

URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Spring Semester 2002

Political Science 313
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As it is employed in the urban politics literature, the political economy approach is based on the premise that the politics of cities must be understood as a complex interaction among institutions, actors, and resources of both the public and the private spheres. In the United States, though governments are expected to provide for the health, welfare, and well-being of citizens, they do not possess the resources to do so. In capitalist society marketplace institutions – defense contractors, large corporations, banks, insurance companies, retailers, real estate companies, and so forth – make critical decisions that determine the material well-being of citizens. Because of this, governments are preoccupied with the task of trying to influence those decisions.

Because local governments are dependent upon the decisions of private institutions to stay and invest in the local economy, much of local politics is driven by an economic logic that requires cities to compete for investment. As the book by Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom argues, the competition among cities results in winners and losers, and the resulting inequalities are extremely important in determining life chances and the quality of life of urban residents. In an attempt to assert control over their own destinies, many cities have tried to promote the revitalization of their downtowns. Even when these strategies are successful, the results are debatable, as the readings by Bernard Frieden and Lynn Sagalyn and by John Hannigan illustrate. Finally, in recent decades cities have been thrown into a new round of competition by changes in the global economy. Saskia Sassen discusses how global economic restructuring has deepened inequalities at the local level, Susan Fainstein shows how local property development is driven by global forces, and the contributors to the edited book by Michael Sorkin explore the ways in which these developments have created segregated, defended, and militarized spaces.

Course Requirements:

Please note that the course schedule booklet lists POLS 101 or POLS 200 as prerequisites for this course. Except in unusual cases I will enforce this requirement. Note also that graduate students taking this course will meet with me separately to discuss additional assignments.

This course will be run in a seminar style, composed of a mixture of brief presentations by me, and a considerable amount of discussion involving every student in the class. I may call on anyone at any time to comment on the readings or even to assist in the presentation; therefore, be prepared to participate at all times. You should keep in mind that a substantial proportion of your course grade depends upon your participation and

preparation for class. To this end, I ask you to observe a few ground rules:

(1) You are required to read the course material before each week's class, according to the schedule outlined in the syllabus. I really can't overstate the importance of this particular requirement. In a course of this size, you will not be able to hide if you're not prepared. Note that the quality of your class participation counts for 25 percent of your grade. To avoid confusion or ambiguity, here's how attendance will affect your participation grade: You may miss up to four classes free, no questions asked (this factors in unforeseen events such as illness, traffic, etc.). The fifth miss will result in a one-half grade deduction from your attendance grade, and each additional miss will result in an additional one-half grade deduction. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (312-413-0123).

(2) Three essays synthesizing the course material are required, on the dates indicated in the syllabus. At least one week in advance (but usually much more), I will hand out essay instructions. Each of the papers counts for 25% of the course grade. They will be graded according to clarity, thoughtfulness, comprehensiveness, and originality.

I ask you to pay meticulous attention to the writing and production of the papers (no first drafts, and use spell check). The essays should be treated as miniature research papers that synthesize the assigned readings. At all costs avoid the appearance (and especially the reality!) of plagiarism; place quotation marks around quoted material, and provide proper citations wherever appropriate. Plagiarism on any assignment will normally result in failure for that assignment with no rewrite option.

The books available in the bookstore are:

Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf, Todd Swanstrom. Place Matters. University Press of Kansas.

Bernard J. Frieden and Lynn B. Sagalyn, Downtown Inc., MIT Press.

Saskia Sassen, Cities in a World Economy. Pine Forge Press, 1994.

Susan S. Fainstein The City Builders. University Press of Kansas.

John Hannigan, Fantasy City. Routledge.

Michael Sorkin, Variations on a Theme Park. Hill and Wang.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER: The bookstore returns books to distributors at the end of the 7th week (by my calculations, that is the week of February 25 this semester). If you wait to buy books until after that date you may have to do so through Amazon.com or through a special book order. It's your call; just be mindful that your failure to buy books on time does not become my problem, or an excuse not to read any of the readings on

time.

If you request, I will place any or all of the required books on reserve. Believe it or not, many of the personal copies I've placed on reserve over the years have come back to me marked up. It almost embarrasses me to even ask, but please do not write marginal notes in any book placed on reserve!

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNED READINGS

January 7. Introduction to the course.

I. The Metropolitan Contest

January 9. Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf, Todd Swanstrom, Place Matters, chapter 1.

January 14, 16. Dreier et al., chapters 2 & 3.

January 21. Martin Luther King's birthday. **No Class.**

January 23. Dreier et al., chapter 4.

January 28, 30. Dreier et al., chapter 5.

February 4, 6. Dreier et al., chapters 6-8.

Monday, February 11. First Essay Due.

II. The Downtown Strategy

February 11, 13. Bernard J. Frieden and Lynn B. Sagalyn, Downtown Inc., chapters 1-5.

February 18, 20. Frieden and Sagalyn, chapters, 6-9.

February 25, 27. Frieden and Sagalyn, chapters 10-14.

March 4, 6. John Hannigan, Fantasy City, chapters 1-5.

March 11, 13. Hannigan, chapters 6-10.

Wednesday, March 13. Second Essay Due.

March 18, 20. Spring Break!

III. Globalization and the New Urban Economy

March 25, 27. Saskia Sassen, Cities in a World Economy, chapters 1-3.

April 1, 3. Sassen, chapters 4, 6, 7 (but chapter 5 is recommended).

April 8, 10. Susan S. Fainstein, The City Builders, chapters 1-3.

April 15, 17. Fainstein, chapters 4, 5, 10, 11.

April 22, 24. Michael Sorkin, Variations on a Theme Park, pp. xi-30; 123-180; 205-222.

Monday, April 29. Third Essay Due.