

POLS 7150X

Government of New York City and Urban Politics

Professor Minnie Go
Contact: MinHeeGo@brooklyn.cuny.edu
Class times: Monday 5:40-7:20 pm
Location: CCWE 701
Office Hours: Monday 4:30-5:30 or by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to major theoretical approaches to and empirical analyses on urban politics in the US.
- Enhance student understanding on the structure, activities and problems of the politics in New York City in comparison with other cities in the US.
- Promote student capacity to identify research problems and conduct original research on contemporary urban government and politics.

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course. Reading materials will be available via Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a survey of topics on urban politics in general, and New York City politics in particular. We will cover seminal, classic readings as well as contemporary research in urban politics and apply them to New York City. Throughout the course, some knowledge on quantitative data analysis (regression, etc.) is recommended but not necessary.

This course largely consists of three parts. Beginning with the history of urban politics, we first cover major theories including pluralist and regime theories, Marxist theory, and economic theory of urban governance. We will discuss strengths and weaknesses of each theory and its applicability to NYC politics. Second, we discuss how ordinary citizens shape political and social life in urban area. The penetrating theme of the second part is race (racial, economic, etc.), since racial inequality is a powerful underlying factor that affects political representation as well as socioeconomic conditions of various groups. Finally, the third part deals with urban policy – housing, police, economic, etc. We start with a question whether urban policies matter at all, and if they do, to whom and in what ways. In the final week, this course concludes with contemplating on the state of the discipline and its place within the field of political science.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance & Participation (10%): Students are required to attend class and actively participate in class discussions and activities. In addition to attendance, students are required to

attend class and actively participate in class discussions and activities. Students must complete reading assignments before class and be ready to discuss the readings and answer the following questions.

- What is author's main argument?
- How does the author go about supporting his/her argument (data, method, case selection, etc.)? What are the strengths/weaknesses of that approach?
- To what extent do you agree with author's argument, and why?
- How is this piece related with other readings in this week or any previous readings?
- How does this reading apply to NYC politics and why?

Instructor may give surprise quizzes and reflect the results in the final grade if students fail to present their familiarity with the reading materials.

Response Papers (8 total, 5% each): From Week 4 to Week 13, students must submit a 2-3 page paper (double-spaced, one inch margin) that address questions listed below in relation to the week's reading assignments. You do not have to answer all the questions but can pick whatever you want and address it in depth. Some questions are deliberately made abstract, so that you can redefine/reorganize the questions. Paper is due in the week's class *in hard copy*. Don't email the paper without instructor's request. **No late submission is accepted.** Each paper is 5% of the grade, and missing a paper has a substantial consequence for the final grade.

Midterm Exam (20%): Midterm exam will cover reading assignments, class discussions, and any materials presented in class. There will be no make-up exam or extra-credit assignments for the exams. Details on format will be provided later in class.

Final Research Project (30%): As a final project, students write a research paper (15-20 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margin) that contains an in-depth discussion of a topic of his/her interest. Topics may vary: for example, you can develop one of your response papers to full-fledged research paper. Students will present the progress of their research on Weeks 4 and 5 (5%). Submission deadline TBA.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: Regular attendance is critical to this class, and it is the student's responsibility to sign the attendance sheet in class at the beginning of class. Five absences, without proper documentation and prior notification, will automatically lead to an F. Absence due to religious reasons and medical emergency is permitted, and make sure to inform me in advance

Not only physical absence but the following behaviors count as an absence:

- Cell phone use during class: Cell phone use is considered a disruptive behavior for learning environment and thus allowed under no circumstances. I reserve the right to ask a student to leave the classroom in case of detecting the use of mobile devices including text messaging, facebook, playing games or taking pictures. If you have important reasons to use your phone during class, inform me prior to class so I can accommodate your needs.
- Laptop/Tablet PC use unrelated to class presentation and activities: the above rule applies to laptop/I-pad use.
- Late arrival/early departure: 3 late arrivals and/or early departures equal 1 absence.

Assignment: No email/late submission is allowed; only hard copies will be accepted unless notified otherwise. If a late submission is inevitable due to medical or personal emergency, you must provide a verifiable document prior/posterior to event as proof of evidence.

Email: Instructor will try to respond to emails as soon as possible during 9 am to 5 pm on weekdays. Expect a slower response on weekends.

Plagiarism: Any attempt to use other's work (both ideas and writings) without proper acknowledgement is considered plagiarism (including cheating in exam) and will not be tolerated. Instructor will carefully censor each student's assignments, and any academic misconduct will result in automatic F.

Below is the official mandate for faculty:

"The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation."

Student Disability Services: In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS). Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the CSDS please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with her as soon as possible and at an appropriate time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug 31). Introduction

Week 2 (Sep 10). The Origins of Urban Politics

- Joshua Sapatichne, Brian D. Jones, and Michelle Wolfe. 2007. "Is Urban Politics a Black Hole? Analyzing the Boundary between Political Science and Urban Politics", *Urban Affairs Review*. 43: 76-106.
- Swanstrom and Judd, *City Politics*. Ch. 2-4.

Week 3 (Sep 14). No Class

Part I: Theories of Urban Governance and Politics

Week 4 (Sep 21). Pluralism

- Robert Dahl. *Who Governs?* Book I.

Questions: Who governs New York City? Which groups can you identify as governing bodies and why? Is there a single group that has an overarching influence on NYC politics?

Week 5 (Sep 28). Regime Theory

- Clarence Stone. *Regime Politics*
- Clarence Stone. 2015. "Reflections on *Regime Politics*: From Governing Coalition to Urban Political Order." *Urban Affairs Review*. 51(1): 101-137
- Michael Jones-Correa and Diane Wong. 2015. "Whose Politics? Reflections on Clarence Stone's *Regime Politics*." *Urban Affairs Review*. 51(1): 161-170.

Questions: How does regime politics apply to New York City? Who constitute a governing coalition in NYC? If the regime theory does not hold, which policy area (other than housing) is run by the city's non-elites?

Week 6 (Oct 5). Marxist Theory

- Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*. 56(4): 947-952
- Mike Davis. *Fortress Los Angeles*.
- Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*. Ch. 1-3, 5

Questions: What does the "second face of power" mean and how does it apply to NYC politics? In de Blasio's term (or those of ex-mayors), which issues have become salient, which are muted? Why?

Week 7 (Oct 12). Columbus Day – No Class

Week 8 (Oct 19). Economic Theory of Urban Politics

- Charles Tiebout. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of Political Economy* 64(5): 416 – 424.
- Paul Peterson. *City Limits*. Ch. 1-4.

Questions: What's the relationship between NYC, New York State, and the Federal Government? In which policy areas does the economic theory apply best?

Part II: Place, Participation and the Politics of Race

Week 9 (Oct 26). Election and Representation

- Zoltan Hajnal and Jessica Trounstine. 2005. "Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics" *Journal of Politics*. 67(2): 515-535
- Zoltan Hajnal. 2001. "White Residents, Black Incumbents, and a Declining Racial Divide." *American Political Science Review*. 95(3): 603-617.
- CUNY Graduate Center, the Center for Urban Research
NYC Election Atlas: www.nycelectionatlas.com

Analyzing NYC Elections: Pick a recent election and write a brief analysis based on the data from NYC Election Atlas (link above). Who voted, and who participated? What is the implication of the election you chose for citizen participation and representation?

Week 10 (Nov 2). Midterm Exam

Week 11 (Nov 9). Governing New York City: Inequality and Accountability

- Douglas Arnold and Nick Carnes. 2012. "Holding Mayors Accountable: New York's Executives from Koch to Bloomberg." *American Journal of Political Science*. Link: http://people.duke.edu/~nwc8/Arnold_Carnes_Holding_Mayors_Accountable.pdf
- Ken Auletta. 2013. "After Bloomberg." *The New Yorker*.
- New York Office of Comptroller. 2012. *Income Inequality in New York* http://comptroller.nyc.gov/wpcontent/uploads/documents/NYC_IncomeInequality_v17.pdf

Questions: How has income inequality transpired in NYC, and what are the causes of such inequality? What role does the mayoral leadership play in widening/closing the income gap?

Week 12 (Nov 16). Crisis in New York City and New Orleans

- Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg. *Crisis Cities*.

Questions: Is New York in crisis? What are the differences between NYC and New Orleans, and why such difference? Or are they more or less similar in using crisis as a source of governance, as the authors claim?

Week 13 (Nov 23). The Politics of City Services: Nail Salons

- NY Times Series, 2015. "The Price of Nice Nails"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/nyregion/at-nail-salons-in-nyc-manicurists-are-underpaid-and-unprotected.html?comments>
- Richard Bernstein, "What the Times Got Wrong About Nail Salons." *The New York Review of Books*.
Link: <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2015/jul/25/nail-salons-new-york-times-got-wrong/>
- Millian Kang, 2011. *The Managed Hand: Race, Gender and the Body in Beauty Service Work*

Questions: What is the source of structural inequality in New York City, and what role does race and gender play in constructing the structure? What are other service sectors that present similar problems of low wages, and does race and gender play a role in that industry as well? If so, how?

Week 14 (Nov 30). Student Presentation I

Week 15 (Dec 7). Student Presentation II

Conclusion

Week 16 (Dec 14). Wrapping Up: State of the Discipline

- Dennis Judd. 2005. "Everything is always going to hell: Urban scholars as end-times prophets." *Urban Affairs Review*. 41: 119-131.
- Elaine Sharp. 2007. "Revitalizing Urban Research," *Urban Affairs Review*. 43: 55-75.