

Gov 94mh: Power, Politics, and the American City

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Class: Thursdays, 2:00 pm - 4 pm, CGIS-Knafel 050

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm, CGIS-Knafel 435

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1 Description

As politicians bemoan gridlock in Washington, mayors and city officials are stepping up at the local level to address some of the US's greatest social challenges. From education reform to housing affordability, city governments strive to experiment with policy levers, learning from each others' successes and failures. In short, cities are where the action is.

Or so claim city advocates. In reality, much of the so-called "Metropolitan Revolution" is built on anecdote and celebrity cases. Does a new park or shopping district count as innovative change or merely window dressing? To what degree are large-scale policy initiatives possible at the city-level? More so, who is city policy designed to benefit and what forces shape it?

This course is designed to help reinvigorate the study of American cities as political entities by applying modern political science methodology to the foundational theories of urban politics. Pushing beyond anecdotal accounts, each class will explore an influential player in the urban context, combining existing theory with new data to address the fundamental question: Who governs the American city? And, more importantly, what does that power mean for the populace?

2 Objectives

This course is designed to help students transition from learning about politics to researching politics within the context of the American city. By the end of the semester, students will produce an original, executable research prospectus of their choosing. While targeted towards Juniors approaching their Senior Thesis, enrollment is open to all students through the Government Department lottery.

3 Class Structure

Classes are discussion-based and seek to blend canonical debates of urban politics with new data and research methods. Generally, the first half of each class

will be spent discussing the readings. The second half will be spent sharing research designs and working through potential tests to address the questions put forth in the student memos.

There are two books assigned for this course, both of which are available at COOP and on reserve at Lamont Library:

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc..
- Kantor, Paul and Dennis R. Judd. 2013. *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*. Pearson Education, Inc..

Additional readings will be available online or through Harvard Google Scholar.

4 Grading

There are four measures by which students are evaluated:

- 20% participation
- 25% memos
- 5% midterm draft
- 10% midterm paper
- 40% final paper

Participation consists of attendance and active, informed discussion during class hours. Students with weak participation marks will be notified early in the semester. Attendance is expected at each class.

Students are responsible for weekly, 500-word memos in which they will briefly synthesize the readings as well as propose a research question motivated by the readings. The research question will include a description of how they would test the question and what data would be necessary. These memos will be submitted each week by 2:00 pm on Wednesday. Of the 9 weeks in which a student may submit a memo, two may be skipped, for a total of 7 memos.

The midterm paper is a proposal for the final paper. The midterm paper will outline your question of interest, the relevant literature within the field, and your early stages of how such a question may be answered. Draft midterm paper of 4-6 pages is due Wednesday, March 2nd. The midterm paper of 6-8 pages is due Wednesday, April 6.

The final paper is a 20 to 25 page research prospectus containing your question, relevant literature, methodological design, and data sources. Research designs will be presented during the final two weeks of class in 15 minute sessions designed to garner peer feedback. The final paper is due at the Registrar's assigned final slot.

5 Collaboration Policy

Students are encouraged to work together to understand and synthesize the readings and materials. However, memos must contain independent synthesis and unique research questions. Likewise, while research designs for the final project may be discussed, all written work must be independent. Sources used for all assignments must be properly cited.

6 Structure

1/28	Introduction: Power and Data	No readings/no memo
2/04	The Urban Context	
2/11	Citizens and Exit	
2/18	Elected Officials and Institutions	
2/25	Chasing Capital, Keeping Capital	Midterm topic due
3/03	Race and Class	
3/10	Neighborhoods and Geography	Midterm draft due
3/24	Fragmented Metropolis	
3/31	Federal Urban Policy?	
4/07	Rich City, Poor City	Class rescheduled for 4/4
4/14	Paper Presentations I	Midterm due 4/10
4/21	Paper Presentations II	
5/14		Final Paper Due

7 Readings

Note: Readings subject to change.

1. Power, Data, and the American City

- What are the objectives of this course?
- How do we think about political inquiry?
- What is the role of new data in the study of city politics?

Notes: No reading/memos this week.

2. The Urban Context

- What are the functions, interests, and players of a city government, broadly?
- What are the unique features and dominant debates of city/local politics?
- What are the capabilities of US Census data?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp 1-43 (“City Politics in America: An Introduction” and “The Enduring Legacy”).
- Dahl, Robert. 1961. “From Who Governs? and from A Preface to Democratic Theory”. pp. 88-94.
- Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. “Two Faces of Power.” *American Political Science Review* 56(4): pp. 947-952.
- Peterson, Paul. 1981. “The Interest of the Limited City” from *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd, Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 10-20.
- Molotch, Harvey. 1979. “The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place.” *American Journal of Sociology* 82(2): pp. 309-329.

- Hajnal, Zoltan L. and Jessica Trounstein. “Who or What Governs?: The Effects of Economics, Politics, Institutions, and Needs on Local Spending”. *American Politics Research* 38(6): pp. 1130-1163.

Data: US Census Data

- Sperling, Jonathan. 2012. “The Tyranny of Census Geography: Small-Area Data and Neighborhood Statistics”. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 14(2): pp. 219-224.
- Badger, Emily. 2013. “An Extraordinary ‘Synthetic’ Map of Every Household in America” *City Lab*. 25 Oct 2013. <http://www.citylab.com/housing/2013/10/extraordinary-synthetic-map-every-household-america/7375/>.

3. Citizens and Exit

- (a) How can citizens exercise voice in a city?
- (b) Does the ability to ‘exit’ empower the citizen?
- (c) How has the citizen’s role changed over time?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp 48-110 (“Party Machines and Immigrants” and “The Reform Crusades”).
- Sharp, 1984. “‘Exit, Voice, and Loyalty’ in the Context of Local Government Problems”. *The Western Political Quarterly* 37(1). pp. 67-83.
- Anzia, Sarah F.. 2011. “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups”. *Journal of Politics* 73(2). pp. 412-427.
- Fischel, William. 2001. “Homevoter, Municipal Corporate Governance, and the Benefit View of the Property Tax”. *National Tax Journal* 54(1): pp. 157-173.

Data: Citizen Behaviors

- Casselman, Ben. 2014. “Residents of Struggling Cities Opt to Skip Town”. *FiveThirtyEight* 27 Mar 2014. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/residents-of-struggling-cities-opt-to-skip-town/>
- Greenblatt, Alan. 2015. “How Seattle Is Increasing Diversity in Politics” *Governing*, Nov 2015. <http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-seattle-city-council-elections.html>
- Maciag, Mike. 2016. “When It Comes to 311, the Customer Isn’t Always Right”. *Governing*. <http://www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/gov-311-data.html>

4. Elected Officials and Institutions

- (a) What are the incentives and actions of politicians once in office?
- (b) How do political structures shape the behaviors of elected officials?

Readings

- Trounstine, Jessica. 2006. “Dominant Regimes and the Demise of Urban Democracy.” *Journal of Politics* 68(4): pp. 879-893.
- Burnett, Craig M. and Vladimir Kogan. 2014. “Local Logrolling? Assessing the Impact of Legislative Districting in Los Angeles”. *Urban Affairs Review* 50(5): pp. 648:671.
- Tausanovitch, Chris and Christopher Warshaw. 2014. “Representation and Municipal Government”. *American Political Science Review* 108(3): pp. 605-641.

Data: Voting, Elected Officials

- Ban, Pamela, Alexander Fourinaies, Andrew B. Hall, and James M. Snyder, Jr.. “How Newspapers Reveal Political Power”. *Working Paper*. pp. 1-18.
- Jaffe, Eric. 2012. “Potholes Are Big Politics In San Diego.” **City Lab** 11 Jun 2012. <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2012/06/potholes-are-politics-san-diego/2231/>.

5. Chasing Capital, Keeping Capital

- (a) What is the influence of business power in city politics?
- (b) How do agglomeration benefits balance capital mobility?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 174-182 (Beginning of “National Policy and the City/Suburban Divide”).
- Judd, Dennis R. and David Laslo. 2010. “The Regime Moment: The Brief but Storied Career or Urban Regimes in American Cities” from *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd, Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 35-46.
- Kantor, Paul and H. V. Savitch. 1993. “Can Politicians Bargain with Business?” from *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd, Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 120-132.
- Garcia-Milà, Teresa, Therese J. McGuire, Edward Glaeser, and Todd Sinai. 2002. “Tax Incentives and the City”. *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs*: pp. 95-132 *excerpt from 111-132*.
- Siegfried, John and Andrew Zimbalist. 2000. “The Economics of Sport Facilities and Their Communities”. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14(3): pp. 95-114.

Data: Tax Incentives

- Waldron, Travis. 2015. “How Boston Won The Right to Avoid The Olympics”. 31 Jul 2015. *The Huffington Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/boston-olympics-2024_55ba4c65e4b0b8499b188b28.
- Stephens, Alexis. “We May Soon Be Able to Track Exactly How Badly Corporate Tax Breaks Fail Cities”. 16 Dec 2014. <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/track-corporate-tax-breaks-subsidies-cities-businesses-relocate>.

- Kinney, Jen. “Boston Snags GE With Tax Breaks, Tech-Savvy Workforce”. 14 Jan 2016. <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/ge-relocating-global-headquarters-to-boston-move>.

6. Race and Class

- Why do many read ‘urban politics’ as code for ‘racial politics’?
- How do racial and economic cleavages affect political outcomes?
- How do these findings complicate the issue of ‘poor doors’ and inclusionary housing?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 136-173 and 372-397 (“The City/Suburban Divide” and “Governing the Divided City”).
- Rugh, Jacob S. and Jessica Trounstein. 2011. “The Provision of Local Public Goods in Diverse Communities: Analyzing Municipal Bond Elections”. *The Journal of Politics* 73(4): pp. 1038-1050.
- Enos, Ryan D.. 2015. “What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior”. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): pp. 123-142.
- Enos, Ryan D.. 2014. “Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary Attitudes”. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111(10): pp. 3699-3704.

Data: Integration and ‘Poor Doors’

- Enos, Ryan D.. 2013. “How the demographic shift could hurt Democrats, too”. *Washington Post*. 8 Mar 2013.
- Moyer, Justin Wm.. 2015. “NYC bans ‘poor doors’ - separate entrances for low-income tenants”. 30 Jun 2015. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/30/nyc-bans-poor-doors-separate-entrances-for-low-income-tenants/>.
- Schlichtman, John Joe. 2014. “Poor Doors Are About as Egalitarian as the U.S. Gets”. *Next City* 1 Aug 2014. <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/poor-door-new-york-chicago-affordable-housing-ideas>.
- Jacobus, Rick. 2015. “In Defense of the ‘Poor Door’”. *Rooflines: The Shelterforce blog*. 14 Oct 2015. http://www.rooflines.org/4267/in_defense_of_the_poor_door/.

7. Neighborhoods and Geography

- Why does geography play an outsized role in the politics of a city?
- Should neighborhoods/communities have more or less political power?
- What defines a community and who speaks for it?

Readings

- Altshuler, Alan and David Luberoff. 2003. *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy: pp. 8-75.

- Caro, Robert. 1974. “One Mile” from *The Power Broker*: pp. 850-884.
- Hankinson, Michael. 2013. “Externalities or Extortion? Privatizing Social Policy through Community Benefits Agreements”. *Harvard Journal of Real Estate* 1(1): pp. 6-10.

Data: Spatial Proximity

- Gerber, R. Elisabeth and Justin H. Phillips. 2003. “Development Ballot Measures, Interest Group Endorsements, and the Political Geography of Growth Preferences”. *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4): pp. 625-639.

8. Fragmented Metropolis

- (a) When do political surroundings within a region matter?
- (b) Under what conditions is localism most efficient?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 252-308 (“Rise of the Fragmented Metropolis” and “Governing the Fragmented Metropolis”).
- Craw, Michael. 2010. “Deciding to Provide. Local Decisions on Providing Social Welfare”. *American Journal of Political Science* 54(4) pp. 906-920.
- Frug, Gerald E. “Beyond Regional Government”. *Harvard Law Review* 115(7) pp. 1763-1836.
- Haughwout, Andrew F. and Robert P. Inman. 2002. “Should Suburbs Help Their Central City?” *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs*. pp. 45-94.
- Blumgart, Jake. “The Bad Economics of Balkanized Suburbs.” *City-Lab* 23 Feb 2016. <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2016/02/the-downside-of-crazy-quilt-suburbs/470310/>

9. State and Federal City Policy?

- (a) How do state and federal power affect city politics and city life?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 182-226 (“National Policy and the City/Suburban Divide” and “Federal Programs and the Divisive Politics of Race”).
- Frug, Gerald E. and David J. Barron. “City Bound: How States Stifle Urban Innovation”. 2008. *Cornell University Press*. pp. 53-140.
- Glaeser, Edward L. and Joseph Gyourko. 2008. “Rethinking Federal Housing Policy”. *AEI Press*. pp. 1-15, 126-131.

Data: Intergovernmental Actions

- Freemark, Yonah. 2014. “Why Can’t the United States Build a High-Speed Rail System?” *City Lab* 13 Aug 2014. <http://www.citylab.com/politics/2014/08/why-cant-the-united-states-build-a-high-speed-rail-system/375980/>.

10. Rich City/Poor City

- (a) What is the spectrum of urban challenges?
- (b) How do cities approach these challenges based on their political environments?

Readings

- Judd, Dennis R. and Todd Swanstrom. 2015. *City Politics*. Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 398-403 (“City and Metropolis in the Global Era.”).
- Kantor, Paul. 2013. “City Futures: Economic Crisis and the American Model of Urban Development” from *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd, Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 300-311.
- Glaeser, Edward L.. 2011. “Why do cities decline?” from *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd, Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 93-106.
- Rivlin, Gary. 2015. “Why The Plan To Shrink New Orleans Failed.” *FiveThirtyEight*, 27 Aug 2015. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-the-plan-to-shrink-new-orleans-after-katrina-failed/>.
- Liu, Amy. 2016. “Remaking Economic Development.” *The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program*. pp. 1-32.

11. Paper Presentations I

12. Paper Presentations II