

Western University
Department of Political Science

Power in the City

Political Science 3363F
Fall 2024

Instructor: Martin Horak
E-mail: mhorak@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Wed. 1pm – 2pm (in person, starting Sept. 25)
or by appointment (in person or on Zoom)
Physical Office: SSC 7237

Teaching Assistant: Noah Vanderhoeven

Class Time: Mondays, 3:30-5:30pm

Location: See course OWL site

Course Description

Most people now live in cities. As a result, much of politics is profoundly urban in character. It takes place in cities, it is shaped by urban processes, and it responds to distinctly urban problems, ranging from local economic development and housing inequality to public transit and immigrant integration. This course aims to introduce you to leading theories of urban politics, which we will apply to urban political processes in Canada, the United States, and Western Europe. Our main focus will be on *local* government in cities, but we will also examine the ways in which urban politics is inherently multi-level in character, and how other levels of government help to shape responses to urban policy issues. We will discuss how contrasting national traditions and institutional structures shape the terrain of urban politics; we will investigate the role played in urban politics at the local level by politicians, business, and community actors, and compare how they operate in various settings; and we will focus on two specific urban political issues that the class will select in discussion with the instructor.

The course will also give you the opportunity to learn about politics in an ‘**adopted city**’ of your choice, and to conduct an independent research project in which you analyze some aspect of urban politics in your ‘adopted city’ and/or another city or cities of your choice, using theories and concepts drawn from the course.

Prerequisites

You must have taken at least 1.0 full course equivalent in Political Science at the 2200 level to enroll for this course. This course is useful preparation for **POL4210 Globalization and Urban Politics**.

Course Format

This is a mixed format course. Each class will feature a lecture, but I will also periodically open up the class for discussion; there will be opportunities for online discussion as well. The reading load for the course is not heavy, but some of the readings are challenging, and **you must be committed to reading all the assigned material before each class**. Advance reading is a prerequisite for doing well (see “Course Evaluation” below). *All readings will be posted under “Resources” on our course OWL site unless otherwise noted. There is no textbook.*

Note also that this course has an **extensive writing component**. We build from small, simple assignments about your “adopted city” (see below) to a full research essay; Noah and I will give you feedback along the way. Students in previous years have found that this format has been very helpful to developing their writing skills, but you must be prepared for the volume of writing.

The course also has an element of **curriculum co-design**: during the week of October 28th, students will collectively choose two topics in urban politics that we will engage with in Weeks 11 and 12 of the course (Nov 25, and Dec 2).

Course Requirements

The final grade for this course will be composed of three main elements:

1. *Participation (attendance and active engagement with course material) (15%).*

You are expected to be at every class; *attendance* will be taken and is worth 5% of your course grade. In addition, *active engagement* with course material is an important part of this course. Each week except the first week, I will post **discussion questions** on the OWL site. Please come to class prepared with some thoughtful reflections on them (as well as with any other thoughts or questions that you may have). I set aside time in class to focus on the discussion questions. However, the class is large, and you may not always get a chance to participate in class; in addition, some of you may be less comfortable participating than others. So I have also set up a **discussion forum on OWL** where you can post responses to the discussion questions, and react to responses that others have posted if you so desire. This is an alternative way of engaging with the course material. Active engagement in class and/or on the forum is worth 10% of your course grade.

2. *Writing assignments on your adopted city (35%).*

On September 16th in class, you will choose an “adopted city” whose politics you will learn about in detail. You will be expected to bring your knowledge of politics in your city to our class discussions. Between Week 3 and Week 6 of the course, you will write **three** assignments on some aspect of politics in your adopted city. These assignments will respond to factual questions about politics in your city. They will be due on OWL on Tuesday night after the relevant class (one day after class). I will post the questions on OWL **one week** before each assignment is due. The first two assignments will each be

about 500 words long, and each will be worth 10% of your grade. The third assignment will be about 1000 words long and will be worth 15% of your grade.

Below you will find a list of suggestions for adopted cities. You can also choose one that is not on the list, *with my prior approval* (the main concern is that you choose a city on which there is enough information available):

Amsterdam	Atlanta	New Orleans	Copenhagen	London (UK)	Sydney
Vancouver	New York	Chicago	Montreal	Detroit	Paris
Glasgow	Barcelona	Houston	Portland	Los Angeles	Berlin
London (ON)	Miami	Calgary	San Francisco	Baltimore	Winnipeg
Ottawa	Boston	Austin	Phoenix	Manchester	Toronto

3. Research project (50%)

A significant proportion of your grade in this course will be based on your research project. This project is a chance for you to investigate in depth some aspect of urban politics that you are particularly interested in. You may select an aspect of urban politics in your ‘adopted city’ and investigate it in depth using concepts from the course; or you may compare aspects of urban politics across two or more different cities. The research project has two components:

a. Proposal for your research paper (10%)

By **November 20th**, you will put together a 500 to 750-word research proposal. The aim of the proposal is to focus your research question and develop a strategy for the rest of your research. Full guidelines will be handed out mid-way through the term.

b. Research paper (40%)

The final product of your research project will be a 3000 to 4000-word paper on your research topic. The paper must be double spaced with a consistent academic referencing style and a complete bibliography at the end. Full guidelines will be handed out mid-way through the term. The final paper will be due on **December 9th**.

Course Policies

Submitting assignments: All written work should be submitted via the course's OWL site. Work handed in late will be subject to a penalty of 2% for each day past the deadline, weekends included. If you foresee problems meeting submission deadlines please consult the instructor early; accommodations can be made with adequate advance notice – this means *at least two days before the deadline*. While I am generally willing to grant brief 1 to 2-day extensions for reasonable cause if you ask me in time, requests for longer extensions must go through Academic Counselling. I do not grant extensions requested after the due date!

Academic integrity: To protect and uphold academic integrity in the class, it is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of his or her work. At a minimum, for every assignment, the sources of all information and ideas must be properly referenced using an accepted academic referencing style of your choice (I prefer author-date systems). Failure to properly reference ideas, concepts, and quotations in an assignment that are not your own will result in academic penalties as required by university policy.

All upper-year students are expected to have a good understanding of the rules and conventions of academic writing. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to reference sources, please visit the Writing Support Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/> or review information at: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>

Use of AI tools: Using AI tools such as ChatGPT to generate content for your assignments is unacceptable in this class, since it undermines the learning process. If Noah or I suspect that an assignment contains AI-generated writing, we will discuss its content in a meeting with you. If you are unable to explain and defend the content as your own work, we will require you to re-write the assignment. Any late penalties incurred since the original due date will be applied to the re-written assignment.

Instructor contact: I encourage you to bring any questions or concerns about course material, requirements or assignments to me. My office hours and contact for appointments are listed above. Questions or concerns can also be sent my e-mail to: mhorak@uwo.ca. I will usually respond within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

Help with writing: Learning to express ideas clearly is a central goal of the university experience. If academic writing does not come easily to you, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Support Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept 9): Introduction: Cities and Urban Politics

Our first session will include an overview of the structure, aims and requirements of the course. We will also discuss what a ‘city’ is, what urban politics is, and why it is important – both to our daily lives, and as an object of study in political science.

Wirth, Louis. 1938. “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” *American Journal of Sociology* 44(1). Read excerpt, pp. 1-18.

John, Peter. 2009. “Why Study *Urban Politics*?” In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., pp. 17–23. Los Angeles: Sage.

Part I: Urban Political Institutions in Comparative Perspective

Week 2 (Sept 16): Local and Urban Politics: Differing National Traditions

*** Choose your adopted city ***

Keating, Michael. 1991. “Systems of Local Government: Culture and Structure.” In *Comparative Urban Politics: Power and the City in the United States, Canada, Britain and France*, pp. 13-35. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Week 3 (Sept 23): Local Elections and Political Parties

Mevellec, Anne, Brandon Bolduc, Guy Chiasson and Veika Donatien. 2024. “Municipal Elections and Political Incorporation.” Chapter 8 in Kristin R. Good and Jen Nelles, eds. *Canadian Urban Governance in Comparative Perspective*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 246-266.

*** Short Writing Assignment #1 due on OWL Sept. 24 (Tuesday) ***

Week 4 (Sept 30) * National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – No Class *

Week 5 (Oct 7): Local Political Leadership

Greasley, Stephen and Gerry Stoker. 2009. “Urban Political Leadership.” In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. pp. 125–136. Los Angeles: Sage.

Sancton, Andrew. 2015. "Mayors and Local Political Leadership" in *Canadian Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Oxford. Excerpts: "Models of Mayoral Leadership" (pp. 239–247) and "How Mayors Become Powerful" (pp. 232–236) — in that order.

The Canadian Press. 2024. "A look at one year of strong mayor powers in Ontario." *CTV News*, July 22.

Access at: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/a-look-at-one-year-of-strong-mayor-powers-in-ontario-1.6972452>

Javed, Noor. 2024. "Doug Ford's strong mayor powers used for staffing changes." *Toronto Star*, July 22.

Access: https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/this-law-has-nothing-to-do-with-housing-doug-ford-gave-mayors-more-power-to/article_1b65deaa-42c7-11ef-8119-f31ed70fe0c9.html

*** Short Writing Assignment #2 due on OWL Oct 8 (Tuesday) ***

*** Fall Reading Week (Oct 14 – 18) ***

Part II: Power in the City

Week 6 (Oct 21): Local Democracies or Growth Machines: Who Governs the City?

Harding, Alan. 2009. "The History of Community Power." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage. Excerpt: pp. 27–39.

Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56 (4): 947–952.

Week 7 (Oct 28): Community Activism and Urban Social Movements

Rabrenovic, Gordana. 2009. "Urban Social Movements." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., pp. 239–254. Los Angeles: Sage.

Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. 2019. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1): 28–46.

Tattersall, Amanda, and Kurt Iveson. 2022. "People power strategies in contemporary housing movements." *International Journal of Housing Policy* 22(2): 251–277.

*** Students Choose Course Topics for Weeks 11 – 12 ***

*** Short Writing Assignment #3 due on OWL Oct. 29 (Tuesday) ***

Week 8 (Nov 4): Urban Regimes and Governing Capacity

Stone, Clarence. 1993. "Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15 (1): 1-28.

Part III: Urban Politics Beyond the Local

Week 9 (Nov 11): Governing Metropolitan Areas

Savitch, Hank and Ron Vogel. 2009. "Regionalism and Urban Politics." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., pp. 106-124. Los Angeles: Sage.

Neill, William J.V. 2015. "Carry on Shrinking?: The Bankruptcy of Urban Policy in Detroit". *Planning Practice & Research*, 30(1): 1-14.

Week 10 (Nov 18): Multilevel Urban Governance and Canada's Housing Crisis

Horak, Martin. 2024. "Multilevel Urban Governance in Canada." Chapter 4 in Kristin R. Good and Jen Nelles, eds. *Canadian Urban Governance in Comparative Perspective*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 108-140.

Eidelman, Gabriel, Tomas Hachard and Enid Slack, eds. 2022. *The Municipal Role in Housing*. Toronto: Institute for Municipal Finance and Governance.

<https://imfg.munkschool.utoronto.ca/report/the-municipal-role-in-housing/>

*** Research Paper Proposal due November 20 ***

Part IV: Selected Issues in Urban Politics

Week 11 (Nov 25): Megaprojects and Transit Development

** special guest: John Fleming, former City of London Chief Planner **

Siemiatycki, Matti. 2013. "Riding the wave: explaining cycles in urban mega-project development." *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 16(2): 160-178.

Horak, Martin. 2021. "Building rapid transit in Canada: the problem of governance". *Anuario de Derecho Municipal 2020*, Madrid: Autonomous University of Madrid: 243-258.

Week 12 (Dec 2): Race in American and Canadian Urban Politics

Smedley, Audrey, and Brian D. Smedley. 2005. "Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race." *American Psychologist* 60(1): 16-26.

Trounstein, Jessica. 2018. "Introduction" in *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 1-22. *Read only up to page 19.*

Williamson, Vanessa, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein. 2018.. "Black lives matter: Evidence that police-caused deaths predict protest activity." *Perspectives on Politics* 16(2): 400-415.

**** Final Papers due on OWL December 9th ****