

# Decision-Making in American Cities

POSC 301/401

Case Western Reserve University

Department of Political Science

Spring 2020

**Tuesday/Thursdays 5:30 – 6:45 PM**

Classroom: **Clark Hall 205**

*(updated: January 9, 2020)*

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## Course Description

In any American city, it is apparent that urban life holds the opportunity (for some residents and visitors) of great potential and fully-engaged lives of economic, social, cultural and intellectual fulfillment. Urban life also presents (for many residents) the seemingly intractable pitfalls of poverty, violence and despair. Great universities (like Case) stand next to or within urban school districts without the funding or methods to provide basic education. Great corporations, in gleaming office towers, engaged in global trade rise in the midst of rampant unemployment and street-level drug trade.

Why do contemporary American cities face these circumstances and the great issues that arise therefrom? Why do some American cities thrive in the age of globalization, while others face uncertainty and decline?

*Decision-Making in American Cities* will examine these questions.

This course of study is an examination of decision-making and governance in the American urban context. Local governments operate in ways that are distinctive from federal and state government. Not recognized in the U.S. Constitution, American cities are the third rung (some might argue, the “third rail”) of federalist governance. Subordinate and dependent upon federal and state decision-making and policy, U.S. cities are also part of the often-incoherent mosaic of other local governmental and non-governmental entities and agencies competing for scarce resources and seeking to meet their expanding needs. Today, issues of immigration, land use, education, law enforcement and security, infrastructure and economic growth are more acute, while conflicts and decisions relating to race, profiling and social equity persist.

We will examine governance and power in American cities – its historical roots and contemporary forms. As we discuss urban issues of the day – education, finance, economic development and planning – we will analyze the (i) distribution of urban political power (formal and informal), (ii) leadership, (iii) political economy and (iv) national urban policy.

### Required Texts

Judd, Dennis R. & Hinze, Annika M., **City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America**, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Routledge, 2019 (“J&H”).

McGovern, Stephen J., **Urban Politics: A Reader**, CQ Press, 2017 (“McG”).

**Selected Readings** listed on Appendix I attached hereto will be available at <https://canvas.case.edu/> . Selected Readings and Additional Selected Readings as assigned are a requirement of this course.

Also, consider visits to [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com) – good source for current urban political and policy issues.

### Student Performance and Evaluation

Undergraduate student performance in this course will be based on the following:

- **Class Attendance and Participation** (20%) - Attendance is expected and required. Class time will be used for lectures, discussions and engagement with guest speakers. Class time will include introduction and discussion of material beyond the assigned readings. Students are expected to be prepared for each class meeting by having read, in advance, the materials assigned for each class. All students are expected to participate in class discussion. During the class term, each student will be required lead a class discussion; there will be advance sign-up for this course requirement.
- **Short Paper** (10%) - There will be one short research paper on topics to be assigned in Week 4 (on February 4<sup>th</sup>) (*Urban Economic Development: Politics of Urban Public Investment*). Details will be provided in handouts. Short paper should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced with 12 pt. font and one-inch margins and are due two weeks from date of assignment.
- **Mid-Term Examination** (20%) – 45-minute in-class written examination in Week 8 (on March 3<sup>rd</sup>), the Mid-Term will be a short answer and essay examination addressing topics covered in the course of study through Week 7.
- **Film Analysis** (10%) – There will be an in-class screening of the film, *Cleveland: Confronting Decline in an American City* (Northern Lights Productions, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2006) on March 5<sup>th</sup> . Students will be required to provide an analysis and criticism of the substantive issues addressed in the film. This is not intended to be an exercise in filmmaking criticism, although, if time permits, we may have some class discussion on the filmmaking and references to Hollywood’s depiction of cities, slums, mayors and machines. The written analysis should address the following:
  - a. Brief overview of the filmmakers’ message and argument;
  - b. Analysis of issues raised by the filmmakers, utilizing the (i) paradigms and analytics presented in our readings and (ii) your own refinements or views thereon; and
  - c. Alternatives analyses and solutions to the issues raised by the filmmakers.

The analysis should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced with 12 pt. font and one-inch margins. The film analysis is dues two weeks from assignment.

- **Take-Home Final Examination** (40%) – The final will be an essay examination that will cover the breadth of the topics covered in the course of study. The “take home” format is intended to emphasize analysis and writing, not recitation of data. The 48-hour examination period will occur May 4<sup>th</sup> (9AM) through May 6<sup>th</sup> (9AM). Additional details with respect to the items above will be provided in class.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are required to uphold, and to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy of the University, found online at:

<https://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/academicintegrity/>

Students who do not understand the Policy after having read it should make an appointment to see me to discuss it; indeed, I welcome this discussion and encourage students to see me in advance of any assignment about which they have doubts or questions. It is a course requirement that students read the Academic Integrity Policy.

**Ground Rules for the Classroom.** The classroom is to be an environment conducive to active engagement and mutual respect for our time and our points of view. Accordingly, please observe the following:

- **Arrive on time and be ready to commence at 5:30 P.M.** If circumstances require a late arrival, provide advance notice. Unexcused absences will affect your Class Participation grade.
- Please turn off all cell phones and mobile electronic devices. Texting or other mobile communications is not permitted during class.
- **No laptop or tablet use is permitted in the classroom.** Multi-tasking is not conducive to fully-engaged discussion and learning.
- Students are expected and obliged to conduct themselves in class in a professional manner. Professionalism refers to adherence to standards of behavior and performance expected from political scientists. This includes, but is not limited to, courteous behavior in class; attention to other speakers; and engagement with the work at hand.

**Guest Speakers.** Several guest speakers have been invited to share their expertise with our class. Our guests are current and former elected officials and policy experts. As the availability of speakers can change, I will keep the class advised of changes in scheduling.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Week/Date</u>	<u>Topics; Assignments</u>	<u>Readings</u>
<b>Week 1:</b> January 14 January 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Introduction and Overview</li> <li>• Approaches to the Study of Urban Politics</li> <li>• Evolution and History of Cities</li> <li>• U.S. Cities in the Federalist System</li> <li>• Cities as Political Systems</li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> chs.1-2; <b>McG</b> Ch. 1 <i>Selected Reading 1</i>
<b>Week 2:</b> January 21 January 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Political Parties: <i>Rise of the Machines</i></li> <li>• Reform Initiatives</li> <li>• Urban Voters and National Politics</li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> chs. 3, 4, 5 <b>McG</b> chs. 3, 4 Selected Reading 2
<b>Week 3:</b> January 28 January 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politics of the Pre-Industrial City</li> <li>• Urban Political Economy and the Future of Urban Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Urban Decline</li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> ch. 12 <b>McG</b> Ch. 2 <i>Selected Reading 3</i>
<b>Week 4:</b> February 4 February 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in the Postindustrial City</li> <li>• Urban Economic Development: <i>Politics of the Urban Public Investment</i></li> <li>• Public Spaces and Privatization</li> <li>• Guest Speakers: <i>Jeremy Paris (The Raben Group)</i> and <i>Chris Ronayne (University Circle, Inc.)</i></li> <li>• <b>Short Paper Assigned</b> (due February 20)</li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> ch. 13; <b>McG</b> chs. 6 <i>Selected Reading 4</i>
<b>Week 5:</b> February 11 February 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities and Public Education</li> <li>• Suburban-Central City Dichotomy</li> </ul>	<i>Additional Selected Readings TBD</i>
<b>Week 6:</b> February 18 February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crabgrass Frontiers: Urban Flight and Suburban Sprawl</li> <li>• Ascendancy of Sunbelt Cities; Rustbelt Decline</li> <li>• Governing Urban Regions: Fragmentation and Initiatives for Metropolitan Government and Regionalism</li> <li>• Guest Speaker: <i>Mayor David Weiss (Shaker Heights, OH)</i></li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> chs. 6, 9, 10, 11 <b>McG</b> Ch. 5
<b>Week 7:</b> February 25 February 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Urban Policy</li> <li>• From Reagan's Devolution to Today</li> <li>• Redefining Federalism</li> <li>• Guest Speaker: <i>TBD</i></li> </ul>	<b>J&amp;H</b> ch. 7; <b>McG</b> ch. 9

**Week 8:** March 3                      **MIDTERM EXAMINATION (March 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

- Week 8:** March 5
- City Planning: A Political Analysis; **Film Presentation:** *Cleveland: Confronting Decline in an American City* (Northern Lights Productions, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2006)
  - **Film Analysis Assigned** (due March 19)
- Selected Readings 5, 6, 7

**SPRING BREAK: March 9-13**

- Week 9:** March 17  
March 19
- Race, Poverty and Politics of the New Segregation
  - The Suburbs: *Politics of Space, Race and Ethnicity*
  - Evolving Challenges: *Economic Development, Public Safety and Regional Collaboration*
  - Guest Speakers: *TBD*
- J&H** ch. 8, 14;  
**McG** chs. 7, 8

- Week 10:** March 24  
(No Class on  
March 26<sup>th</sup>)
- Case Study: Participatory City Planning In Cleveland
  - Effects of Top-down Planning
  - Guest Speaker: *Robert Jaquay (Associate Director, Gund Foundation))(tentative)*
- Selected Readings 8, 9*

- Week 11:** March 31  
April 2
- Infrastructure and the Imperatives of Growth and Governance
  - Case Study: Infrastructure failure; Flint, Michigan
  - Guest Speaker: *Julius Ciaccia, former Chief Executive Officer of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District*
- Additional Selected Readings TBD*

- Week 12:** April 7  
April 9
- Urban Grassroots Activism
  - Regime Politics
- McG** chs. 10, 11

- Week 13:** April 14  
April 16
- Imperatives of Governance and the Urban Police Force
  - Police Misconduct and Federalism
  - Case Study: **Race, Public Safety and Police Legitimacy**
  - Guest Speaker: *Steven Dettelbach, Esq, (former U.S. Attorney (N.D. Ohio))*
- McG** ch. 12  
*Additional Selected Readings TBD*

- Week 14:** April 21  
April 23
- Urban Governance in the Global Era
  - Are U.S. Cities Governable?
- J&H** ch. 15;  
**McG** ch. 14

## APPENDIX I

### SELECTED READINGS

1. R.A, Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (Yale Univ. Press 1974) pp. 1-8.
2. William L. Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Practical Politics* (E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1963) **various excerpts**
3. P.Peterson, "Big Cities: Is the Problem Financial?" in *The Price of Federalism* (The Brookings Institution 1995).
4. P. Eisenberger, "The Politics of Bread and Circuses," *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2000).
5. D. W. Keating and N. Krumholz, "Downtown Plans of the 1980s: The Case for More Equity in the 1990s," *Journal of American Planning Assoc.*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (1991).
6. A. Altschuler, *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis* (Cornell Univ. Press 1965) pp. 1-13, 354-391.
7. J.E. Innes, "Planning Through Consensus Building: A New View of Comprehensive Planning," *Journal of American Planning Assoc.*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (1991).
8. R. Jaquay, "*Civic Vision: Participatory City Planning in Cleveland*," Kennedy School of Government Case Program (Case C16-91-1060.0), Harvard University 1991, pp. 1-17 (read carefully), scan remainder.

9. "Citizen Participation" in *Urban Society*, 14<sup>th</sup> ed., Myron A. Levine, ed. (McGraw Hill 2010).