

Western University  
Department of Political Science  
**Globalization and Urban Politics**  
Political Science 4210F / 9755A  
Fall 2020

**Instructor:** Martin Horak  
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**Office Hours:** by appointment on Zoom

**Class Time and Location:** Thursdays, 1:30 – 3:30pm (max. – sessions may be shorter) – Zoom

### **Course Description**

Cities have long been engines of social and economic change. Over the past thirty years, cities around the world have been focal points for globalization and have in turn been transformed by it. *How social and economic change affects city politics at the local level is the central theme of this course.* How can – and how do – local governments respond to changing urban economic conditions, the cultural diversification of urban populations, increasing social inequality, the need for new infrastructure, and a host of other changes and challenges? What do they do when they lack the powers and resources to respond on their own? When and how urban politics help to overcome social and economic divisions, and when and how does it make them worse? These are the kinds of questions that we will be discussing. The primary empirical focus is on Canadian and American cities, but in broader and global comparative perspective.

The course begins with five weeks of foundational material. We will discuss the institutions and processes through which cities are governed; what globalization is and how it has re-shaped cities; and how and why local governments have responded differently to the challenge of thriving in a global economy. Some of the reading may be review for those of you who have taken other urban politics courses, but we will synthesize it in new and different ways.

During weeks 6 through 12 we will examine a series of thematic issues and/or case studies of urban politics and governance in a global age. **The syllabus for five of these twelve weeks is co-designed by the students and the instructor** (see below).

### **Prerequisites and Antirequisites**

You must have taken at least 1 full course equivalent in Political Science at the 2200 level in order to enroll. POL3363F/G (Power in the City), while not a prerequisite, is *particularly useful* as background. Other useful courses include POL2140A (Globalization) and GEO2460 (Intro to Urban Development). POL3364 F/G and POL3368E are antirequisites for this course.

## Course Format and Readings

This is a mixed-format course. For many classes – especially those near the beginning of the course, which discuss foundational conceptual and theoretical material – I will post short lecture segments in advance on OWL, which students will be expected to view before our regular Zoom class time. I will briefly review lecture material at the start of each Zoom class. Classes themselves will be primarily devoted to discussion, both as a whole class, and in small-group breakout meetings. This means that you control the agenda of the course to a significant degree by contributing to our discussion in regular class time.

In addition, while the Covid pandemic prevents us from doing a collective field trip as a class, one course assignment requires you to walk around a downtown area of your choice and document what you see in a blog post with photos.

You will also control the agenda of the course by choosing topics for Weeks 7-11 of the course (five weeks in total). We will do this during the third class. See course outline and reading schedule below for a list of possible topics.

4210G / 9755B is a reading-based course. The reading load is substantial, and all readings are mandatory. *You must be committed to reading the assigned material before each class.* Advance reading is a prerequisite for doing well in the course. All readings will be posted on the course's OWL site unless otherwise noted. No purchase of materials is necessary.

## Course Evaluation

The final grade for this course will be composed of the following elements:

### 1. Participation in class discussion (15%).

In a reading-based course such as this one, lively class discussion is what brings ideas to life and helps to produce a valuable learning experience for all. *Attendance in every Zoom class of the term is mandatory*, and you are expected to participate as actively as you are able in discussion and debate. I will take attendance at the start of each class and will subtract 1% from your participation grade for each unexcused absence.

Starting with Week 2, I will post **discussion questions** for each week's material on OWL one week before the class. Please come to class with some thoughtful reactions. We will discuss these questions as a whole class, or in small groups in Zoom breakout rooms.

### 2. Downtown redevelopment blog (15%).

Following our Week 6 discussion of downtown redevelopment, you will conduct a self-guided exploration of a downtown near you. I will develop a list of things that you will look for evidence of – physical transformation processes, social and economic challenges, redevelopment processes, etc. You will document your discoveries in photos and post them with commentary to a blog page that I will develop. You may need to do a

bit of additional research about your local downtown for this purpose. The post will be due by October 22. Detailed guidelines will be posted closer to the assignment date.

**3. Two short reading response essays (15% each; 30% total).**

During the course, you will write two short essays of about 1500 words each. You will write one short essay during each half of the course. In Week 1, you will choose either Week 3, 4, or 5 as your first short essay week. In Week 4, you will choose one week from Weeks 7 to 11 in which to write your remaining short essay.

In each essay, you will be asked to analyze that week's reading material based on a question developed by the instructor. The instructor will post the essay question one week ahead of the due date, along with the discussion questions for that week (see above). The essay will be due on OWL immediately before the class in which the relevant material is discussed. Your short essays will present a well developed argument that responds to the assigned question. They will be written in standard academic format, with citations and a (short) reference list. Research beyond the class readings is not necessary for these essays, although you may choose to do some.

**4. Research project (10% proposal, 30% final paper; 40% total).**

Your research project is a chance for you to investigate in depth some aspect of urban politics or policy that you are particularly interested in. You will devise your own *research question*. You should develop and explanatory research question about *how or why* something happens the way that it does in your area of interest. Your paper will then answer your question by bringing together academic work on your subject with examples from one or more cities.

There are two elements to your research project:

- a) By Week 9 of the course (November 12), you will develop a research proposal of about 1000 words. The proposal will lay out your research question and your plan for completing your research. It is worth 10% of your course grade.
- b) At the end of the course, you will hand in a 4000 to 5000-word research paper in which you develop a well-crafted answer to your research question. The paper is worth 35% of your grade and is due on December 7 (Monday after last class).

Detailed guidelines for the proposal and the paper will be handed out in Week 4 or 5.

## Graduate Student (POL9755) Requirements and Evaluation

Graduate students will have **additional reading and assignment requirements**, as follows:

1. In place of the two short reading response essays, graduate students will write two longer (about 3000 words) critical response papers. Each of these papers will engage with an *additional* set of 7 – 10 academic readings. These readings will be set by the instructor, based on a conversation with each graduate student about their research interests. The first paper will be due on October 8; the second on November 19.
2. Final course papers will be longer – approximately 6000 – 7000 words.
3. All writing by graduate students will be evaluated in accordance with standards of quality appropriate to the stage of education of each student (ie, MA or PhD candidate).

### 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. 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*.

**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 will be held on Zoom by appointment. Questions or concerns can also be sent my e-mail to: [mhorak@uwo.ca](mailto: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/>

**Accommodations on medical grounds:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office 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.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE**

- *The assigned readings are best read in the order listed on the schedule below.*
- *All readings will be posted on the course's OWL website.*

### **Part I: Globalization and the New Urban Governance: Theoretical Foundations**

#### ***Week 1 (Sept 10): Introduction: An Urbanizing World***

Soja, Edward and J. Miguel Kanai. 2007. "The Urbanization of the World." In Ricky Burdett and Dejan Sudjic, eds., *Endless City*. London: Phaidon. 54–69.

We will also discuss the structure and requirements of the course.

\*\* students choose first short essay week (3 – 5) \*\*

#### ***Week 2 (Sept 17): Institutions, Democracy, and Urban Politics***

Sellers, Jefferey, Anders Lidstrom and Yooil Bae. 2020. Ch. 1, "Introduction: Taking Local Institutions Seriously." *Multilevel Democracy: How Local Institutions and Civil Society Shape the Modern State*, pp. 1-18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keating, Michael. 1991. Ch. 1, "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.

England, Kim and John Mercer. 2006. "Canadian Cities in Continental Context: Global and Continental Perspectives in Canadian Urban Development". In Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion, eds. *Canadian Cities in Transition* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), pp. 24-39. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Week 3 (Sept 24): Globalization and Cities: Mechanisms and Consequences**

Sassen, Saskia. 2005. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept". *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11: 27-43.

Borja, Jordi and Manuel Castells. 1997. "Chapter 2: The Impact of Globalization on the Spatial and Social Structure of Cities". In *Local & Global: Management of Cities in the Information Age*. London: Earthscan, pp. 16-44. NB: You do not need to read the inset case study boxes.

\*\* class chooses topics for weeks 7 – 11 \*\*

**Week 4 (Oct 1): Urban Governance in a Global Age**

Stoker, Gerry. 1998. "Governance as Theory: Five Propositions". *International Social Science Journal* 155, pp. 17-28.

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

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

\*\* students choose second short essay week (7 – 11) \*\*

**Week 5 (Oct 8): Urban Growth and Development: Local Strategies in a Global Era**

Savitch, H.V. and Paul Kantor. 2002. "Chapter 2: Toward a Theory of Urban Development". In *Cities in the International Marketplace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 29-54.

Levine, Marc V. 2000. "'A Third World City in the First World': Social Inclusion, Racial Inequality, and Sustainable Development in Baltimore, Maryland". In Mario Polese and Richard Stren, eds. *The Social Sustainability of Cities*. Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, pp. 123-156.

Florida, R., 2003. "Cities and the creative class." *City & community*, 2(1), pp.3-19.

\*\* graduate students: first critical response paper due \*\*

**Part II: Issues and Cases in Urban Politics and Governance**

**Week 6: (Oct 15): Downtown Redevelopment in Mid-Sized Cities: London, Ontario in Comparative Perspective**

Strom, Elizabeth, and Robert Kerstein. 2017. "The homegrown downtown: redevelopment in Asheville, North Carolina." *Urban Affairs Review* 53.3: 495-521.

City of London Reports (to read selectively for an overall sense of contents):

2015. *Our Move Forward: London's Downtown Plan*

2019. *State of the Downtown 2017*

2019. *Making a Difference: Core Area Action Plan*

Special guest: **John Fleming**, former Director of Planning for the City of London

***Weeks 7 to 11 (Oct 22, Oct 29, Nov 12, Nov 19, Nov 26): Selected Topics***

As noted earlier, topics for these five weeks will be selected by students in Week 4. I propose the following list of topics to choose from, but we could add others if you have good ideas:

*Race and Urban Politics in the United States and Canada* – There is a rich literature on how local politics has reproduced racial inequality in the US, and we could explore some of this work and how it helps us to understand the current crisis of race and local policing.

*From Gentrification to Homelessness: The Urban Politics of Housing Inequality* – Socially polarized cities mean housing options are also polarized by wealth, creating policy problems such as unaffordable housing and the displacement of poorer residents by gentrifiers. We could dig into some of the rich literature on urban housing politics and policy.

*Urban Transit and Transportation* – For this topic, we could focus on various areas, including the politics of big transportation projects like freeways and subways, the policy challenge of environmental sustainability, and transit during Covid, among others.

*Public Space and Private Space in Cities* – In an age of globalization and privatization, public and open-access spaces in many cities are being privatized. What are the political and social implications of this? How are the uses of public space changing, and could they change further after Covid? Are gated communities a legitimate expression of the interests of their residents?

*Detroit, an All-American City* – In the span of sixty years, Detroit went from symbol of modern America to one of the poorest cities in the country. We would explore the intersection of globalization, deindustrialization, racism and local government structure that led to these outcomes, and look at the tentative 'renaissance' of the Motor City today.

*Space and Political Cleavages in the Urban Landscape* – Central city residents often differ from suburbanites in their political leanings in North America. But the geography of political cleavages is complex and has far-reaching implications for politics at all scales. We would draw on some interesting new research on this subject, which has just begun to get academic attention.

*The Multicultural City* – Large, globalized cities are home to immigrants from all over the world, bringing both tremendous vitality and social strain. How do local governments respond to immigrant needs and concerns? How should they respond? Toronto would probably be a case focus for this week

*Vancouver – A Pacific Rim City* – Since the 1970s Vancouver has been transformed from a somewhat staid regional hub to a cosmopolitan, incredibly expensive global gateway. How has local politics and planning wrestled with the growing pains that accompany this transition?

*Silver Bullets? Mega-projects and Mega-events* – Those who govern large cities with global aspirations sometimes turn to huge infrastructure projects and mega-events such as the Olympics to secure a global reputation and attract residents, investors and visitors. Who benefits and who loses from such projects? What are their political dynamics?

*Governing the Suburbs* – North American suburbs are not just ‘bedroom communities’ – they are socially and economically complex and diverse places, but they aren’t so often the focus of academic study. What do we know about the politics of suburbs and their residents?

\*\* downtown redevelopment blog due Oct 22 \*\*

\*\* research proposals due Nov 12 \*\*

\*\* second graduate student critical response paper due Nov 19 \*\*

***Week 12 (Dec 3): Covid-19 and Urban Politics: Crisis and Response***

Armstrong, David A., Matthew J. Lebo, and Jack Lucas. "Do COVID-19 Policies Affect Mobility Behaviour? Evidence from 75 Canadian and American Cities." *Canadian Public Policy* (2020): Accepted-version.

Cole, Helen V.S., et al. "The COVID-19 pandemic: power and privilege, gentrification, and urban environmental justice in the global north." *Cities & Health* (2020): 1-5.

*Note: I may alter the above readings, and/or assign new ones, as this is a subject on which new research is being published at a rapid rate.*

\*\* final research papers due on OWL Dec 7 (Monday after last class) \*\*