

Western University
Department of Political Science

Power in the City

Political Science 3363F
Fall 2023

Instructor: Martin Horak
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Office Hours: Wed. 2pm – 3pm (in person), or by appointment (in person or on Zoom)
Physical Office: SSC 7237

Class Time and Location: see OWL.

Course Description

Most people now live in cities. As a result, much of politics is profoundly urban in character. It takes place in cities, it is shaped by urban processes, and it responds to distinctly urban problems, ranging from local economic development and housing inequality to public transit and immigrant integration. This course aims to introduce you to leading theories of urban politics, which we will apply to urban political processes in Canada, the United States, and Western Europe. Our main focus will be on *local* government in cities, but we will also examine the ways in which urban politics is inherently multi-level in character, and how other levels of government help to shape responses to urban policy issues. We will discuss how contrasting national traditions and institutional structures shape the terrain of urban politics; we will investigate the role played in urban politics at the local level by politicians, business, and community actors, and compare how they operate in various settings; and we will focus on two specific urban political issues that the class will select in discussion with the instructor.

The course will also give you the opportunity to learn about politics in an ‘**adopted city**’ of your choice, and to conduct an independent research project in which you analyze some aspect of urban politics in your ‘adopted city’ and/or another city or cities of your choice, using theories and concepts drawn from the course.

Prerequisites

You must have taken at least 1.0 full course equivalent in Political Science at the 2200 level to enroll for this course. This course is useful preparation for **POL4210 Globalization and Urban Politics**.

Course Format

This is a mixed format course. Each class will feature a lecture, but I will also periodically open up the class for discussion; there will be opportunities for online discussion as well. The reading load for the course is not heavy, but some of the readings are challenging, and **you must be committed to reading all the assigned material before each class**. Advance reading is a

prerequisite for doing well (see “Course Evaluation” below). *All readings will be posted under “Resources” on our course OWL site unless otherwise noted. There is no textbook.*

Note also that this course has an **extensive writing component**. We build from small, simple assignments about your “adopted city” (see below) to a full research essay; I will give you feedback along the way. Students in previous years have found that this format has been very helpful to developing their writing skills, but you must be prepared for the volume of writing.

The course also has an element of **curriculum co-design**: during the week of October 18th, students will collectively choose two topics in urban politics that we will engage with in Weeks 11 and 12 of the course (Nov 29 and Dec 6).

Course Requirements

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

1. *Participation (active engagement with course material) (15%).*

Active engagement with course material is an important part of this course. You are expected to be at every class; attendance will be taken and is worth 5% of your course grade. Each week except the first week, I will post **discussion questions** on the OWL site. Please come to class prepared with some thoughtful reflections on them (as well as with other thoughts or questions that you may have). While I set aside time in class to focus on the discussion questions, since the class is fairly large, you may not always get a chance to participate in class; in addition, some of you may be less comfortable participating than others. So I have also set up a discussion forum on OWL where you can post responses to the discussion questions, and react to responses that others have posted. This is an alternative way of engaging with the course material. Active engagement in class and/or on the Forum is worth 10% of your course grade.

2. *Writing assignments on your adopted city (35%).*

On September 20th in class, you will choose an “adopted city” whose politics you will learn about in detail. You will be expected to bring your knowledge of politics in your city to our class discussions. Between Week 3 and Week 6 of the course, you will write **three** assignments on some aspect of politics in your adopted city. These assignments will respond to factual questions about politics in your city. I will post the questions on OWL one week before the day in which they are due. The first two assignments will each be about 500 words long, and each will be worth 10% of your grade. The third assignment will be about 1000 words long and will be worth 15% of your grade.

Below you will find a list of suggestions for “adopted” cities. You can also choose one that is not on the list, *with my prior approval* (the main concern is that you choose a city on which there is enough information available):

Amsterdam	Atlanta	New Orleans	Stockholm	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
Ottawa	Boston	Pittsburgh	Phoenix	Manchester	Toronto

3. Research project (50%)

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. You may select an aspect of urban politics in your ‘adopted city’ and investigate it in depth using concepts from the course; or you may compare aspects of urban politics across two or more different cities. The research project has two components:

a. Proposal for your research paper (10%)

By **November 15th**, you will put together a 500 to 750-word research proposal. The aim of the proposal is to focus your research question and develop a strategy for the rest of your research. Full guidelines will be handed out mid-way through the term.

b. Research paper (40%)

The final product of your research project will be a 3000 to 4000-word paper on your research topic. The paper must be double spaced with a consistent academic referencing style and a complete bibliography at the end. Full guidelines will be handed out mid-way through the term. The final paper will be due on **December 11th**.

Course Policies

Submitting assignments: All written work should be submitted via the course’s OWL site. Work handed in late will be subject to a penalty of 2% for each day past the deadline, weekends included. 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 two days before the deadline*. While I am generally willing to grant brief 1 to 2-day extensions for reasonable cause if you ask me in time, requests for longer extensions must go through Academic Counselling. I do not grant extensions requested after the due date!

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. 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/>

Instructor contact: I encourage you to bring any questions or concerns about course material, requirements or assignments to me. My office hours and contact for appointments are listed above. Questions or concerns can also be sent my e-mail to: mhorak@uwo.ca. I will usually respond within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

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/>

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept 13): Introduction: Cities and Urban Politics

Our first session will include an overview of the structure, aims and requirements of the course. We will also discuss what a ‘city’ is, what urban politics is, and why it is important. Both to our daily lives, and as an object of study in political science.

Wirth, Louis. 1938. “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” *American Journal of Sociology* 44(1). Read excerpt, pp. 1-18.

John, Peter. 2009. “Why Study *Urban Politics*?” In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., pp. 17–23. Los Angeles: Sage.

Part I: Urban Political Institutions in Comparative Perspective

Week 2 (Sept 20): 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*, pp. 13-35. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

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.

Week 3 (Sept 27): Local Elections and Political Parties

Keating, Michael. 1991. "Parties and Elections." In *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France*, pp.43-49. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Moore, Aaron. 2017. "The Potential and Consequences of Municipal Electoral Reform." *IMFG Perspectives* No. 20

https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/78793/1/IMFG_perspectives_20_electoral_reform_AaronMoore_Oct_17_2017.pdf.

**** Short Writing Assignment #1 due Sept. 27 ****

Week 4 (Oct 4): Local Political Leadership

Greasley, Stephen and Gerry Stoker. 2009. "Urban Political Leadership." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. pp. 125–136. Los Angeles: Sage.

Sancton, Andrew. 2015. "Mayors and Local Political Leadership" in *Canadian Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Oxford. Excerpts: "Models of Mayoral Leadership" (pp. 239–247) and "How Mayors Become Powerful" (pp. 232–236) — in that order.

Wilson, Kerissa. 2022. "What does a 'strong mayor' system mean for Toronto?" CTV News, July 26.

Access: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/what-does-a-strong-mayor-system-mean-for-toronto-1.6002954>

Taylor, Zack and Martin Horak. 2022. "Strong mayor powers in Ontario are a gross violation of democratic principles." Policy Options, December 16.

Access: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/strong-mayor-powers-in-ontario-are-a-gross-violation-of-democratic-principles/>

**** Short Writing Assignment #2 due Oct 4 ****

Part II: Power in the City

Week 5 (Oct 11): Local Democracies or Growth Machines: Who Governs the City?

Harding, Alan. 2009. "The History of Community Power." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage. Excerpt: pp. 27–39.

Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56 (4): 947–952.

Week 6 (Oct 18): 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., pp. 239-254. Los Angeles: Sage.

Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. 2019. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1): 28–46.

Then read at least ONE of the following articles (your choice; you can read both, of course):

Clayton, Dewey. 2018. "Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A Comparative Analysis of Two Social Movements in the United States." *Journal of Black Studies* 49(5): 448–80.

Tattersall, Amanda, and Kurt Iveson. 2022. "People power strategies in contemporary housing movements." *International Journal of Housing Policy* 22(2): 251-277.

*** Short Writing Assignment #3 due Oct. 18 ***

*** Students Choose Course Topics for Weeks 11 – 12 ***

Week 9: No Class – Meet the Prof Day on Oct 23

In Week 9 there will be no Wednesday class. Instead, Martin Horak will be available from 9am to 3pm on Monday October 23 – you are encouraged to book a one-on-one chat with him.

*** Fall Reading Week (Oct 30 – Nov 3) ***

Week 8 (Nov 8): Urban Regimes and Governing Capacity

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

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.

Part III: Urban Politics Beyond the Local

Week 9 (Nov 15): Governing Metropolitan Areas

Savitch, Hank and Ron Vogel. 2009. "Regionalism and Urban Politics." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., pp. 106-124. Los Angeles: Sage.

Kantor, Paul. 2006. "Regionalism and Reform: A Comparative Perspective on Dutch Urban Politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 41 (6): 800-829.

**** Research Paper Proposal due November 15 ****

Week 10 (Nov 22): Cities in Multi-Level Political Systems

Taylor, Zack and Neil Bradford. 2020. "Governing Canadian Cities." In Markus Moos et al., eds., *Canadian Cities in Transition: Understanding Contemporary Urbanism*, 6th ed., pp. 33-50. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Horak, Martin. 2012. "Conclusion: Understanding Multi-Level Governance in Canada's Cities." In Martin Horak and Robert Young, eds., *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 339-370.

Good, Kristin. 2019. "Municipalities Deserve More Autonomy and Respect." *Policy Options*, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2019/municipalities-deserve-more-autonomy-and-respect/>.

Part IV: Selected Issues in Urban Politics

Weeks 11 – 12 (Nov 29, Dec 6): Topics to be chosen in class on Oct 18

**** Final Papers due on OWL December 11th ****