

**Political Science 913/Urban Studies 913**  
**Urban Political Process**  
**Spring 2023**

Instructor: Joel Rast  
Time: Thursdays, 4:30-7:10  
Location: Bolton Hall, Room 702B

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**Course Overview**

The field of urban politics has gone through significant changes during the past several decades. During the 1960s and 1970s, cities across the nation experienced economic stagnation and fiscal crisis as industries and middle-class residents migrated to the suburbs. Urban economic restructuring gave rise to new theoretical approaches to urban politics emphasizing structural sources of business power resulting from the increased mobility of business enterprises. Many urban theorists argued that capital mobility had produced a dramatic shift in the balance of political power in cities, dimming the prospects for policies that address the needs of neighborhood organizations, low- and moderate-income city residents, and other non-business groups.

Subsequent scholarship took into account the phenomenon of urban economic restructuring, while in many cases moving beyond the economic determinism of much of the earlier literature. Many of the newer studies concluded that various types of governing arrangements are possible in contemporary cities, including regimes responsive to the needs of less wealthy city residents. Although scholars continue to debate these issues, there is a growing consensus that the distribution of political power in cities can take a number of different forms.

Theoretically, the field of urban politics in recent years has featured considerable fragmentation. There is no overarching paradigm that guides research in a Kuhnian sense (see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). Instead, many urban scholars today focus on individual policy areas, such as housing or economic development. Contemporary scholarly debates often focus less on genuine theoretical considerations than on differences in policy approaches.

This course is divided into three parts. Part I is primarily theoretical. This part of the course traces the development of the field of urban politics during the past several decades and examines the main theoretical perspectives in the field.

Part II consists of a set of studies focused around a number of key themes in the urban politics field, including urban redevelopment, segregation, housing and land use policy, criminal justice policy, and urban economic change. Where appropriate, we will use theoretical approaches examined in Part I of the course to help understand and interpret the findings of these studies. By the same token, the readings in this part of the course will help us further articulate these theoretical frameworks.

Part III of the course is devoted to student research. There are several options that students may pursue. One possibility is to write a critical essay that engages with one or more of the theoretical perspectives introduced in Part I of the course, such as urban regime theory. This would be mainly a theory paper, drawing on scholarly works that address theoretical questions and debates in the field of urban politics. Another possibility would be to develop a paper focused around a particular theme or policy area, like the studies we will read in Part II of the course. This could take the form of a review essay. Alternatively, a case study approach would also work for this option. Finally, students may choose a combination of these approaches, such as developing a theoretical argument of some kind supported by empirical research focusing on a particular case. Students with ideas for papers that do not fit any of these options should meet with me individually to discuss their paper ideas.

In order to give you ample time to research and write these papers there will be no reading or writing assignments after April 13, other than to complete your research papers by the end of the semester. We will spend two or three class sessions toward the end of the semester working in small groups. The purpose of these sessions is to give you an opportunity to describe and present your project to your fellow group members, and to get feedback from group members on your work.

## **Course Requirements**

Class Participation: Since this class is a graduate seminar, your participation in our weekly meetings will be critical to making the class a success. I will devote a minimal amount of time to lecturing. In Parts I and II of the course, most of our class time will be spent providing you with the opportunity to respond to the readings. If students come to class well prepared, our seminar discussions should be lively and thought provoking. In the research portion of the course (Part III), you will need to make some progress on your project each week so that you have material to discuss with your fellow group members.

Response Papers: During Parts I and II of the course, each of you should prepare a 1-2 page (single-spaced) reaction to the readings each week. During weeks where the readings consist of a set of articles, feel free to synthesize the readings and treat them thematically rather than responding to each reading individually. A key purpose of the response papers is to facilitate your participation in the seminar. Therefore, as you prepare them, consider questions or issues raised by the readings that you would like to see discussed in class. Response papers may include a brief summary of the book/article's key arguments, but they should focus primarily on *reacting* to the material rather than summarizing it.

Research Paper: The papers should be roughly 20 pages in length (double-spaced). They will be due on **Monday, May 15**. A one-page (single-spaced) summary of your proposed paper project will be due on **Thursday, March 30**. I will provide additional guidelines for the paper later in the semester.

The breakdown of your final course grade will be determined as follows:

- Research Paper 70 %
- Response Papers 20 %
- Class Participation 10 %

### Required Books:

Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989.

Robert J. Chaskin and Mark L. Joseph, *Integrating the Inner City: The Promise and Perils of Mixed-Income Housing Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Jessica Trounstein, *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Tenth Anniversary Edition. New York: The New Press, 2020.

Douglas Rae, *City: Urbanism and Its End*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

**Note:** The books are not available through the UWM virtual bookstore, but you can easily purchase affordable used copies from Amazon and other online booksellers. Full text versions of the additional readings can be found on the course Canvas site.

## Class Schedule

### *Part I: Theorizing the City*

#### January 26: Course Overview

- No reading assignment

#### February 2: Structuralism and Its Critics

- Susan Fainstein, “The Changing World Economy and Urban Restructuring.” In S. Fainstein and S. Campbell, eds., *Readings in Urban Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Edward W. Soja, “Economic Restructuring and the Internationalization of the Los Angeles Region.” In M. P. Smith and J. Feagin, eds., *The Capitalist City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Paul Peterson, “The Interests of the Limited City.” From Paul Peterson, *City Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Paul Kantor, “The Dependent City: The Changing Political Economy of Urban Economic Development in the United States.” *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 22: 493-520, 1987.
- Kenneth K. Wong, “Economic Constraint and Political Choice in Urban Policymaking.” *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 1-18, 1988.
- Todd Swanstrom, “Semisovereign Cities: The Politics of Urban Development.” *Polity* 21: 83-110, 1988.

#### February 9: The City as a Growth Machine

- Harvey Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place.” *American Journal of Sociology* 82: 309-332, 1976.
- Shelley McDonough Kimelberg, “Inside the Growth Machine: Real Estate Professionals on the Perceived Challenges of Urban Development.” *City & Community* 10: 76-99, 2011.

- David Wilson and Jared Wouters, “Spatiality and Growth Discourse: The Restructuring of America’s Rust Belt Cities.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 25: 123-138, 2003.
- Judith T. Kenny, “Making Milwaukee Famous: Cultural Capital, Urban Image, and the Politics of Place.” *Urban Geography* 16: 440-458, 1995.
- Kevin J. Delaney and Rick Eckstein, “Urban Power Structures and Publicly Financed Stadiums.” *Sociological Forum* 22: 331-353, 2007.
- Mark Schneider and Paul Teske, “The Antigrowth Entrepreneur: Challenging the ‘Equilibrium’ of the Growth Machine.” *Journal of Politics* 55: 720-736, 1993.

#### February 16: Urban Regime Theory

- Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*.

#### February 23: The Political Economy of the Postindustrial City

- Richard Florida, “Cities and the Creative Class.” *City & Community* 2: 3-19, 2003.
- Jamie Peck, “Struggling with the Creative Class.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29: 740-770, 2005.
- Jeffrey Zimmerman, “From Brew Town to Cool Town: Neoliberalism and the Creative City Development Strategy in Milwaukee.” *Cities* 25: 230-242, 2008.
- J. Peter Byrne, “Two Cheers for Gentrification.” *Howard Law Journal* 46: 405-432, 2003.
- Tom Slater, “The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30: 737-757, 2006.
- Kathleen Donnelly, “The Gentrifier’s Dilemma: Narrative Strategies and Self-Justifications of Incoming Residents in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.” *City & Community* 17: 374-393.

### ***Part II: Thematic Areas***

#### March 2: The Politics of Urban Redevelopment

- Robert J. Chaskin and Mark L. Joseph, *Integrating the Inner City: The Promise and Perils of Mixed-Income Public Housing Transformation*.

#### March 9: Segregation and Public Policy

- Jessica Trounstein, *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*.

#### March 16: Housing and Land Use Policy

- David Imbroscio, “Rethinking Exclusionary Zoning or: How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love It.” *Urban Affairs Review* 57: 214-251, 2021.
- Edward G. Goetz, “Democracy, Exclusion, and White Supremacy: How Should We Think About Exclusionary Zoning?” *Urban Affairs Review* 57: 269-283, 2021.
- Katherine Levine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick, “Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes.” *Perspectives on Politics* 17: 28-46, 2019.
- Jessica Trounstein, “You Won’t be My Neighbor: Opposition to High Density Development.” *Urban Affairs Review*. Online first. 2021.
- Max Holleran, “Millennial ‘YIMBYs’ and Boomer ‘NIMBYs’: Generational Views on Housing Affordability in the United States.” *The Sociological Review* 69: 846-861, 2021.

March 23: Spring break

- No assignment

March 30: The Carceral State

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.
- **Abstracts for research papers due today.**

April 6: The Long View (Part 1)

- Douglas Rae, *City: Urbanism and Its End*, pp. 1-211.

April 13: The Long View (Part 2)

- Douglas Rae, *City: Urbanism and Its End*, pp. 215-432.

***Part III: Research Workshop***April 20: Research Workshop

Students in this portion of the class will work in small groups. In this first workshop session, each student will provide an overview of their project and then identify any problems they may be wrestling with that group members might help them work through. For example, in the case of a theoretical essay, you might have an idea for a particular line of criticism that you would like to explore with members of your group to see if they find your approach convincing. Or, for those writing review essays or case studies, you might want to see how your group responds to the argument you see yourself making. Whatever the issues are that you present to the group, do your best to pick ones that group members can realistically help you with. For example, time management may be a major concern, but it's not something that members of your group are likely to be much help with.

Plan to spend about 20-25 minutes on each person's project.

**To prepare for this session, please post your project abstracts on the course Canvas site at least two days before class. Students should read the abstracts of all members of their group before coming to class.**

April 27: Research Workshop

The objective of this class session is to provide feedback on drafts of papers or portions of papers, once again working in small groups. It is expected that by this date, students will have completed a draft of at least a portion of the final paper.

**To prepare for this class, please post a draft of your paper or a portion of your paper on the Canvas site at least two days before class. Students should come to class having read and written comments on the drafts of all members of their group.**

May 4: Optional Research Workshop

Groups have the option of meeting as a group or working individually on projects. I will be available during class time for individual paper consultations.

May 11: Class Presentations

**Final papers due Monday, May 15, 4:30 pm.**