout the quarter, and these will be worth 15% of your total grade. These quizzes are not designed to "trick" anyone, but instead to judge that the reading assignments are being completed. You are allowed ONE makeup of a daily quiz,

and this makeup will only be given if I have pre-approved your absence or if you have a **VALID** written excuse for your absence.

### **Term Paper and Proposal**

Students are required to complete a 7-10 page paper. This paper should explore a concept/problem in urban politics and a specific place that demonstrates this issue. There are two main ways of approaching this paper:

1. Focus on a problem in urban America today. Demonstrate various places where this problem occurs and how different cities are approaching this issue. Discuss which city seems to be dealing with the problem the best and why.
2. Focus on a specific city. Discuss the various issues this city seems to be dealing with lately and why these issues exist. Discuss the future prospects for this city.

While these are the main approaches you can take with your paper, you can also come up with your own approach, but please discuss this with me so I can approve it.

A proposal for this paper will be due on **Tuesday, October 11** by class time. It should be one page and should discuss your idea/s for your paper, as well as two sources you plan to use. The proposal is worth 3%.

The paper is due **Tuesday, November 22** by class time. It is worth 17% of your grade. Therefore, together, the proposal and paper are worth 20% of your grade.

Both the proposal and the paper should be typed and have the standard formatting. You must present a hardcopy in person in class or drop it in my mailbox on the second floor of Derby Hall. I do not accept either the proposal or paper by email. Papers are late if they are not turned in by class time. For each day papers are late, 10% will be deducted from the original grade.

I will take the following into account when assigning your grade for the paper: organization, format, consistency, use of logic, use of literature, conceptual formation, substantive value, originality, depth of understanding, language and writing.

### **Exams**

Your midterm will be on Thursday, **October 27**. It is worth 20% of your grade. It will be on the readings, lectures, discussions, and debates up until that point. It will be primarily terms and short essay. The final will be the same format, will be on **December 6 from 1:30 to 3:30**, and will be cumulative with a large focus on the latter part of class. The final is worth 25% of your total grade. If you miss the midterm for any reason the makeup will directly after the final.

### **Debates:**

We will have eight debates in this class. The debate topics are listed below in the class schedule. There will be 3-4 students on each team, two teams per debate. The debate format will be given later. These debates are to highlight current issues in urban politics and particular American cities that demonstrate these issues. You can turn in your preferences for which debate topic the second day of class and you will be assigned to your group the third day of class. The debate itself is worth 10% of your grade. 5% of this will be judged by how well your overall team does during the debate. 5% is judged by your teammates' average of how much you contributed to the debate. The class will vote on who is the winning team of the debate, and the members of that team will earn 2% extra credit. In addition to the debate, each team must turn in a 5-page paper presenting their side of the debate. This paper will be worth 10% of your grade. This paper will be judged by the same standards as the term paper, and the grade for the paper will apply to each person in the group.

## **Extra Credit**

There are two opportunities for extra credit in this class. First, the winning teams in the debates will earn 2% per person. Also, you can participate one of the various experiments the political science department is conducting. You may only do one experiment. It is worth 2%. More details will follow regarding this.

## **Grading:**

Thus, your grade will be determined by the following:

Midterm: 20%

Final: 25%

Reading Quizzes: 15%

Paper Project: 20%

    Proposal: 3%

    Paper: 17%

Debate: 20%

    5% Teammate Evaluation

    5% Debate Performance

    10% Debate Paper

Other:

Extra Credit-experiment: +2%

Extra Credit-winning debate teams: +2%

Discussion: up to -5% if not done well

## **Class Schedule:**

September 22: Introduction-Syllabus

September 27: What is Urban Politics?

    Reading: JS 1-10; JK 1-10; BMT 3-16

**Choose Debate Topic**

**Choose Discussion Day**

September 29: 19 Century and Mercantilism

    Reading: JS 15-47; JK 77-96

October 4: Machine Politics

    Reading: JS 52-73; JK 97-121

October 6: Reform Politics and the New Deal Coalition

    Reading: JS 78-129; JK 127-169

October 11: The Rise of the City and the Suburban Split

    Reading: JS 135-207

**Paper Proposal Due**

October 13: Suburbanization, Metropolitanization, and Urban Sprawl

    Reading: JS 283-336

*Debate 1: Urban Sprawl- Good or Bad? Solutions? The Case of Fresno, CA*

October 18: Urban Governance

    Reading: JS 340-364; JK 378-413

October 20: State & Federal Governments and Cities

    Reading: JS 214-250; JK 356-376

*Debate 2: Rebuilding Cities- The Case of New Orleans. Whose fault is it? How to rebuild?*

October 25: Catch up on Prior Topics, Review for Exam

*Debate 3: Transportation Issues in Urban America- The Case of Atlanta, GA. Who Should Pay for Infrastructure? What Types of Transportation are Best?*

October 27: **Midterm Exam**

November 1: Race and Ethnicity in Urban America, Part 1

Reading: JK 296-354; BMT 17-47

November 3: Race and Ethnicity in Urban America, Part 2

Reading: BMT 281-306

*Debate 4: Education in America- Whose responsibility is education- the cities or states and federal government? Solutions?*

November 8: Gender and Class Issues

Reading: JK 173-184; BMT 201-224; 255-274

*Debate 5: Corporate Welfare- The Case of Chicago, IL. Is Corporate Welfare a Good Idea?*

November 10: Coalitions, Part 1

Reading: BMT 51-110, 227-274

November 15: Coalitions, Part 2 and “New” Minority Groups

Reading: BMT 333-386 and another TBD

*Debate 6: Gay Marriage in Cities- The Case of New York City, NY. The Pros and Cons of Gay Marriage. Is This a City Issue?*

November 17: Barriers to Coalitions

Reading: BMT 115-139; 143-163

November 22: Current Issues in Columbus

Reading: TBD

*Debate 7: Smoking Bans- The Case of Columbus, OH. Are Smoking Bans a Good Idea? How do they Influence Local Business?*

**Term Papers Due**

November 24: Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Revitalizing the Cities

Reading: JS 370-396, 400-428

December 1: Wrap Up and Review

*Debate 8: Classifying Cities- The Case of Washington DC- Why is Washington DC doing so poorly? Should it be a City or State?*

**Final Exam: December 6 1:30-3:30**