

# POLS 210 - Introduction to Urban Politics

**Instructor:** Douglas Cantor

**Email:** dcanto2@uic.edu

**Office:** BSB 1171

**Office Hours:** Tuesday – 12pm to 1pm

## **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the political life and major policy issues in cities, metropolitan areas, and local governance. First, we examine political, social, and economic explanations for the origin and evolution of urban environments. We trace the historical development of local government institutions, investigate distribution of power, and analyze urban coalitions. In the second part of the course, we locate cities in regional, national, and global contexts, in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of urban politics. Finally, we analyze policy issues and challenges facing American cities and other urban areas across the world. We focus on a variety of urban policy issues including poverty, growth, cultural strategies of development, and gentrification.

We will be using mediums of several kinds to understand a complex blend of urban politics, people, and spaces. This includes a blend of films, lectures, and discussions that are designed to encourage inquiry and objective analysis.

## **Requirements and Expectations**

Your grade will be based on four components:

Research Paper 1: 25% (250 points) – Due July 17th

Research Paper 2: 35% (350 points) – Due Aug 7th

Film Paper Essays: 15% (150 points) – Due July 15<sup>th</sup> and July 29<sup>th</sup>

Class participation/attendance: 25% (250 points)

You are expected to attend lecture and do all of the readings **BEFORE THE LECTURES**. Do the readings and be ready to analyze the content before you walk through the door. Your readiness and knowledge during class discussions will most certainly play a large part of your grade.

Attendance, again, is required. You are permitted 2 unexcused absences for the semester. Upon the third, you will be deducted 25 points per unexcused absence.

Students are required to write 2 research papers examining urban issues and/or sets of institutions. Paper topics should be developed in consultation with me.

Both papers will deal with similar topics, so you should choose your topic for the first paper wisely, since you'll be sticking with it for the second topic.

### **Rules for papers:**

1. You must get your topic approved ahead of time. You submit a one-page prospectus in class on **July 8th**, describing your paper topic and sources you will use. I will hold extra office hours before papers for consultations.

Most importantly: *Pick a topic that you are interested in. Keep in mind that you will be spending a lot of time on this topic over the summer.*

2. Papers should be 7-10 double-spaced pages. Do NOT go over 10 pages.

3. Please use a cover sheet for the title and name, and number your pages.

4. Papers are due at the beginning of class. I deduct ½ a letter grade per day that a paper is late.

5. Please note that I do deduct points from papers for a lack of formal citation. You may not invent your own style of citing sources. Please use Chicago Style or APA styles of citation.

6. Grades for papers will be based on both substance and style. Use proper grammar, appropriate language, proofread and spell-check the final copy of every assignment.

### **Film Paper Essays**

We will be watching two films that deal with themes of politics, power, culture, and crises of cities. The goal of this course is not to just conceptualize what localities are, but also how localities are perceived. After each film, you must submit a 1-page minimum, 2-page maximum (double-spaced), essay on the film at the beginning of the following class. These essays will provide you with an opportunity to refine your writing skills for your papers, as well as make you think critically and analytically about images and stories of urban landscapes through the lens of concepts you learn in this class.

### **Decorum and Civility**

Cell phones are not allowed. You may not use your phone for class purposes. Please turn your phone on silent before you walk in the classroom. If you need to make a call or text, please excuse yourself from the room to do so. If you have an emergency that day and need to keep your phone on, please let me know before class.

You also may not use your computers or tablets for anything other than classroom purposes. Please do not make me be the bad guy and ban electronic devices from the classroom because you couldn't stay off Facebook for three hours twice per week.

### **Academic Honesty**

Your work must be your own. If you don't understand the writing assignments, you must be proactive and you should talk me immediately. Your papers must be adequately cited; to do otherwise is to plagiarize (for definitions see <http://www.uic.edu/depts/pols/Plagiarism1.pdf>).

*PLAGIARISM—THE PASSING OFF OF OTHERS' WORDS OR IDEAS AS YOUR OWN—WILL BE SEVERELY PENALIZED* (sanctions include automatic course failure and possible subjection to the Student Disciplinary Policy: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/studentconduct.html>).

### **Readings**

*Required Texts* - Judd, Dennis and Todd Swanstrom (2011). City Politics (8th Edition) YOU MUST BUY THE 8TH EDITION. (I am aware that this book is on the pricier side, however I have tried to balance this out by making this the only text that you'll be required to buy for this course).

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard. There is a chance that I will adjust the reading load or assign supplemental readings depending on how the course progresses.

(To reiterate, the only book on this schedule that you are responsible for purchasing is the Judd & Swanstrom textbook, all others will be provided through Google Books or PDFs on Blackboard.)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1 - The City

June 17th - *Introduction*

June 19th – *What is a city?*

- Mumford – *What is a city?*

- Bogart – *What is a city?*

(*Not a typo, both have the same title*)

### Week 2 - Development and History

June 24th – *Historical Development*

- Judd & Swanstrom – Chap 1 and 2

June 26th – *Historical Development*

- Warner – *The Private City* – Introduction (pages ix- xxvi)

- Wade – *The Urban Frontier* - Chapter 1

### Week 3 – Machines and Reform

July 1st – *Machines* –

- Judd & Swanstrom – Chapter 3

- Rakove – *Don't Make No Waves, Don't Back No Losers* – Intro (1-19)

- Erie – *Rainbow's End* – Chap 1 (1-24)

July 3rd – *Reform*

Judd & Swanstrom – Chapter 4

Bridges – *Morning Glories* (selected excerpts)

### Week 4 - Suburbanization and Sprawl

July 8th – *The Politics of the Suburbs*

- Judd & Swanstrom – Chapters 6 and 7

- Oliver – *Democracy in Suburbia* (selected excerpts)

**- PAPER TOPICS MUST BE CHOSEN BY TODAY**

July 10<sup>th</sup> – *The Perception of the Suburbs*

Judd & Swanstrom – Chapter 10

- McKenzie – *Privatopia* (selected excerpts)

- FILM – *Avalon*

## **Week 5 – Power, Decisions, and Theoretical Approaches**

July 15th – Decisions (*Film Essay #1 Due*)

- Dahl – Who Governs? (selected excerpts)
- Peterson – City Limits (selected excerpts)

July 17th – *Power*

- Stone – Urban Regimes
- DeLeon – Left Coast City (selected excerpts)

**PAPER #1 DUE**

## **Week 6 – Globalization**

July 22nd – *What is globalization?*

- Friedman – The World City Hypothesis
- Abu-Lughod – New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's Global Cities (selected excerpts)
- Savitch & Kantor – Cities in the International Marketplace

July 24th

- Film (in class) Blade Runner

## **Week 7 – The Urban Environment**

July 29th – *Neighborhoods and Culture (Film Essay #2 Due)*

- Kantor, Judd, and Rogers Selections
- Smith – Transnational Urbanism (selected excerpts)

July 31st – *Gentrification*

- Gans – The Urban Villagers (selected excerpts)

## **Week 8 – Urban Leadership and Economic Development**

Aug 5th - *Urban Dilemmas of Decline and Revitalization*

Judd & Swanstrom – Chapter 13

- Frieden & Sagalyn – Downtown Inc. (selected excerpts)
- Erie – Paradise Plundered (selected excerpts)

Aug 7th – *Leadership and Strategies*

- Judd & Swanstrom – Chapter 15
- Florida – The Rise of the Creative Class (selected excerpts)

**Final Essay – IN CLASS**

**PAPER #2 DUE**

