

Western University · Dept. of Political Science

Urban Political Economy

Political Science 9524

Fall 2019

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:30am, or by appointment

Class time and location: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30pm, SSC 4105

What is political power? Who has it? How is it acquired? How is its use enabled or constrained? How are political and economic power inter-related? This course takes up these foundational questions in the urban context. We will survey classic and contemporary theories of urban political economy. The first half of the course examines perspectives on the acquisition and exercise of power *in* the city. The second half considers the power *of* the city — in an increasingly borderless world, is there such a thing as an autonomous local politics, or must urban political economy be understood only in relation to broader forces? How do the institutional layering and fragmentation that characterize urban governance shape the exercise of political power?

This is an advanced, graduate-level course with a reading load (average of 150 pages / week) and expectations to match. The focus is on *theoretical debates and foundational readings*, rather than on applied literature (although you may choose to explore in your term paper empirical applications of theoretical approaches discussed in class). It is a required core course for all PhD students intending to write a Comprehensive Exam in local / urban politics. We will also use the terrain of urban political economy research to discuss the methodological challenges all political scientists face as they study the acquisition and use of power.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will:

- be familiar with leading theories of urban political economy,
- have sharpened your analytic and argumentative skills through classroom discussions and assignments.

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 (20%): Lively, informed and thoughtful discussion is at the heart of this course. You will be evaluated on the preparation and thoughtfulness that you bring to your in-class discussion contributions.

Seminar leadership (10%): You will lead a one-hour seminar discussion once during the term. On your chosen day, you will distribute a (maximum two-page) summary of the reading or readings you have prepared to the class. You will briefly (ten minutes max.) present some key points from the reading, and then you will motivate discussion by posing discussion questions that you have prepared, and by moderating and participating in the discussion.

Two readings summaries (10%): You will choose two readings from weeks other than your seminar week, and will prepare and submit via OWL a one-page summary of each reading.

Final paper (60%): Building on the course material, you will write an *argumentative essay* that critically engages with 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 (1-2 pages) paper proposal for instructor feedback on or before October**

16. Masters students will submit a maximum 20-page paper. Doctoral students will submit a maximum 30-page paper. **Papers are due on Monday, December 9.**

Both your abstract and your paper will be submitted via the OWL assignment submission system. Further details on the paper assignment will be discussed early in the term.

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 your Western University account. The instructor will *not* accept assignments by e-mail.

Late assignments: The penalty for late assignments is two percentage points per day (including weekend days). 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.

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/>.

Communication with the instructor: Please do not hesitate to e-mail me or come to office hours if you would like to discuss course material. I will make every effort to respond to e-mails within 24 hours (weekends excepted). If you are having trouble with the course material or are falling behind in your work, please contact me as soon as possible.

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/ 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

Questions: Where are power and politics in Burgess' and Wirth's classic portrayals of the city? How do the two accounts differ in this respect? 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.

Wirth, Louis. 1938. "Urbanism as a Way of Life". *American Journal of Sociology* 44(1): 1-24.

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 – Power in the City

Class 2 Power and History: The Development of Urban Politics in Canada and the United States

Questions: How and why did Canadian and American local politics, local government institutions, and intergovernmental relations historically come to differ? What role did power – and whose power? – play in the evolution of these differences?

- 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*, 3rd ed. New York: Pearson. pp. 101–109.
- 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*, 3rd ed. New York: Pearson. pp. 128–131.
- Trounstine, 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Class 3 The Community Power Debate: Elitism vs Pluralism

Questions: What is power according to Hunter? How is it acquired and exercised? Who are the elites? How does the pluralist perspective on power differ from the elite domination perspective? How do Bachrach and Baratz critique the pluralist and elite domination perspectives?

- Hunter, Floyd. 1953. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press. Chs 1 and 4.
- Dahl, Robert. 2005 [1961]. *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*, 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. Chs. 7–8, 10–12, 19–27 (the chapters are short).
- Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. “Two faces of power.” *American Political Science Review* 56(4): 947–52.

REVISIONS DONE TO HERE

Class 4 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? Why do pluralist and structuralist writers make such radically different claims about the nature and use of political power in the urban setting?

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.

Class 5 Urban Regime Analysis

Questions: 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. Read whole book.

Class 6 Regimes and Governance in Comparative Perspective

Questions: Does the urban regime concept belong to a particular space and time? Is the approach underlying the regime concept more generally applicable than the concept itself? How is the concept of governance different from the concept of regime?

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

Mossberger, Karen, and Gerry Stoker. 2001. "The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory: The Challenge of Conceptualization." *Urban Affairs Review* 36 (6):810–35.

Stoker, Gerry. 1998. "Governance as Theory: Five Propositions." *International Social Science Journal* 50 (1): 17–28.

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 II – The Power of the City

Class 7 Power and Metropolitan Governance

Questions: How does fragmented (or “polycentric”, or specialized) metropolitan governance affect the exercise of political power in the urban arena? Is the development of a fully unified or coordinated metropolitan governance a realistic goal? Why or why not?

- 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.
- Stephens, G. Ross, and Nelson Wikstrom. 2000. *Metropolitan Government and Governance: Theoretical Perspectives, Empirical Analysis, and the Future*. New York: Oxford University Press. Read Ch. 2.
- Norris, Donald F. 2001. "Prospects for Regional Governance under the New Regionalism: Economic Imperatives Versus Political Impediments." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 25 (3):557–71.
- Mullin, Megan. 2008. "The Conditional Effect of Specialized Governance on Public Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(1): 125-141.
- Sancton, Andrew. 2005. "The Governance of Metropolitan Areas in Canada." *Public Administration and Development* 25 (4):317-27.

Class 8 City Limits and National Systems

Questions: Is local power an illusion? What are the interests of the limited city, as Paul Peterson calls them? How does Savitch and Kantor’s account of local agency differ from Peterson’s? How do they build on the regime approach in their work? How is Sellers’ approach different from Savitch and Kantor’s?

- Goldsmith, M. 1995. ‘Autonomy and City Limits’, in D. Judge, G. Stoker and H. Wolman (eds), *Theories of Urban Politics*. London: Sage, pp. 228–52.
- Peterson, Paul. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read Chs. 1–3.
- 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.
- Sellers, Jefferey M. 2005. "Re-Placing the Nation: An Agenda for Comparative Urban Politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 40 (4):419–45.

Class 9 Structuralism II: Capitalist Urbanization and Neoliberalism

Questions: What is a “spatial fix,” and how is it functional to the maintenance of capital accumulation? How is Harvey’s conception similar to or different from Logan and Molotch’s? What is neoliberalism? Do local actors and governments enjoy any meaningful autonomy under capitalist urbanization? How do the Marxist accounts you’ve read for this week differ from Savitch and Kantor’s account of local political agency in a global marketplace?

Harvey, David. 1989. “From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation of urban governance in late capitalism”. *Geografiska Annaler* 71B, 3–17.

Harvey, David. 2001. “Globalization and the ‘Spatial Fix’.” *Geographische Revue* 3(2): 23–30.

Peck, Jamie, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner. 2009. “Neoliberal urbanism: Models, moments, mutations.” *SAIS Review* 23: 49-66.

Class 10 Urban Self-Government

Questions: Why does Sancton argue that city-regions cannot be self-governing? Do you find his argument convincing? What is the locus of political power in his account?

Sancton, Andrew. 2008 *The Limits of Boundaries: Why City-Regions Cannot be Self-Governing*. Montreal: MQUP.

Class 11 Multilevel Governance

Questions: If urban governing power is distributed across multiple levels of government, what does this mean for its exercise? Are you convinced by Sancton’s argument that cities cannot be self-governing?

Hooghe, Lisbet and Gary Marks. 2003. “Unraveling the Central State, but How? Types of Multi-level Urban Governance.” *American Political Science Review* 96(2): pp. 233–243.

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.

Horak, Martin. 2013. "State Rescaling in Practice: Urban Governance Reform in Toronto." *Urban Research & Practice* 6 (3):311–28.

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.