

Political Power in American Cities (Introduction to Urban Politics)
POLISCI 121 (also URBANST 111, AMSTUD 121Z, PUBLPOL 123)
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-11:20a.m., Building 200 Room 305

Instructor: Prof. Clayton Nall, Department of Political Science, email: nall@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2 pm

Section Times (pick one):
Wednesday 1:30-2:20pm
Friday 10:30-11:20am.

Section TA: Masha Krupenkin, mkrupenk@stanford.edu

Lab TA: Cameron DeHart, cdehart@stanford.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Course Overview

In this course, we will develop answers to “big questions” in American urban politics.

Why should we study the politics of cities? In a global economy, cities appear to have decreasing control over their own affairs and seem to be at the mercy of economic change. Cities find themselves in competition for citizens, industries, and resources. Somehow, though, they manage to provide for densely settled populations even as they cope with their often deserved reputations for vice, dangerous streets, and public disorder. In recent decades, they have relied on aggressive (even desperate) policy initiatives ranging from slum clearance to school reform to corporate welfare to stadium construction to attract and retain desired businesses and residents. The city described here, the “limited city,” appears to play second fiddle in American politics while all the important decisions are made at the state and federal level.

Yet municipal governments, not national or state governments, are the ones with which citizens interact the most, and that have the biggest day-to-day influence on routine life. They have substantial power in areas including education, public safety, and public works, to name only a few. Cities operate at the level of basic needs: making sure water runs, sewers flow, streets are clear, and people are safe from crime and life-threatening injury. So, cities have power in a important set of issue domains. But how do they use it? How do they control their streets (and their citizens), maintain public order, shape buildings and infrastructure, and make themselves attractive to the middle class residents that drive local economies? Are their efforts working? If so, why, and if not, why not?

Each class session will be built around answering one of these big questions about cities and their role in American politics. While we will read some of the classic research in American urban politics, we will build much of our class discussion around recent debates over the proper role of local governments, approaching these controversies with knowledge gleaned from the social sciences. The readings cover ongoing debates over the drug war, police militarization, urban development projects, and suburban sprawl. Students will get direct experience dealing with these issues through three short field research projects conducted in cities in Silicon Valley.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this class, you should have an improved understanding of the place of local government in American politics, and will have learned to approach major questions about cities and their role from a social-science perspective. You will have gained direct experience in survey research, obtaining information from government bureaucracies, and converting social observations into usable data for social science analysis.

Students should enroll in POLISCI 121 if and only if they wish to take the class to satisfy the WIM requirement. All other students should enroll in one of the course cross-listings in Urban Studies, American Studies, or Public Policy. The courses will be offered for the same credit, but WIM students will complete a set of additional writing projects specified in the syllabus below. The course TA will provide more details in the first class section.

Prerequisites

There are no course prerequisites. However, POLISCI 2, AP American Government and Politics, or equivalent experience with American politics and social science research is highly recommended.

Grading Criteria

The grading criteria are intended to place approximately equal emphasis on course readings and research. The course will appear to be heavy on quizzes and exams, but these are designed to ensure continual focus on the class. The semi-“pop” quizzes will cover only material taught since the previous quiz.

40% Field Research Papers (3, distributed throughout quarter, each about 5-7 pp)

10% Two reading response papers (five-paragraph essays, no more than 2 pp. each)

15% Three reading quizzes on readings and lectures (5% each, unscheduled but announced at end of previous class)

25% Final Exam

10% In-Class Participation

Assignments are due at the date and time specified. They will lose a full letter grade for each day (or portion thereof) of lateness. We will use the standard Stanford numerical grading scale for all assignments, quizzes, and exams. Grades will be “curved up” at Professor Nall’s discretion, never curved down.

Option: Writing in the Major, Political Science

Students have an option to take the course for writing-in-the-major (WIM) credit. All students will receive the same instruction regarding social-science writing, and will complete the same writing assignments. Students enrolled for WIM credit will be given quick feedback on their papers and asked to revise them within one week of the original submission. The three main research papers (40% of grade) are designed to train students in the basics of political science research and communication of research findings. All students will also complete two reading response papers (no more than 2 pp, in five-paragraph format). The specific due dates will be determined by student signups.

Note: This syllabus is subject to revision before or during the quarter, at Professor Nall’s discretion.

Assigned Books

Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom (2013). *City Politics*, 9th edition. ISBN-13: 978-0205996391

Paul Kantor and Dennis R. Judd (2012), editors. *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*, 7th edition. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-25175-9

Ryan Avent (2011), *The Gated City*. Kindle Single E-book. Downloadable online and readable on a Kindle or Kindle apps for computers/devices.

Nathan Bomey (2016). *Detroit Resurrected*. ISBN-13: 978-0393248913

Students with Documented Disabilities: Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae>).

Class Schedule

Week 1. January 10 and 12

The Limited City

Judd and Swanstrom, Ch. 2

Paul Peterson, "The Interests of the Limited City," in Judd and Kantor, pp. 10-20.

Nancy Burns (1994). *The Formation of American Local Governments*, Ch. 1 [Canvas]

"The Free Rider Problem". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2003.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/free-rider/> [Canvas]

"Local US Governments," Readings from National League of Cities. [Canvas]

Week 2. January 17 and 19

The Powers of Cities

William Novak (1996). *The People's Welfare*, Introduction [Canvas]

James Scott (1998). *Seeing Like a State*, Ch. 2, pp. 53-63, 73-83 [Canvas]

Elaine Sharp (2005). *Morality Politics in American Cities*, Ch. 5 [Canvas]

"Local Government Authority." Readings from National League of Cities. [Canvas]

Writing instruction: We will discuss the particulars of writing in the social sciences, including APSR bibliographical style and guidelines for writing about politics from a scientific perspective.

Field Research Paper 1: Documenting the Local Governments of Silicon Valley. Assigned January 17, due at start of class January 31. WIM students: revised paper due February 3.

Week 3. January 24, 26, and 31

The Structure of Local Government, Political Machines, and Urban Reform

Judd and Swanstrom, Ch. 3

"Mayoral Powers" and "Forms of Municipal Government," Reading from National League of Cities. [Canvas]

Jessica Trounstein (2006). "Dominant Regimes and the Demise of Urban Democracy," *Journal of Politics* 68(4): pp. 879-893. [Canvas]

Clarence Stone, "Urban Regimes," in Judd and Kantor, pp. 20-34.

Dennis R. Judd and David Laslo, "The Regime Moment: The Brief but Storied Career of Urban Regimes in American Cities," in Judd and Kantor, pp. 35-46

William Riordon (1963). *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2810/2810-h/2810-h.htm#link2HCH0007>

Robert Caro (1974). "Leading Out the Regiment," in *The Power Broker*. [Canvas]

Week 4: February 2

Elections, Participation, and Electoral Institutions

Judd and Swanstrom, Ch. 4

"Municipal Elections." Reading from National League of Cities [Canvas]

Brian Schaffner et al. (2001). "Teams Without Uniforms: The Nonpartisan Ballot in State and Local Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 54:1, pp. 7-30. [Canvas]

Terry Moe (2006). "Political Control and the Power of the Agent." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 22:1, pp. 1-29. [Canvas]

Optional: Elisabeth Gerber and Daniel Hopkins (2011). "When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2): pp. 326-339 [Canvas]

Week 5. February 7 and 9

Urban Reform and Its Consequences: How cities manage urban decline

Steven Malanga (2010). "The Next Wave of Urban Reform." *City Journal*, Autumn 2010.

[Canvas]

Nathan Bomey (2016). *Detroit Resurrected*.

James Pethokoukis (2013). "Remake Detroit, or Empty It." *National Review*, July 22:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/354036/remake-detroit-or-empty-it-james-pethokoukis>

Michael Walsh (2013). "The Ruins of Detroit". *National Review*, July 22:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/354051/ruins-detroit-michael-walsh>

Nathan Bomey and John Gallagher (2013). "How Detroit Went Broke: The Answers May Surprise You." *Detroit Free Press*, 15 September. [Canvas]

Week 6. February 14 and 16

The Police and Public Safety

Judd and Swanstrom Ch. 12: pp. 320 – 321; 331 – 336

Radley Balko (2013). “‘Why Did You Shoot Me? I Was Reading a Book’: The New Warrior Cop is Out of Control.” *Salon* (July 7). [Canvas]

James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling (1982). “Broken Windows.” *The Atlantic*:
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>.

Daniel Brook (2006). "The Cracks in 'Broken Windows'." *The Boston Globe*. February 19:
http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/02/19/the_cracks_in_broken_windows

William Bratton and George L. Kelling (2014). “The Assault on Broken Windows Policing.”
Wall Street Journal. December 18. [Canvas]

PBS Frontline (2016) "Policing the Police" video:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/policing-the-police/>

Monica Potts (2015) "What Are Cops Really Good For? A Brief History." Talking Points Memo.
February 04: <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/theslice/what-are-cops-really-good-for-a-brief-history>

Jesse Walker (2014) "Centralized Policing Is the Wrong Solution." Reason. December 17:
<http://reason.com/archives/2014/12/17/the-wrong-solution>

Field Research Paper 2: Diversity, City Government, and the Police. Assigned February 14, due February 24. WIM students: revised paper due February 26.

Week 7. February 21 and 23

Why Cities Invest in Big Projects

Altshuler and Luberoff (2003). *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Public Investment*, Chs. 2-3 [Canvas]

Jon Teaford (2010). "Urban Renewal and Its Aftermath." *Housing Policy Debate* 11 (2). [Canvas]

View the PBS documentary, American Experience, *The World that Moses Built*. Currently available on Youtube. Also available for in-library use at Green Library.

Simon Jenkins (2015) "An Olympic-sized rip-off," Review of *Circus Maximus* by Andrew Zimbalist. *The Guardian* (UK). May 22:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/may/22/circus-maximus-andrew-zimbalist-review>

Week 8: February 28

Public Goods Provision and Diversity

J. Eric Oliver, "Paradoxes of Integration," in Judd and Kantor, pp. 198-213.

Robert Putnam (2007). "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30:2, 137-174. [Canvas]

Jessie Trounstine. "Segregation and Inequality in Public Goods," *American Journal of Political Science* 60:3, pp. 709-725. [Canvas]

Field Research Paper 3: Deliberating about Development. Assigned February 28, due March 9. WIM students: revised paper due March 14.

Week 8-9. March 2 and March 7

How Americans Choose Where to Live

Wallace Oates (2005). "The Many Faces of the Tiebout Model." In *The Tiebout Model at Fifty*: pp. 21-37

Watch "The Logic of Life: Racial Segregation." Summary of the Schelling Segregation Model. YouTube 2009: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjfihtGefxk>

Ryan Avent (2012). *The Gated City* (Kindle Single) [Sold for \$1.99 on Amazon.com and readable using Kindle or various Kindle apps.]

Clayton Nall and Jonathan Mummolo (2013). "Why Partisans Don't Sort: How Neighborhood Quality Concerns Trump Americans' Desire for Like-Minded Neighbors." [Canvas]

Kim-Mai Cutler (2014) "How Burrowing Owls Lead to Vomiting Anarchists (Or SF's Housing Crisis Explained). TechCrunch. April 14: <https://techcrunch.com/2014/04/14/sf-housing/>

Conor Dougherty (2016). "In Cramped and Costly Bay Area, Cries to Build, Baby, Build." The New York Times. April 16: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/business/economy/san-francisco-housing-tech-boom-sf-barf.html>

Robert Bruegmann and Gloria Ohland (2007). "Brawl Over Sprawl," *Los Angeles Times*. June 18: <http://www.latimes.com/la-op-dustup18jun18-story.html> [Canvas]

Optional: "Parable of the Polygons". An interactive visualization of the Schelling Segregation Model. <http://ncase.me/polygons/>

Week 9-10. March 9, 14, and 16

Cities and Suburbs in Conflict

Judd and Swanstrom, Chs. 6-7.

Kevin Baker (2012). "Republicans to Cities: Drop Dead," *New York Times*, 6 October. [Canvas]

Myron Orfield, "Building Consensus" in Judd and Kantor, pp. 334-339.

Joel Kotkin (2012). "America's Future is Taking Shape in the Suburbs." *Forbes.com*, 31 July. [Canvas]

Nall, Book Chapter, TBA.

Final Exam: Wednesday March 22, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Location TBA.