

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
POLITICS 3363 F: URBAN POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

Fall 2010

Instructor: Tim Cobban

Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 pm SSC Room 4103

Course Objectives

In the twenty-first century, the cities that are home to most people in North America and Western Europe are increasingly important sites for political activity. Local governments in cities deal with many of the core issues that affect our lives, ranging from economic development and housing to public transit and urban sprawl. This course aims to give you the tools with which to understand how urban political processes formulate responses to such issues in different local and national settings. Why do many North American cities pursue economic growth above all other goals? How can community groups make their voices heard in cities? Is urban politics in North America and Western Europe truly democratic, or is it dominated by narrow groups of elites? In this course, we will discuss these questions and many more. The course will:

1. Introduce you to key ideas and theories in urban political analysis, and explore how they can be applied in various countries. The course has a special focus on the United States, Canada, Britain, France, but it is not strictly limited to these countries.
2. Examine how contrasting national traditions and institutional structures shape the terrain of urban politics.
3. Investigate the role played in urban politics by politicians, business, and community actors, and compare how they operate in various settings.
4. Give you the opportunity to engage in structured debates of four key urban policy issues – suburban sprawl, the politics of urban planning, sustainable urban transportation, and the rise of the ‘creative city’.
5. Allow you to apply what you are learning to a detailed independent study of urban politics in a major city (or cities) in North America or Western Europe.

Prerequisites

You must have taken at least 1 full course equivalent in Political Science at the 2200 level in order to enroll for this course. Previous courses related to local politics and/or urban studies will be an asset, but are not required.

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

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Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

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B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

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Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western

Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

Course Format and Readings

3363F is a seminar course. This means that *you* control the agenda of the course to a significant degree, by contributing to our weekly discussions of reading. I will usually introduce new topics with a brief lecture, but much of the class time will be reserved for discussion. *You must be committed to reading all of the assigned material before each class.* Advance reading is a necessary prerequisite for doing well in this course (see “Course Evaluation” below), and will help make the seminar discussions exciting and dynamic for all of us.

About half of the required readings for the course are found in the *3363F Reading Package*, which is available from the InPrint office, Room 78, UCC.

The remaining readings are available through online library databases, as noted in the “Course Outline and Reading Schedule” later on in the syllabus.

Course Evaluation

The final grade for this course will be composed of three main elements:

Participation in class discussion and structured debates (25%).

Discussion among students in the class is at the heart of this course. Attendance in every class of the term is mandatory, and you are expected to participate actively in our debates. In the course outline below, you will find discussion questions for reading material for weeks 2 through 7. Please come to class prepared with thoughtful answers to these questions. In weeks 8 through 11, we will engage in a series of structured debates of urban policy issues; details of the debates will be announced later on in the course. You are expected to participate actively in these debates. 5 % of your participation mark will be based on your attendance record, while 15% will be based on the quality of your contribution to discussion.

Writing assignments on your adopted city (30%).

In Week 2 of the course, you will choose an “adopted city” whose politics you will learn about in some detail. You will be expected to bring your knowledge of politics in your city to our class discussions. In many cases, this city will also be a focus for your research paper (see below). Furthermore, between Week 3 and Week 7 of the course, you will write a total of four 2-page (about 500 words) assignments on some aspect of politics in your adopted city. The questions are listed in the course outline below. These assignments will be based on your own research on the Internet and in the library. These assignments must be written up in full sentence form, but you do not need to cite your sources (unless you want to). However, you are strongly encouraged to keep a record of your source materials, as it is likely to be of use to you in writing your research paper. Each assignment is worth 7.5% of your course mark, so the four assignments together are worth 30% of your mark.

Here is a list of suggestions for “adopted” cities. Each student must choose a different one. You can also choose one that is not on the list, provided that you have the instructor’s approval (the main concern is that you choose a city on which there is enough information available):

Halifax	Atlanta	New Orleans
Moscow	London (UK)	Sydney
Vancouver	New York	Chicago
Montreal	Detroit	Paris
Glasgow	Barcelona	Houston

Portland	Los Angeles	Berlin
London (ON)	Miami	Calgary
San Francisco	Baltimore	Winnipeg
Hamilton	Boston	Pittsburgh
Phoenix	Manchester	Dublin
Naples	Edmonton	Prague
Amsterdam	Stockholm	Toronto

Research project

A significant proportion of your grade in this course will be based on your research project. This project is a chance for you to investigate in depth some aspect of urban politics that you are particularly interested in. The research project has two components:

a. Proposal for your research paper (10%)

By Week 7 of the course, you will put together a 2-3 page (about 1000-word) research proposal. The aim of the proposal is to focus your research question and develop a strategy for the rest of your research. Your proposal should include the following elements:

- a. Statement of your research question (see below for details).
- b. Brief discussion of ideas or theories from academic literature that might help you to organize an answer to your research question.
- c. Brief discussion of the empirical evidence that you have uncovered so far, if any.
- d. Plan for completing the research – what information you need to answer your question well, and how / where you plan to look for that information.
- e. Short formal bibliography (about 4-6 sources, not including assigned reading for the course) of the work that you have consulted in designing your project.

b. Research paper (35%)

The final product of your research project will be a 10-12 page (3000-4000 word) paper on your research topic. The paper must be presented in formal format: double spaced with a consistent referencing style (footnotes or endnotes) and a complete bibliography at the end. Full guidelines will be handed out and discussed approximately mid-way through the term.

In order to develop a feasible and interesting research project, you must first devise an explicit *research question* that you plan to address. For many of you, this research question may arise from your work on your adopted city. However, you can also focus on a different city, compare more than one city, or come up with a research question that explores a broad theme or theoretical debate in the literature through multiple case study examples. Here are some examples of possible areas of focus:

- An important and / or controversial policy issue faced by municipal government in your adopted city, or another city (or cities) that interest you. Issues include housing and homelessness, city center redevelopment, economic development, historic preservation, suburban sprawl, urban transport, and many others.
- An important urban political event or development in one or more cities. Such events include the rise of a new community movement, the reform of municipal structures, and others.
- An analytical theme raised by the theoretical literature we have read in the course – such as the power of business in urban politics, the relationship between political institutions and policy outcomes in cities, and many others.

Whatever area of focus you choose, the task of your research question is to ask *how* or *why* something in that area of focus happens. The task of your research project is to develop an answer to this question that draws on the theory that we have looked at in the course, and provides empirical evidence from one or more cities.

Note on deadlines for written work:

All written work is due in class on the due date. Written work handed in late will be subject to a penalty of 2% for each day past the deadline, weekends included. I cannot guarantee that written work slipped under my office door other otherwise delivered outside class will be received and read. The late penalty will be wholly or partly waived in exceptional circumstances, usually restricted to medical or family emergencies.

Instructor Contact

I encourage you to bring any questions or concerns about course material, requirements or assignments to me, and I will be happy to give you my time. My office hours will take place at a time to be announced in class, in SSC room 4217. Questions or concerns can also be sent by e-mail to: tcobban@uwo.ca. I will usually respond within 24 hours, except on weekends. You can also phone me at (519) 661 2111 ext. 84929.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

Notes:

- *The assigned readings are best read in the order listed on the schedule below.*
- *Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are included in the course reading package. Remaining readings are available through the electronic resources listed.*
- *Readings are subject to change if the instructor finds it necessary.*

Part I: Urban Politics in Comparative Perspective

Week 1 (Sept 14): Introduction: Why is Urban Politics Important?

Our first session will include an overview of the structure, aims and requirements of the course, and will give us an opportunity to begin getting to know each other. The instructor will also present some introductory thoughts on what urban politics is and why it might be important. The reading listed below can be read after the class; in subsequent weeks, however, you are expected to complete the readings in advance of the class.

Bradford, Neil. 2002. Excerpt from “Why Cities Matter: Policy Research Perspectives for Canada”. Canadian Policy Research Networks Paper #F23; read only the Introduction (pp.1-13, following the Table of Contents).
Availability: http://www.cprn.org/documents/12567_en.pdf 6

Week 2 (Sept 21): Local and Urban Politics: Differing National Traditions

* Choose your “adopted” city *

- * Keating, Michael. 1991. “Systems of Local Government: Culture and Structure”. In *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, pp. 13-35.
- * Wolman, Harold. 1995. “Local Government Institutions and Democratic Governance”. In David Judge, Gerry Stoker and Harold Wolman, eds. *Theories of Urban Politics*. London: Sage, pp. 135-159.

Discussion questions:

1. Do the values underlying local politics in Canada have more in common with those in the USA or Britain? Think of evidence to support your view.
2. Does giving cities more autonomous powers and resources make for better-quality urban government? Why or why not?

Week 3 (Sept 28): Governing Growing Cities: Fragmentation, Consolidation, or Regional Governance?

- * Savitch, Hank and Ron Vogel. 2009. “Regionalism and Urban Politics”. In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds. *Theories of Urban Politics (2nd ed)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 106-124.
- Kantor, Paul. 2006. “Regionalism and reform: A comparative perspective on Dutch urban politics”. *Urban Affairs Review* 41(6): 800-829.
Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which model of metropolitan organization – fragmented, consolidated, or regionalist – do you think is most appropriate for large Canadian cities, and why?
2. Should people in city-regions be allowed to decide what model of metropolitan organization they want to have, or should senior levels of government impose the most appropriate model?

Writing assignment on your adopted city:

Find out some basic facts about your city. What is the population? Does a single municipality cover the whole urban area, or is it fragmented? What are some of the main areas of policy responsibility for local government in your city? Using news sources, identify a current burning urban political issue in your city.

Part II: Who Governs and How? Local Actors in Urban Politics

Week 4 (Oct 5): Political Representatives and Political Leaders

- * Keating, Michael. 1991. “Parties and Elections”. In *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, pp. 43-49.
- * Stone, Clarence. 2008. “Political Leadership in Urban Politics”. In Marion Orr and Valerie C. Johnson, eds. *Power in the City: Clarence Stone and the Politics of Inequality*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, pp. 136-157.

Leach, Steve and David Wilson. 2004. "Urban Elites in England: New Models of Executive Governance". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28(1): pp. 134-149.
Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Discussion questions:

1. In your view, should urban politics be partisan or not? Why or why not?
2. Can the personality of political leaders make a difference in urban politics, or are leaders bound by the powers and resources at their disposal?

Writing assignment on your adopted city:

How are elections structured in your city? Does local politics have parties? If your city has a mayor, what are the mayor's powers? Who is the current mayor? What are some of the mayor's main policy priorities / initiatives? Is he/she strong leader or not (however you choose to define 'strong leader')? If the mayor does *not* play a strong leading role in your city, who leads in urban policy matters?

Week 5 (Oct 12): Business and Pro-Growth Interests

Molotch, Harvey. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place". *The American Journal of Sociology* 82(2): 309-332.

Availability: JSTOR Arts & Sciences 1 database on Western Libraries website.

Molotch, Harvey and Serena Vicari. 1988. "Three Ways to Build: The Development Process in the United States, Japan, and Italy". *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 24(2), pp. 188-214.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Discussion questions:

1. Do you find the "growth machine" idea convincing? Why or why not?
2. Why are business actors often more visible in American urban politics than in urban politics elsewhere?

Writing assignment on your adopted city:

Choose an urban political issue in which business actors have been involved in recent years. Which business actors have been interested in the issue and why? What role have they played in addressing it?

Week 6 (Oct 19): Community Activism and Urban Social Movements

* Rabrenovic, Gordana. 2009. "Urban Social Movements". In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds. *Theories of Urban Politics (2nd ed)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 239-254.

Goetz, Edward and Mara Sidney. 1994. "Revenge of the property owners: Community development and the politics of property". *Journal of Urban Affairs* 16(4): 319-344.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Discussion questions:

1. What are some differences between 'community activism' as discussed by Goetz and Sidney, and 'urban social movements' as discussed by Rabrenovic?
2. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that affect whether a community group or urban social movement achieves its goals?

Writing assignment on your adopted city:

Choose an example of community mobilizing in your city in recent years. What issue did citizens mobilize around and why? How successful were they in achieving their goals?

Week 7 (Oct. 26): Bringing it Together: Urban Regime Theory

*** Research proposal due in class ***

Stone, Clarence. 1993. "Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach". *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15(1): 1-28.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

John, Peter and Alistair Cole. 1998. "Urban Regimes and Local Governance in Britain and France: Policy Adaptation and Coordination in Leeds and Lille". *Urban Affairs Review* 33(3), pp. 382-404.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Discussion questions:

1. How useful is urban regime theory outside the American context?
2. National and state/provincial governments often get involved in aspects of urban policy, but regime theory does not explicitly address them. How might a consideration of intergovernmental relationships change our understanding of public-private policy coordination in cities?

Part III: Selected Issues in Urban Politics

Week 8 (Nov 2): Disaster or American Dream? Suburbanization in North America

* Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck. 2000. "Chapter 1: What is Sprawl and Why?" In *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point Press, pp. 3-20.

* Nivola, Pietro S. 1999. "Chapter 4: So What?" In *Laws of the Landscape: How Policies Shape Cities in Europe and America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, pp. 35-51.

Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. 2006. "Places to Grow: A Guide to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe".

Availability: <http://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/FINAL-GUIDE-ENG.pdf>

Week 9 (Nov 9): Cities for Citizens: The Transformation of Planning Practices

* Leo, Christopher. 2002. "Urban Development: Planning Aspirations and Political Realities". In Edmund P. Fowler and David Siegel, eds. *Urban Policy Issues: Canadian Perspectives*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, pp. 215-236.

Grant, Jill. 2006. "The Ironies of New Urbanism". *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15(2), pp. 158-174.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Week 10 (Nov. 16): Urban Environmental Policies and the Challenge of Transport

* McAllister, Mary Louise. 1995. "Local Environmental Politics: Principles in Conflict". In James Lightbody, ed. *Canadian Metropolitics: Governing Our Cities*. Toronto: Copp Clark, pp. 269-289.

Metrolinx. 2008. "Sustainable Transportation: An Overview".

Availability: <http://www.metrolinx.com/docs/1/WhitePapers/WhitePaperBrochureMay08f.pdf>

Week 11 (Nov. 23): "Creative Cities" and Urban Policy

Florida, Richard. 2003. "Cities and the Creative Class". *City & Community* 2(1): 3-19.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Ponzini, Davide and Ugo Rossi. 2010. "Becoming a Creative City: The Entrepreneurial Mayor, Network Politics, and the Promise of an Urban Renaissance". *Urban Studies* 47(5): 1037-1057.

Availability: Scholars Portal on Western Libraries website.

Week 12 (Nov. 30): TBA

Week 13 (Dec 7): Research Roundtable

*** Research paper due in class ***

In this final class, we will discuss the interesting things that you have all found out in your research projects and relate these to the themes of the course.

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You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

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