PO 517. Urban Politics and Policy.

Fall 2014, Mondays 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, 312B

This course explores the impact of American urban and national politics on the implementation of local policy. We explore a variety of topics, including deindustrialization, white flight, housing policy, schools, incarceration, and regionalism. The course begins by outlining the historical, economic, and demographic constraints that shape cities’ policy-making capacities. We then look to understand the effects of these constraints on the contemporary implementation of urban policies, focusing our discussion on federal urban policies and policies within the purview of local officials.

In addition to completing the readings for each week, students are expected to participate actively in seminar discussions and activities. In addition, they will complete a 4-5 page city case study, a 3-page final paper proposal, a 5-7 minute oral presentation on their final paper, and a 12-15 page final paper.

Course Requirements

4-5 Page City Case Study

The first assignment for this course will be a 4-5 page (double-spaced, 12 pt font, with 1-inch margins) paper due to me by e-mail (kleinst@bu.edu) on October 13 at 9 AM. This case study will explore how trends discussed in class have shaped the demography of a metropolitan area of each student’s choosing. The instructor must approve the student’s choice of a city case study in advance, and it cannot be the city of Boston (which will be the subject of all of your final papers). We will discuss helpful data sources for this paper in class on September 22.

12-15 Page Policy Paper (including 3-Page Policy Proposal and 5-7 Minute Oral Presentation)

The major assignment for this course will be a policy case study detailing the implementation of a policy of the student’s choosing in the Boston metropolitan area. Students will structure this paper as if it is a recommendation to city/regional leaders or state/federal officials about the policy under study. The
paper will cover: (1) A brief background on the policy and region under study; (2) An examination of how the constraints we have studied in class affect the implementation of this policy; and (3) Recommendations on strategies to render the implementation of the policy more effective, based on the constraints highlighted in (2). Students will be expected to use both secondary and primary sources in completing this paper. It will be due December 14 at 9 PM. Students will also be required to complete a 5-7 minute oral presentation on their findings and recommendations in the final class (December 8).

To ensure the timely completion of this project, students will turn in a 3-page proposal on October 27 at 9 PM summarizing their (1) topic; (2) planned sources, and; (3) preliminary findings.

Reading Responses

Over the course of the semester, students are required to submit two 2-page reading responses (double-spaced with one-inch margins) by midnight on the Sunday before the seminar meets. Reading responses should not simply be a summary of the reading. Instead, a reading response should present a clear argument (with an easily identifiable thesis statement) that does one of two things: (1) compares and contrasts two (or more) readings from the same week; (2) compares and contrasts two (or more) readings from different weeks.

Participation

Regular attendance at seminar and active and informed participation are central to your and your classmates’ learning. Students are required to do the reading and participate actively in class.

In addition, most classes will feature an in-class, group activity (e.g., a debate). Participation in these activities will count towards each student’s participation grade.

Grading

    Participation             15%
    Reading Responses         15%
    City Case Study           25%
    Final Policy Proposal, Paper, and Presentation 45%

September 8. Introduction. What can cities do?


I. The Political Context of the City

**September 15. The Limited City? Horizontal and Vertical Constraints**

Paul Peterson, *City Limits*, Chapters 2, 3

Dreier et al., *Place Matters*, Chapter 5


**September 22. Federal Urban Policy and the Limited City**

Rae, Chapter 8

Dreier et al., *Place Matters*, Chapter 4


**Class Demo on Using the Census Website.**

**September 29. Racial Threat, Coalition-Building, and Electoral Constraints**

Claire Kim, *Bitter Fruit*, Chapter 4


Karen Kaufmann, *The Urban Vote*, Chapter 5


**October 6. Urban-Suburban Divide**

Chen and Rodden. 2012. “Unintentional gerrymandering: Political geography and electoral bias in legislatures.”


Dreier et al., *Place Matters*, Chapter 6
II. Policy Implementation in the City.

October 13. Columbus Day.

Sampson, *Great American City*, Chapters 6, 10
Rusk, *Inside Game Outside Game*, Chapters 2, 7

City case study due.

October 20. Policy in Boston

Shadow Campus series in *Boston Globe* (all three parts):
http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/specials/shadow-campus

Jenny Schuetz. 2008. “Guarding the Town Walls: Mechanisms and Motives for Restricting Multifamily Housing in Massachusetts”

“On the Right Track: Meeting Greater Boston’s Land Use Challenges” Urban Land Institute Boston District Council

A. Within-City Policies: The Case of Redistribution

October 27. When Do Cities Redistribute?


Einstein, Katherine Levine and David M. Glick. 2014. “Cities Inequality and Redistribution: Evidence from a Survey of Mayors.”

Final Paper Proposal Due

November 3. Redistribution at the Federal Level: The Case of Public Housing Policy


**B. Targeting Jurisdictions**

**November 10. School Case Study**


Read *Milliken V. Bradley* opinion (Burger), concurrence (Stewart), and three dissents by Douglas, White, and Marshall: [http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC.CR.0418.0717.ZD.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC.CR.0418.0717.ZD.html)


**November 17. Sustainability**

Portney, Kent E. and Jeffrey M. Berry. 2010. “Participation and the Pursuit if Sustainability in U.S. Cities.” *Urban Affair Review*


Joseph Stromberg. “Should bikes and cars share the same road and the same rules?”

**C. State and Federal Policies with Disproportionate Urban Impacts**

**November 24. Incarceration**

Todd Clear, *Imprisoning Communities*, Chapter 6


**December 1. Family Policy**


Kathryn Edin and Maria Kerfalas. 2005. *Promises I can Keep*, Chapters 2, 3, 6, Conclusion

**December 8. Presentation of Final Projects**