

Prof. Tony Affigne
Department of Political Science
Providence College
Fall 2009

Howley Hall 316
Tel. (401) 865-2569
affigne@providence.edu
www.providence.edu/polisci/affigne



Urban Politics in the United States

Political Science/Black Studies 303 – Fall Semester 2009

Tuesdays and Thursdays • 1:00-2:15 p.m.

About this Course

In Political Science/Black Studies 303, *Urban Politics in the United States*, you will learn the techniques of advanced political analysis, focusing on city politics in the United States. Topics include the politics of ethnic and racial communities, urban development, public education, municipal administration, emergency management, law enforcement, and others. Conceptual frames include political economy, community power structure, urban social movements, regime interests, the global city, and U.S. federalism.

Special Features

Each student will plan and conduct two field explorations; the first will be an observational visit through the downtown and South side of Providence, and the City of Pawtucket, using public transit. In a second, each student will attend a meeting of the Providence City Council, or of a Council committee. In this course there will no final exam, but each student will plan and submit an individual project. Your project will be research-based, and may be a conventional term paper, a website, or a

short documentary video. To satisfy your curiosity and improve your grade, you may choose at any time to submit extra-credit assignments. See instructor for details.

Course Design

This is an advanced course with a complex design. From time to time, instead of attending a class meeting you'll be asked to leave campus for a field exploration experience, or attend a video presentation whose subject is related to course readings and discussions. The best way to manage all of this is to make yourself familiar with the syllabus, keeping close track of requirements and deadlines.

General Requirements and Grading Rubric

Urban Politics in the United States incorporates lectures, assigned readings, videos, class discussions, short essays, individual projects, and field exploration. Your final course grade will be based on attendance, participation, and effort (20%), written assignments (50%), and individual project (30%). Attendance is required, and assigned reading should always be completed before coming to class. Unexcused absences require make-up assignments, with extra reading and an additional short essay.

Discussions, Participation, Field Exploration

Your participation in class discussions serves both to demonstrate and improve your mastery of course material, and to share your insights and knowledge with other students. Our class discussions, organized around the reading assignments, are central to the class. Your field explorations through urban neighborhoods, and to Providence City Hall, will ask you to carefully observe, and then write about, economic conditions, population demographics, public transportation, elementary and secondary education, police and crime, and other aspects of city government.

Your Individual Project

Each student will choose and plan an individual project, based on original research, in the form of a conventional term paper, a thematic website, or a video documentary. Your detailed, two-page proposal will be due on October 27. Completed individual projects may be submitted at any time after mid-semester, but must be turned in no later than the final class meeting on December 10.

Required Texts

The following books are the main texts for the course:

Theories of Urban Politics, 2nd ed. Jonathan S. Davies and David Imbroscio, Eds. (Sage 2008).
Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher. (CQ Press 2009).

Other Books about Urban Politics

The following books offer additional perspectives on politics in U.S. cities, and we will use occasional readings from this group:

City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America, 6th ed. Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom (Pearson 2008).
Cities, Politics, and Policy: A Comparative Analysis. John P. Pelissero, Ed. (CQ Press 2003).
Community Power Structure. Floyd Hunter (North Carolina 1953).
Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988. Clarence Stone (Kansas 1989).

The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America. Nicholas Lemann (Vintage 1992).
The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements. Manuel Castells (California 1983).
Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985. Steven Erie. (California 1985).
Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991. William J. Grimshaw (Chicago 1992).

CLASS SCHEDULE WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS

UNIT I. "SEEING" THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE

Recommended Reading:

In the Barrios: Latinos and the Underclass Debate. Joan Moore and Raquel Pinderhughes, Eds. Russell Sage, 1993.
The Politics of Black Empowerment. James Jennings, Wayne State University Press 1992.
Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City. Michael Jones-Correa, Cornell, 1998.
Black and Multiracial Politics in America. Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh and Lawrence J. Hanks, New York University, 2000.
Racial Politics in American Cities, 3rd edition. Rufus Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David Tabb, eds., Longman Press, 2003.
Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles. Lisa Garcia Bedolla, University of California, 2005.

9/8/09 **Introduction**

No reading assignment

9/10/09 **Urban Communities in the United States**

Reading assignments: (1) Chapter 9 "The Politics of Race and Ethnicity: The Cities," in *City Politics, 6th Ed.*, Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom (Pearson Longman 2008). (2) Locate and read a **news article** (*not* a signed or unsigned opinion editorial, blog entry, broadcast transcript, etc. — but a *news article* with reporter's byline), published in 2009, in a major daily newspaper (*not* a magazine, non-newspaper web site, or broadcast station), in which "city" and "African American" and "Latino" are subjects. Bring article to class. Be prepared to summarize and discuss your article.

Special discussion topic: Field exploration and essay instructions.

9/15/09 **NO CLASS: Field exploration, Providence South Side via public transit**

9/17/09 **NO CLASS: Field exploration, Pawtucket via public transit**

9/22/09 **Social Change and Economic Development**

Reading assignments: (1) Chapter 11 "Downtown Renaissance" by Alan Greenblatt, in *Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher*; and (2) Chapter 5 "'Posty' Urban Political Theory" by Serena Kataoka, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

FIELD EXPLORATION, URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS (ESSAY #1) DUE

9/24/09 **NO CLASS – Video "Gangs of New York" 7:00 p.m. Moore Hall III**

Video assignment: Feel free to be entertained by this video, but also remember to take notes and, while you're watching the action, consider how the images and stories you see on screen, raise questions which might be answered by our reading materials and discussions. You will be expected to understand these questions well enough to participate in a well-reasoned discussion at the next class.

9/29/09 **The More Things Change...**

Reading assignment: "Chapter 1, Domestic Poverty," and "Chapter 2, Immigration Debate," in *Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher*; and (2) Chapter 11 "Poverty, Inequality and Social Exclusion" by Mara Sidney, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

Discussion: "Gangs of New York"

Special discussion topic: City Council meeting and essay instructions.

UNIT II. UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF URBAN POWER

Recommended Reading:

Who Governs? Robert A. Dahl (Yale 1961).

Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago. Mike Royko (Dutton 1971).

The Politics of Turmoil: Essays on Poverty, Race, and the Urban Crisis. Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven (Vintage 1975).

City Limits. Paul Peterson (Chicago 1981).

City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States. Ira Katznelson (Chicago 1982).

Coleman Young and Detroit Politics. Wilbur C. Rich (Wayne State 1989).

The Rascal King: The Life and Times of James Michael Curley, 1874-1958. Jack Beatty (Addison-Wesley 1992).

City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco. Chester Hartman and Sarah Carnochan (California 2002).

10/1/09 **NO CLASS – Field Exploration: Providence City Council Meeting**

Field Assignment: The City Council of the City of Providence meets in the Council chambers, on the third floor of City Hall, adjacent to Kennedy Plaza. The meeting on October 1 will begin at 7:00 p.m. There are sometimes delays, so please go to City Hall prepared to be patient.

10/6/09 **City Government**

Reading assignment: (1) Chapter 1, “The Political Environment of Cities in the Twenty-First Century,” by John P. Pelissero; “Chapter 7, City Councils,” by Timothy B. Krebs and John P. Pelissero, in *Cities, Politics, and Policy: A Comparative Analysis*, John P. Pelissero, Ed. (CQ Press 2003); and (2) Chapter 6 “New Institutionalism and Urban Politics” by Vivien Lowndes, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

FIELD EXPLORATION, CITY COUNCIL (ESSAY #2) DUE

10/8/09 **Community Power Structure: Social Elites in City Government**

Reading assignment: (1) Chapter 1 “Introduction,” Chapter 2 “Location of power in regional city,” Chapter 3 “What some leaders are like,” from *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*, by Floyd Hunter (1953); and (2) Chapter 2 “The History of Community Power” by Alan Harding in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

10/13/09 **NO CLASS – Indigenous Peoples’ Day (aka Columbus Day)**

10/15/09 **NO CLASS – Video “Chinatown” 7:00 p.m. Moore Hall III**

Video assignment: Feel free to be entertained by this video, but also remember to take notes and, while you’re watching the action, consider how the images and stories you see on screen, might be explained by our readings and discussions to date. Come to the next class prepared to participate in a well-reasoned discussion of the film.

10/20/09 **The Fusion of Public and Private Power: Urban Regime Theory**

Reading assignment: (1) Chapter 9 “Atlanta’s Urban Regime,” Chapter 11 “Rethinking Community Power: Social Production versus Social Control,” and “Conclusion,” from *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*, by Clarence Stone (1989) ; and (2) Chapter 3 “Urban Regime Analysis” by Karen Mossberger, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

Discussion: “Chinatown”

Special discussion topic: Individual project instructions.

10/22/09 **Historical Context: “The Great Migration”**

Reading assignment: (1) “Clarksdale” and “Chicago” in *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*, by Nicholas Lemann (Knopf 1991) ; and (2) Chapter 12 “Race and Urban Political Theory” by J. Phillip Thompson, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

10/27/09 **Urban Social Movements**

Reading assignment: Chapter 6 “The Post-Industrial City and the Community Revolution: The Revolts of American Inner Cities in the 1960s,” and Chapter 13 “Urban Poverty, Ethnic Minorities and Community Organization: The Experiences of Neighbourhood Mobilization in San Francisco’s Mission District,” from *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, by Manuel Castells (1983).

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

- 10/29/09 **Historical Context: Immigration, Race, and Machine Politics**
Reading assignment: (1) Chapter 2 “Building the Nineteenth-Century Machines, 1840-1896,” from *Rainbow’s End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985*, by Steven P. Erie, 1985; (2) Chapter 5 “Daley’s Black Machine: The Productivity-Patronage Contradiction,” and Chapter 6 “The Movement and the Machine: The Cultural Limits of Political Power,” from *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine 1931-1991*, by William J. Grimshaw, 1992.

UNIT III. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN URBAN POLITICS

- 11/3/09 **Buildings and Land in the City: Housing and Property Rights**
Reading assignment: Chapter 3 “Mortgage Crisis” and Chapter 12 “Property Rights,” from *Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher*.
In-Class Video: “Brooklyn Matters”
- 11/5/09 **Housing and Property Rights (2)**
Reading assignment: Locate and read two *news articles* published between 2001 and 2009 (see instructions above), in which “mortgage crisis” or “economic development” are subjects. Bring printed articles to class. Be prepared to make an in-class presentation based on the two articles.
- 11/10/09 **Class Politics and Public Services: Education in America’s Cities**
Reading assignment: Chapter 3 “Fixing Urban Schools” and Chapter 6 “Racial Diversity in Public Schools,” from *Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher*.
- 11/12/09 **Education in America’s Cities (2)**
Reading assignment: Locate and read two *news articles* published between 2001 and 2009 (see instructions above), specifically about *cities* (not rural or suburban communities) in which “public education” is the subject. Bring printed articles to class. Be prepared to make an in-class presentation based on the two articles.
- 11/17/09 **Public Safety: Law Enforcement and Homeland Security**
Reading assignment: Chapter 7 “Fighting Crime” and Chapter 8 “Disaster Preparedness,” from *Urban Issues: Selections from CQ Researcher*.
- 11/19/09 **Law Enforcement and Homeland Security (2)**
Reading assignment: Locate and read two *news articles* published between 2001 and 2009 (see instructions above), in which “urban crime” or “disaster preparedness” is the subject. Bring printed articles to class. Be prepared to make an in-class presentation based on the two articles.
- URBAN ISSUES (ESSAY #3) DUE**
- 11/24/09 **NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Week**
- 11/26/09 **NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Week**

UNIT IV. ANALYSIS, REFLECTION, AND SYNTHESIS

12/1/09 **NO CLASS – Video “Do the Right Thing” 7:00 p.m. Moore Hall III**

Video assignment: Remember to take notes and consider how the images and stories you see on screen, might be explained by our readings and discussions to date. Come to the next class prepared to participate in a well-reasoned discussion of the film.

12/3/09 **What is “The City” in U.S. Politics?**

Reading assignment: Chapter 1 “Why Study *Urban* Politics” by Peter John, and Chapter 4 “Marxism and Urban Politics” by Mike Geddes, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

12/8/09 **Is Democracy Possible in U.S. Cities?**

Reading assignment: Chapter 7 “Regionalism and Urban Politics” by Hank Savitch and Ronald K. Vogel, and Chapter 8 “Urban Political Leadership” by Stephen Greasley and Gerry Stoker, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.

12/10/09 **What Does the “City of the Future” Look Like?**

Reading assignment: Chapter 15 “Urban Social Movements” by Gordana Rabrenovic, and Chapter 16 “Who is Governed? Local Citizens and the Political Order of Cities” by Clarence Stone, in *Theories of Urban Politics*.