PLSI 512: URBAN POLITICS AND COMMUNITY POWER
Spring 2013 (4 units)

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Class Meeting:
Tues & Thurs 2:10 – 3:50pm
Location: HSS 107

Course Description:
This course will provide an overview of the major issues and theories of urban and local politics. The study of democracy and political power has historically been connected to the study of cities and localities. Whether it is Plato's image of the Ideal Republic, Robert Dahl's study of New Haven, Clarence Stone's examination of Atlanta, or DeLeon's study of San Francisco progressive politics, the study of urban politics has served to illuminate critical debates about power and democratic politics in America: Is political power the exclusive domain of elite and/or corporate interests or do groups and interests possess a pluralistic diversity of resources that can affect political outcomes? Do urban political processes and elected decision-makers matter at all, or are decisions mostly constrained by structural economic forces?

The course offers a focus on racial and ethnic politics at the local level. How do economic, institutional, and sociological factors affect the ability of racial and ethnic minorities to achieve political incorporation? Have race-based political movements proved effective? How does public opinion and political participation vary by racial and ethnic group?

The course will provide students with grounding in the various theories and perspectives available to answer many such questions, and will provide students an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to current urban problems and issues. The course will also focus on some specifics of urban politics in California, including urban sprawl, gentrification, and globalization.

A significant portion of the course will involve student participation in a role-playing simulation about government decision-making at the local level. The simulation will function as a laboratory for the students to experience some of the complexity and tensions involved in local politics, and as a means of learning the skills required to make political decisions.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:
- Develop critical thinking skills related to understanding the competing theories of urban political power and influence.
- Understand processes of urban development (suburbanization, gentrification, and globalization) and associated political conflicts.
- Explore the fundamental role of race and racial attitudes to many issues and conflicts in urban America.
- Participate in a role-playing simulation of urban governance.
- Develop a research paper related to urban political issues and processes.
Course Requirements and Assignments:
You are expected to attend class and to be prepared to participate in detailed discussion of the required reading for that class date. Your course grade will be based on your performance on the following:

- **Mid-Term Examination (25%): Thursday, February 28**
- **Camelot Role-Playing Participation and Written Assessment (20%):** You will participate in a multi-session role-playing simulation based on governance and decision making in a medium sized city. You will write a 4 – 5 page written assessment relating your experience of the simulation to the themes of the course. Your grade will be based on your written assessment and the quality and creativity of your participation during the simulation.
  
  **Camelot Written Assessment Due:** Tuesday, April 2

- **Research Paper (25%):** You will be required to write a paper based on research into a topic relevant to urban studies and/or politics. (8 – 10 pages). You will be required to submit a Topic Proposal plus a more in depth Paper Prospectus / Outline (5% of grade)
  
  **Research Paper Proposal (5%) Due:** Thursday, April 18
  
  **Research Paper Due:** Tuesday, May 14

- **Final Examination (25%):** Tuesday, May 21, 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Required Texts:
2. Course Reader (Individual articles accessed via iLearn).

Disability Services:
Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to complete all exams and papers on their own. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated, and are grounds for failure in the course.
For more information about plagiarism, you can read the Political Science Department’s policy: http://politicalscience.sfsu.edu/plagiarism-policy

Assignment Deadlines: All assignment deadlines are firm. Extensions will be granted only for good cause – such as a documented medical problem, and should whenever possible be arranged with the instructor beforehand. *Travel arrangements are not good cause for an extension.* A grade penalty will be assessed for papers that are turned in late.
PROPOSED COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: URBAN POLITICAL HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF CITIES AND SUBURBS

Tues Jan 29: Course Intro: Why Study Urban Politics?

Thurs Jan 31: The Urban Situation: Resilient / Vulnerable Cities
   Required Reading:
   • Ross and Levine, Chapter 1

Tues Feb 5: Urbanization and Suburbanization
   Required Reading:
   • Ross and Levine, Chapter 2

Thur Feb 7: Urban Political Machines
   Required Reading:
   • Ross and Levine, Chapter 6
   • Croker, “Tammany Hall and the Democracy” [iLearn Course Reader]

Tues Feb 12: Reform and Post-Reform Politics
   Required Reading:
   • Ross and Levine, Chapter 6

PART II: THEORIES OF URBAN POWER AND POLITICS

Thur Feb 14: Elite Theory and Pluralist Theory
   Required Reading:
   • Ross and Levine, Chapter 4, “Who Has the Power?”
   • Dahl, "Who Governs?" [iLearn Course Reader]

Tues Feb 19: Structuralism: Neo-Marxist Urbanism and Peterson's Limited City
   Required Reading:
   • Mollenkopf, “How to Study Urban Political Power” [iLearn Course Reader]
   • Peterson, “The Interests of the Limited City” [iLearn Course Reader]

Thur Feb 21: Urban Regime Theory: Political Leadership and Constraints
   Required Reading:
   • Clarence Stone, “Looking Back to Look Forward: Reflections on Urban Regime Analysis” [iLearn Course Reader]

Tues Feb 26: Midterm Review Lecture

Thur Feb 28: Midterm Examination
PART III: CAMELOT ROLE-PLAYING SIMULATION

Tues Mar 5: Camelot Introduction
   Required Reading:
      • Camelot: A Role-Playing Simulation of Political Decision Making, Chapters 9 – 14

Thurs March 7 – Thurs March 21: CAMELOT ROLE-PLAY SIMULATION

TUES MAR 9: RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL DUE

MARCH 25 – APRIL 1: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

PART IV: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Tues Apr 2: Documentary: Streetfight

Tues April 2: CAMELOT WRITTEN SELF-ASSESSMENT DUE

Thur Apr 4: Racial Politics in Urban America
   Required Reading:
      • Sonenshein, “The Prospects for Multiracial Coalitions” in Racial Politics in American Cities [iLearn Course Reader]

Tues Apr 9: Racial Politics: Diversity and Immigration
   Required Reading:
      • Oliver, Paradoxes of Integration, Chp 1 and 2 [iLearn Course Reader]

Thur Apr 11: Civic Engagement & Electoral Participation
   Required Reading:
      • Ross and Levine, Chapter 7
      • Trounstine, “Representation and Accountability in Cities” [iLearn Course Reader]

Tues April 16: Gender and the City
   Required Reading:
      • To Be Announced

Part V: Urban Governance: Problems and Solutions

Thur April 18: RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Thur April 18: Documentary: Price of Renewal

Tues April 23: Urban Development: Gentrification and Globalization
   Required Reading:
      • Ross and Levine, Chapter 3

Thur Apr 25: Urban Governance: Mayoral Leadership and Formal Structures
   Required Reading:
      • Ross and Levine, Chapter 5
      • Glaeser, “Do Mayors Matter?” [iLearn Course Reader]
Tues Apr 30: Environmental Sustainability
Required Reading:
  • Glaser, *Triumph of the City*, Chapter 7 and 8 [iLearn Course Reader]

Thur May 2: Urban Service Delivery and Bureaucracy
Required Reading:
  • Ross and Levine, Chapter 8

Tues May 7: Crime and Law Enforcement
Required Reading:
  • To Be Announced

Thurs May 9: Politics of Suburbia
Required Reading:
  • Ross and Levine, Chapter 9

**Tues May 14: RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

Tues May 14: Urban Reform: Regionalism and the Intergovernmental City
Required Reading:
  • Ross and Levine, Chapters 10 and 11

Thurs May 16: Final Exam Review

**FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, MAY 21 AT 1:30 – 4:00PM**

*Note: This is a proposed course outline. I reserve the right to make necessary and appropriate changes.*