

URBAN POLITICS
The Ohio State University

Instructor: Ray Block, Jr.
Office: 2120 Derby Hall Room #2049F
Campus Phone: (614) 292-0511
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 AM
 until Noon and by appointment
E-Mail: block.49@osu.edu

Department of Political Science
Course: PS #505
Class Time: Monday and Wednesday,
 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Location: MacQuigg Lab, Room #161
Summer 2002

I. Course Description and Objectives

This is an advanced undergraduate course providing an overview of the major theories and topics in urban politics. Specifically, this course deals with the institutions within and the governance of American cities, suburbs, and other metropolitan areas. The study of urban politics draws upon such disciplines as sociology, history, public policy, economics, demography, political science, urban planning, and public administration. I do not assume that students have extensive knowledge in all of these disciplines. However, since this is a 500-level course, I expect that most of you have been exposed to at least an introductory course in political science.

This course is intended to: (1) sharpen analytical thinking about urban politics, (2) discuss contemporary problems facing American cities—in local and national context, (3) examine the ways local governments influence the direction of urban development, (4) explore the balance between the needs of cities and various groups within the public, and (5) develop appropriate research questions and methods for a deeper exploration of urban politics.

II. Required Texts

The following books are available at SBX Bookstore:

- Browning, Marshall, and Tabb. 1990. *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 2nd Edition. Longman Publishers.
- Judd, Dennis and Todd Swanstrom 1998. *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy*, 3rd Edition. Longman Publishers.
- Judd, Dennis and Kantor (eds.) 1998. *The Politics of Urban America: A Reader*, Longman Publishers. **Either the 2nd or the 3rd edition of this book is acceptable.**

In addition, I require students to read the *Columbus Dispatch* daily. If you do not have a subscription to the *Columbus Dispatch*, check out www.dispatch.com. All readings on the syllabus are required and I expect them to be completed before class. The instructor will make additional readings available, if necessary. I will place additional readings on closed reserve at the OSU Main Library.

III. Course Requirements

You can think of the syllabus as a teacher-student contract. This contract loosely describes what students should expect from teachers and what teachers should expect from students. Here is what you can expect

from your teacher. You can expect me to be dedicated to providing you with the necessary skills to do well in this course. Also, I am committed to making this course a worthwhile experience for each of you. Generally, I require that students have an open mind and be willing to learn. Specifically, I require four things from you: I will ask students to take responsibilities for leading class discussions and doing group presentations. I expect you to attend class faithfully. The bulk of your grade depends on your class participation and a term paper. And I will give quizzes periodically to see if students are keeping up with the readings. I describe each of the criteria upon which I base your grade below.

- **Term Paper: 25 points**

A term paper can either be a synthetic analytic critique of several themes in urban politics --OR-- it can be an effort to integrate some of the themes and concepts from the course work into some larger research project of your own, say a critical literature review or a research paper. In both cases, the paper has to be well-written, well-organized, and the instructor must agree in advance to your topic. Term papers should be typed, double-spaced, using no larger than a 12-point font and no smaller than a 10-point font, and papers should be at least 10 pages long (not including the title page and bibliography). I expect students to follow an accepted social science footnote and bibliographic style (please **do not** use MLA format). A statement of the proposed paper topic (one [1] page long, same format applies) is due at the start of class on **July 10**. I will judge the final term papers based on the following:

- o *Organization*: Is it easy to read and understand?
- o *Format*: Did you follow the appropriate citation and style guidelines?
- o *Consistency*: Do you stay on topic? Does one line of reasoning follow from another?
- o *Use of logic*: Does the argument make sense?
- o *Use of literature*: Are you familiar with the authors who support/reject your arguments?
- o *Conceptual formation*: How well and in what manner do you build your argument?
- o *Substantive value*: How important is this project to the study of urban politics?
- o *Originality*: Has anyone ever done this idea in this way before?
- o *Depth of scholarship*: How well do you know the topic?
- o *Use of language and writing*: Is it interesting, entertaining and scholarly?

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services offered by the OSU Writing Center (located in the Younkin Success Center on Neil Avenue). I will distribute a more detailed handout about paper expectations later.

- **Active class participation and attendance: 25 points**

Critical discussion is **essential** to this course. Trust me, I do not claim to know everything, and class discussion is a way for me to share what I have learned while learning from my students. I have 4 simple rules about class participation:

1. There are no stupid comments, questions, or ideas.
(Corollary to rule #1: There are inappropriate ones).
2. It is okay to disagree with others (especially the teacher).
3. Respect each other.
4. Have fun.

Class participation consists of speaking in class about the readings, about colleagues' presentations of those readings, or about any ideas regarding the substance of the course that you believe would enhance or further the ongoing conversation in class. Meeting the instructor during office hours can earn you participation points; however, *office visits do not replace in-class participation*.

It is easier to participate when you come to class, so failing to show up for lecture will doubly affect your grade. I will take attendance each class period. Students are permitted **three (3)** excused absences during the quarter. Although excused absences do include illness (must be accompanied

by a doctor's note), I will not excuse routine appointments because such appointments should be scheduled outside of class time.

- **Quizzes: 25 points**

I will give a total of five (5) quizzes over the quarter. Each quiz is worth five (5) points. The exact dates of these quizzes are in the syllabus. I designed these quizzes to ensure that students understand the main points of the readings. I also give quizzes to motivate students to complete readings **before** each lecture. Also, students are required to familiarize themselves with politics and governance in central Ohio by reading the *Columbus Dispatch* each day. To encourage and reward this effort, I will quiz students about the events and issues covered in the newspaper **and** on the class readings. I will factor the scores from these quizzes into a student's overall participation grade.

- **In-class presentation: 15 points**

These are group presentations based on the readings. We will decide group members and presentation topics later in the quarter. Presenting a reading to the class has at least three (3) parts. The first is to summarize the authors' argument and evidence. This does not mean repeating what the author wrote (see above). The second is to relate the authors' arguments and evidence (in your own words) to the other readings, your colleagues' discussions of those readings and their presentations, and your own personal research ideas and experiences. The third part is to constructively criticize the reading presented, explaining what you find unconvincing about the reading and why. It is a good idea to create an outline of your presentation before "show time." Students interested in making PowerPoint presentations must inform me ahead of time so that I can make arrangements and get the equipment.

- **Paper proposal and bibliographic essay: 10 points**

Good proposals should do two things. First, they should sketch out the ideas and goals of the term paper. Second, and more importantly, they should sell me on your idea. In addition to mapping out your course of action, proposals should briefly explain how your term paper fits into the "big picture." Highlight your topic's place in, and its contribution to, the study of urban politics. Do not assume that the reader cares to the same extent as you do about your topic. Convincing readers of the merit and importance of the question in a coherent way is an important first step in your paper. I would like to receive a one-page statement of the proposal and a preliminary list of sources at the start of class on **July 10**. In addition, students are required to schedule an appointment to discuss the topic with me. Appointments should occur by **July 17** (the 4th week of the quarter). The bibliography should be formatted properly (see above comments on term papers), checked for spelling and grammar errors (people tend to neglect this in bibliographies), and alphabetized. I am old fashioned; I believe people should go to libraries and read actual books instead of overusing the Internet for information. Citing on-line sources can be tricky, and pre-made Internet essays can make plagiarism very tempting for researchers. Therefore, if possible, I want all bibliographies to contain at least 5 non-internet sources. I will explain more about this in class.

IV. Grades and Evaluations

Everyone starts with a perfect grade in this course. I grade on a demerit rather than a merit system because I think it levels the playing field. Also, I think it makes learning less about "proving oneself" and more about "maintaining focus." Each student comes into class with 100 points, and I evaluate students based on how many points they end up with at the end of the quarter. I translate total points into letter grades using the following formula (please note that anything higher than 93 points is still an "A", and anything lower than 62 points is still an "E"):

Points	Grade
93 or higher	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
62 or lower	E

The grading logic is simple. The goals for this course are on the front page of the syllabus, and I measure how successful students are at fulfilling those goals based on how well they meet the course requirements. If you end up with 93 or more points, then you should be teaching the class, not the instructor. If you end up with between 80 and 89 points, you achieved all the major goals of the class, but you did not fulfill some minor requirements. If you earn between 70 and 79 points, then you met all the major goals, but you did not complete many of the minor requirements. Students with 63 to 69 points at the end of the quarter fulfilled only a few major goals. Students with 62 points or less did not achieve any of the major goals of the class.

V. Class Outline and Reading Schedule

Below is an overview of the topics covered and the assigned readings for this course. Please note that I reserve the right to change the schedule as I feel necessary.

Section 1: Housekeeping

June 24 Course introduction and overview

June 26 *What is Urban Politics?*
Elvin K. Wyly, Norman J. Glickman, and Michael L. Lahr. 1988. "A Top 10 List of Things to Know About American Cities." *Cityscape* 3(3): 7-32.

Section II. Theories of Urban Politics

July 1 **Quiz #1**

Historical Overview

"The Evolution of Urban Politics in America" in Judd and Kantor, introductory essay, pp. 1-10.

An Overview of the Issues

"The Politics of American Cities: An Introduction" in Judd and Swanstrom, pp. 1-10.

July 3 *Pluralism*

Rodney Hero. 1992. "Theoretical Perspectives on Latino Groups" in *Latinos and the US Political System. Two-Tiered Pluralism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press,

chapter 2, pp. 11-30.

--Have a Happy Independence Day!!!!--

- July 8 *Governing Coalitions*
Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb. 1990. "Can People of Color Achieve Power in City Government? The Setting and the Issues," in Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, Introduction (eds.) pp. 1-13.
- July 10 *Regime Theory*
Stone, Clarence. N. 1989. "Urban Regimes: A Research Perspective" in Judd and Kantor, chapter, pp. 26-42.

--Paper Topic Proposal due Wednesday, July 10 at Beginning of Class--

Section III. State and Federal Government and the Cities

- July 15 **Quiz #2**
- "The Rise and Fall of National Urban Policy" in Judd and Swanstrom, chapter 8, pp. 214-246.
- July 17 Peterson, Paul E. 1995. "Who Should Do What?" Divided Responsibility in the Federal System," in Judd and Kantor, chapter 9, pp. 357-365.

--Last Day to Submit Proposals is Wednesday, July 17 at End of Class--

Section IV. Local Governance, Mayoral Power, and the Politics of Reform

- July 22 *Machine Politics*
Merton, Robert K. 1957. "The Latent Functions of the Machine" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 3, pp. 101-110.
- July 24 *Reform Politics*
Hays, Samuel P. 1964. "The politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 4, pp. 131-150.
- Amy Bridges. 1992. "Winning the West to Municipal Reform" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 3, pp. 151-171.

Section V. Demographic Change, Urban Growth, and Racial and Ethnic Politics

- July 29 **Quiz #3**
- Mobilization and Empowerment*
"The Challenge of Urban Governance" in Judd and Swanstrom, chapter 14, pp. 400-432.
- July 31 Richard E. DeLeon. 1998. "Progressive Politics in the Left Coast City: San Francisco" in Browning, Marshall and Tabb, chapter 6, pp. 137-160.
- August 5 *The City and the Suburbs*
Paul E. Peterson. 1981. "The Interests of the Limited City" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 1, pp. 14-25.

August 7 "The Fragmented Society" in Judd and Swanstrom, chapter 15, pp. 433-458.

August 12 **Quiz #4**

The Politics of Urban Development

Swanstrom, Todd. 1998. "The Semisovereign Cities: The Politics of Urban Development" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 1, pp. 42-59.

Foglesong, Richard. 1994. "When Disney Comes to Town" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 7, pp. 248-251.

August 14 Peter Esinger. 2000. The Politics of Bread and Circus: Building the City for the Visitor Class" in Judd and Kantor, chapter 7, pp. 252-265.

Part VI. Closing Session

August 19 **Quiz #5**

Class Presentations

August 21 Class Presentations

Term Papers Due Friday, August 30 by 5:30 PM

NO FINAL! ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR SUMMER

VI. The Fine Print

Course Policies: Late assignments will be penalized two and a half (2.5) points for each day they are late. Assignments that are more than a week late will not be accepted. Failure to take exams at the scheduled time will result in a grade of zero (0) with no exceptions. Students with legitimate reasons (*i.e.* documented medical emergencies, etc.) for missing an assignment deadline must notify me in advance so that arrangements can be made for an extension. Please note that students must provide me with appropriate documentation before I will extend the deadline for an assignment. Students will be penalized points unless they can demonstrate (to my satisfaction) that it was impossible to complete the assignment at the scheduled time. Since I grade the "extended" assignment harder than I grade the original assignment, students are strongly encouraged to take exams at the scheduled time.

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper documentation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy, and, when appropriate, reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Disability: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor of their needs during the first week of the quarter. Students may also contact the department's coordinator, Mr. Wayne DeYoung (292-2880) for more information about specific services.

Office Hours: Office hours are a time for you to come visit the instructor outside of class to discuss readings, lectures, discussions, presentations, papers, exams, assignments, or anything else remotely related to one's life as a student at this university. I strongly encourage students to meet with me throughout the summer. *Coming to office hours is a great way to boost your overall class participation grade.* Although

office visits do **not** replace in-class participation, students can interact with the instructor in a more relaxed environment if they are not always comfortable with speaking out in class. Most importantly, office hours help me to remember students' names. If the office hours established on the syllabus are not feasible for you, please call or e-mail me to arrange an appointment.

Top 10 List Of Ways To Irritate Your Instructor

(Adapted from Dr. William Nish, Georgia College)

- Do not read your assignments before class lecture and discussion
- Label as “busy work,” “irrelevant,” and “boring,” anything that you do not like to do or that you do not understand.
- Read a newspaper, make cell phone calls, or talk to classmates if you are not interested in the lecture topic.
- Avoid using the instructor’s office hours for appointments.
- Be consistently late to class and other appointments.
- Be very casual about class attendance.
- Avoid taking exams at the same time and under the same conditions as the rest of the class.
- Always be ready with reasons why you are an exception to the rules established for the class.
- Expect your professor to be waiting at home to take your calls.
- Do not participate in such mundane activities as departmental advising appointments.

Top 6 List of Ways to Impress Your Instructor

(Students who wish to do well in this course should do the following)

- Come to class regularly and on time.
- Read thoroughly and before the class period in which the readings will be discussed.
- Contribute regularly to class discussion.
- Pay attention and ask questions when you do not understand.
- Complete your assignments in a timely manner.
- Take the initiative to contact your professor if you are having any difficulties.