

## Urban Political Economy

Political Science 9523

Fall 2017

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**Dates:** Wednesdays 4–6pm  
**Location:** SSC 4103

What is power? Who has power? How is it acquired? How is its use enabled or constrained? This course takes up these questions in the urban context. We will survey classic and contemporary theories of urban political economy. The first half of the course examines different perspectives on the acquisition and exercise of power *in* the city. The second half of the course shifts perspective to consider the power *of* the city—is there, in an increasingly borderless world, such thing as an autonomous local politics, or must urban political economy come to mean something else? As these ideas have developed in relation to one another through time, the flow is chronological.

While empirically focused on urban and local governance, we will discuss how these concepts may be applicable to other contexts and scales of analysis. (Indeed, there be no better time to think about power than now, in our age of populist discontent, profound political disagreement, and alienation from politics!)

We will also use the terrain of urban political economy research to discuss and debate the methodological dilemmas all political scientists face as they have studied the acquisition and use of power—dilemmas you too may face as you write theses, dissertations, and research papers.

### Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will:

- be conversant in leading theories of urban political economy,
- understand methodological approaches and dilemmas in qualitative single- and comparative case study research, and
- have sharpened your analytic and argumentative skills through classroom discussions and assignments.

This is an advanced, graduate-level course with a reading load and expectations to match. Doctoral students may use this course as a foundation for the comprehensive examination in the Urban Politics subfield. Many of the readings are on the comprehensive examination list.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Class 1     Sept. 13     Introduction: Structure, Agency, and Power in the Urban Political Economy  
*Assign reading presentations*

### **Part I – Locating Power *in* the City**

Class 2     Sept. 20     Historical Antecedents: Machine and Reform in North American Urban Politics  
*Reading presentations begin*

Class 3     Sept. 27     Community Power I: Elite Domination

Class 4     Oct. 4     Community Power II: Pluralism

*\*\*\* Reading Week, Oct. 9–13 \*\*\**

Class 5     Oct. 18     Structuralism I: Capitalism, Urban Development, and the Local State

Class 6     Oct. 25     Constructivism I: Urban Regime Analysis  
*Abstract due*

Class 7     Nov. 1     Constructivism II: Urban Regime Analysis Continued – Extension and Critique

### **Part II – Evaluating the Power *of* the City**

Class 8     Nov. 8     Structuralism II: Market Discipline

Class 9     Nov. 15     Structuralism III: Capitalist Urbanization and Neoliberal Hegemony

Class 10     Nov. 22     Institutions I: Macro Context and Local Choices

Class 11     Nov. 29     Institutions II: National Infrastructures of Urban Governance

Class 12     Dec. 6     Reflection on Methods for the Study of Urban Politics

Dec. 8     *Final paper due*

## COURSE WEBSITE

This course makes use of OWL. Please refer to the course website regularly for announcements and course information: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>.

## COURSE FORMAT

This is a seminar course. There will be no lecture. Students will lead and actively contribute to the discussion. Reading the assigned texts in advance is a necessary prerequisite for doing well in this course and will make for more exciting and insightful discussion.

## COURSE MATERIALS

Most of the readings will be posted on OWL. You will, however, purchase one book, which is available in the bookstore:

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

## EVALUATION

**Participation and seminar leadership (40%):** Depending on the number of students enrolled, everyone will present *one or more* of the readings and lead seminar discussion *at least once* during the term. On their assigned days, seminar leaders will distribute a one-page reading summary to the class and come prepared with two or three questions to motivate discussion. You will also be evaluated on your preparedness for class and the quality of your contributions to in-class debates.

**Final paper (60%):** Building on the course material, you will write an *argumentative essay* taking up an important question in urban political economy. This may involve taking a deeper dive into the literature to compare and contrast diverse theoretical perspectives and their extensions, or it may involve applying a theory to one or more empirical cases. **You will submit a short abstract of your paper idea for comment on or before the second class after the Reading Week.** Masters students will submit a maximum 20-page paper. Doctoral students will submit a 20–30-page paper. **Papers are due by midnight, Friday, December 8.**

## COURSE POLICIES

**Electronic devices:** Research shows that levels of student performance and participation are lower when computers, tablets, smartphones, and other devices are present in the classroom. In order to create a pleasant environment conducive to everyone's learning and free from

distractions, please refrain from using phones for texting or any other purposes during classes. The use of laptops and tablets is strongly discouraged.

**E-mail policy:** All Western University students are required to have an @uwo.ca e-mail account. The instructor will *only* respond to e-mails sent from a Western University account, that clearly identify the sender, and have “POL 9523” in the subject line. The instructor will **not** accept assignments by e-mail.

**Submitting assignments:** All assignments must be submitted *by midnight on the due date*.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). **Note that you will be able to view your Turnitin Originality Report after submitting. You may resubmit at any time before the deadline.**

**Late assignments:** The penalty for late assignments is three percentage points per day (including weekend days). A grade of 80% on an assignment therefore becomes 68% in four days. Assignments more than 10 days late will not be accepted. Extensions due to illness require a medical certificate. If you foresee problems meeting submission deadlines please consult the instructor early; accommodations can always be made with adequate advance notice. This means *at least one week before the deadline*, not the night before the work is due!

**Academic integrity:** To protect and uphold academic integrity in the class, it is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of his or her work if called upon to do so. At a minimum, for every assignment, the sources of all information and ideas must be properly referenced using a standard academic referencing style such as Chicago, APA, or MLA. Failure to properly reference ideas, concepts, and quotations in an assignment that are not your own will result in academic penalties as required by university policy: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>. All upper-year students are expected to have a thorough understanding of the rules and conventions of academic writing. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to reference sources, please visit the Writing Support Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/> or review information at: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>.

## ASSISTANCE

If you are having trouble with the course material or are falling behind in your work, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible. We can only help you if the lines of communication are open.

**Help with writing:** Learning to express ideas clearly is a central goal of the university experience. If academic writing does not come easily to you, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Support Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>.

**Accommodations on medical grounds:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please refer to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> and download a Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/> under the Medical Documentation heading. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Accommodations on religious grounds:** Every effort has been made to avoid scheduling assignment due dates on religious holidays. Please inform the instructor at the beginning of the course if you will be unable to attend class for reason of religious observance.

## READING LIST AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **Class 1 Introduction: Structure, Agency, and Power in the Urban Political Economy**

*Questions:* Where are power and politics in Burgess's classic Chicago School portrayal of the city? How does Imbroscio's portrayal of structure and agency fit within Alford and Friedland's typology of power?

Burgess, Ernest W. 1925. "The Growth of City: An Introduction to a Research Project." Ch. 2 in Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, eds., *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 47–62.

Alford, Robert R. and Roger Friedland. 1985. *Powers of Theory: Capitalism, the State, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. **Introduction (pp. 1–14)**.

Imbroscio, David. 1999. "Structure, Agency, and Democratic Theory." *Polity* 32(1): 45–66.

### **Part I – Locating Power in the City**

### **Class 2 Historical Antecedents: Machine and Reform in North American Urban Politics**

*Questions:* How and why have Canadian and American local politics, local government institutions, and intergovernmental relations historically come to differ? How should we understand the acquisition and exercise of power in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century Canadian and American local governance contexts?

Merton, Robert. 2002 [1957]. "The Latent Functions of the Machine." Ch. 8 in Dennis R. Judd and Paul Kantor, eds., *The Politics of Urban America: A Reader*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson. pp. 101–109.

DiGaetano, Alan. 1988. "The Rise and Development of Urban Political Machines: An Alternative to Merton's Functional Analysis." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 24(2): 242–267.

White, Andrew D. 2002 [1890]. "City Affairs are Not Political." Ch. 10 in Dennis R. Judd and Paul Kantor, eds., *The Politics of Urban America: A Reader*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson. pp. 128–131.

Nelles, H. V., and Christopher Armstrong. 1976. "The Great Fight for Clean Government." *Urban History Review* (2):50–66.

Taylor, Zack. 2014. "If Different Then Why? Explaining the Divergent Political Development of Canadian and American Local Governance." *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 49:53–79.

### Supplemental

Wickett, S. Morley. 1900. "City Government in Canada." *Political Science Quarterly* 15(2). pp. 240–260.

- Higgins, Donald J.H. 1986. *Local and Urban Politics in Canada*. Toronto: Gage. [ch. 6]
- Magnusson, Warren. 1983. "Introduction: The Development of Canadian Urban Government." In A. Sancton and W. Magnusson, eds., *City Politics in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. pp. 3–57.
- Hays, Samuel P. 1964. "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Oct.:157–169.
- Trounstein, Jessica. 2009. "Challenging the Machine–Reform Dichotomy." Ch. 4 in Richardson Dilworth, ed., *The City in American Political Development*. New York: Routledge. pp. 77–97.

### **Class 3 Community Power I: Elite Domination**

*Questions:* What is power according to Mills and Hunter? How is it acquired and exercised? Who are the elites? What role do non-elites play in the making of policy in this model?

- Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford UP. **Chs. 1, 11, 12.**
- Hunter, Floyd. 1953. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press. **Chs. 1, 2, 4, 8.**

#### Supplemental

- Domhoff, G. William, and Hoyt B. Ballard. 1968. *C. Wright Mills and The Power Elite*. Boston: Beacon Press.

### **Class 4 Community Power II: Pluralism**

*Questions:* What is power according to Dahl? How is it acquired and exercised, and by whom? What role do non-elites play in the making of policy? How does the Pluralist perspective on power differ from the Elite Domination perspective? How do Bachrach and Baratz, and also Lukes (as summarized by Young), critique the Pluralist and Elite Domination perspectives? What do you think?

- Dahl, Robert. 2005 [1961]. *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. [Chs. 7–8, 12, 19–28: **The chapters are short!**]
- Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two faces of power." *American Political Science Review* 56(4): 947–52.
- Young, Robert A. 1978. "Review: Steven Lukes's Radical View of Power." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 11(3): 639–649.

## Supplemental

Polsby, Nelson W. 1980. *Community power and political theory: a further look at problems of evidence and inference*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

### **Class 5 Structuralism I: Capitalism, Urban Development, and the Local State**

*Questions:* What is the role of the state (and the local state in particular) in the political economy? How does the logic of capital accumulation drive policy decisions? What is the scope of resistance to this logic?

Pickvance, Christopher. 1995. "Marxist Theories of Urban Politics." Ch. 13 in David Judge, Gerry Stoker, and Harold Wolman, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*. London: SAGE. pp. 253–275.

Harvey, David. 1978. "The Urban Process Under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2(1–3). pp. 101–131.

Logan, John R., and Harvey L. Molotch. 2007. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. 20th anniversary ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. Original edition, 1987. **Chs. 1–3, 6.**

## Supplemental

Magnusson, Warren. 1985. "The Local State in Canada: Theoretical Perspectives." *Canadian Public Administration* 28(Winter): 575–99.

Ferman, Barbara. 1996. *Challenging the Growth Machine: Neighborhood Politics in Chicago and Pittsburgh*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

### **Class 6 Constructivism I: Urban Regime Analysis**

*Question:* What is an urban regime? How successfully does Stone resolve the structure-agency conflict in the earlier debate between structuralist/Marxist and pluralist perspectives?

Stone, Clarence. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946–1988*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press. **[Whole book]**

### **Class 7 Constructivism II: Urban Regime Analysis Continued – Extension and Critique**

*Questions:* How flexible and extensible is the urban regime concept? Does it belong to a particular space and time (early postwar America)?

Stone, Clarence N. 1993. "Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: a political economy approach." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15(1): 1–28. **[pp. 18–26.]**

- Mossberger, Karen, and Gerry Stoker. 2001. "The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory: The Challenge of Conceptualization." *Urban Affairs Review* 36 (6):810–35.
- Stone, Clarence N. 2015. "Reflections on Regime Politics: From Governing Coalition to Urban Political Order." *Urban Affairs Review* 51(1): 101–137.

### Supplemental

- Harding, Alan. 1999. "Review Article: North American Urban Political Economy, Urban Theory and British Research." *British Journal of Political Science* 29:673–698.
- Davies, Jonathan. 2002. "Urban Regime Theory: A Normative-Empirical Critique." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24(1): 1–17.
- Andranovich, Greg, Matthew J. Burbank, and Charle H. Heying. 2001. "Olympic Cities: Lessons Learned from Mega-Event Politics." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23(2): 113–131.

## **Part II – Evaluating the Power of the City**

### **Class 8    Structuralism II: Market Discipline**

*Questions:* The first part of the course was concerned with specifying the acquisition and exercise of power in the municipal context. But what if local power is an illusion? Is the market economy a “prison” from which there is no escape? What are the interests of the limited city, as Peterson puts it? What lessons do Peterson and Weir (in the concluding chapter of *City Limits*) draw from New York City’s fiscal crisis in the 1970s?

- Lindblom, Charles. 1982. “The Market as Prison.” *Journal of Politics* 44(2): 324–336.
- Peterson, Paul. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [**Chs. 1–4, 11**]

### Supplemental

- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of Political Economy* 64 (5):416–24.
- Ostrom, Vincent, Charles M. Tiebout, and Robert Warren. 1961. "The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry." *The American Political Science Review* 55 (4): 831–42.

### **Class 9    Structuralism III: Capitalist Urbanization and Neoliberal Hegemony**

*Questions:* David Harvey is the preeminent Marxist urban geographer. According to him, in way is capital intrinsically urban? What is a “spatial fix,” and how is it functional to the maintenance of capital accumulation? How is Harvey’s similar to or different from Logan and Molotch’s? What is neoliberalism? Do local actors and governments enjoy any meaningful autonomy under capitalist urbanization?

- Harvey, David. 2001. "The Urbanization of Capital." Ch. 1 in *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP. pp. 17–58.
- Harvey, David. 2001. "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'." *Geographische Revue* 3(2): 23–30. <http://geographische-revue.de/gr2-01.htm>
- Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell. 2002. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34 (3):380–404.
- Peck, Jamie. 2012. "Austerity Urbanism." *City* 16 (6):626–655.

### Supplemental

- Arrighi, Giovanni. 2004. "Spatial and Other 'Fixes' of Historical Capitalism." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 10(2): 527–539.
- Christophers, Brett. 2011. "Revisiting the Urbanization of Capital." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101(6): 1347–1364.

## **Class 10 Institutions I: Macro Context and Local Choices**

*Questions:* How do Savitch and Kantor build on urban regime analysis to define the conditions of local autonomy and political agency under global capitalism? Is it convincing?

- Savitch, Hank V., and Paul Kantor. 2002. *Cities in the International Marketplace: The Political Economy of Urban Development in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. **Chs. 1, 2, 5, 9, and 10.**

### Supplemental

- Kantor, Paul. 1987. "The Dependent City." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 22 (4):493–520.
- DiGaetano, Alan, and John S. Klemanski. 1999. *Power and City Governance: Comparative Perspectives on Urban Development*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stoker, Gerry. 2011. "Was Local Governance Such a Good Idea? A Global Comparative Perspective." *Public Administration* 89(1): 15–31.

## **Class 11 Institutions II: National Infrastructures of Urban Governance**

*Questions:* How is Sellers's approach different from Savitch and Kantor's? What is "urban governance"? How should we evaluate local autonomy in each of these authors' models?

- Sellers, Jefferey M. 2002. "The Nation-State and Urban Governance: Toward Multilevel Analysis." *Urban Affairs Review* 37 (5):611–641.
- Sellers, Jefferey M. 2005. "Re-Placing the Nation: An Agenda for Comparative Urban Politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 40 (4):419–445.

Pierre, Jon. 2014. "Can urban regimes travel in time and space? Urban regime theory, urban governance theory, and comparative urban politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 50 (6): 864-889.

Eckersley, Peter. 2017. "A New Framework for Understanding Subnational Policy-making and Local Choice." *Policy Studies* 38(1): 76–90.

### Supplemental

Sellers, Jefferey M. 2002. *Governing from Below: Urban Regions and the Global Economy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, John H. 1986. "Urban Autonomy in Canada: Its Evolution and Decline." In *Power and Place: Canadian Urban Development in the North American Context*, edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, 269–91. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

### **Class 12 Reflection on Methods for the Study of Urban Politics**

*Questions:* Are case studies the only way to study urban politics? What are the limits of comparative analysis of urban politics?

Trounstein, Jessica. 2009. "All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (3):611–18.

Pierre, Jon. 2005. "Comparative Urban Governance: Uncovering Complex Causalities." *Urban Affairs Review* 40 (4):446–62.

Denters, Bas, and Karen Mossberger. 2006. "Building Blocks for a Methodology for Comparative Urban Political Research." *Urban Affairs Review* 41:550–571.

DiGaetano, Alan, and Elizabeth Strøm. 2003. "Comparative Urban Governance: An Integrated Approach." *Urban Affairs Review* 38 (3):356–395.

### Supplemental

Brenner, Neil. 2009. "Is there a politics of 'urban' development? Reflections on the U.S. case." In *The City in American Political Development*, edited by Richardson Dilworth, 121–140. New York: Routledge.

Pierre, Jon. 1999. "Models of Urban Governance: The Institutional Dimension of Urban Politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 34 (3):372–96.