

QUEENS COLLEGE
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Urban Studies 105
Urban Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the governance of US cities, especially New York City. It explores the historical development of governmental structures, political parties, machine politics and reform movements in US cities. Theories of power in the urban setting and the role of advocacy groups, ethnic organizations, business, labor, and other interest and activist groups will be discussed.

General Education Requirements: This course fulfills two general education requirements. Through its discussion of urban studies methods and techniques for studying social systems and the relationship of urban studies to other disciplines, this course fulfills the “Analyzing Social Structures” Area requirement. Because this course engages in discussions of the American political system, social values and attitudes toward government and society, and the role of urban residents in shaping those institutions and values, it fulfills the “United States” Context of Experience requirement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A) To enable students to gain substantive knowledge of
- the historical development of American urban political institutions
 - the current structure of New York City and New York State government and the opportunities for political participation at the city, state and community level
 - the relationships between city governments and state and national level institutions within the context of the American federal system
 - the nature of the process of policy-making within US cities and metropolitan areas
 - the impact of globalization on US cities and suburbs
 - current policy issues in New York City and the metropolitan area
- B) To enable students to become confident in applying theoretical frameworks to observed urban political processes and events
- C) To provide opportunities for students to consider their own roles as participants in metropolitan policy-making through interaction with current public officials and community activists.

COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS, GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance and Class Participation. Classes will involve discussions of the assigned reading. Students should read the assignment prior to class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Attendance and informed participation are very important in this course. Class participation accounts for 10% of the final course grade. There will be short assignments during the semester, such as reading the website of a City Council member. These will be collected, but not graded. They are part of your attendance and participation grade

Field /Research Assignments. Two short research essays will be assigned. Detailed instructions are provided on the separate paper assignment sheet. The first assignment is due on April 2, due date for the second paper is May 5. No extensions are granted. Each short essay accounts for 25% of the course grade.

Examinations. Two examinations will be given. Questions are on course reading, class discussions, lectures, films and course speakers. The first exam is 25% of the course grade, the second is 15%.

The New York Times. Students should read the national news in Section A and the Metro section (B) of the New York Times at least twice a week and save relevant articles to share in class discussions. Additional articles from the New York Times will be assigned during the semester. The Times is available in the QC library and on line. Articles can be downloaded for free within the first week of publication.

COURSE OUTLINE

Required Texts:

Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom , City Politics, The Political Economy of Urban America , 6th ed., Pearson/Longman, 2008.

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York, What Makes New York City Run?

Collection of New York Times articles on NYC issues (hand-outs)

The New York Times

| DATE | TOPIC |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1/28 | I. Course Introduction and Overview Why Study Urban Politics? |
| 1/30, 2/4 | Themes, Concepts and Frameworks Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch 1 NYTimes assignment |
| | II. Urban Growth, Forms and Ideologies of Governance |
| 2/6 | The Urbanization of America Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch.2 |
| 2/11 | Machine Politics Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch. 3 |
| 2/13 | The Reform Movement Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch, 4 |
| 2/18 | College Closed |
| | III. Ethnic Change and Urban Politics |
| 2/20, 2/25 | Migration and Immigration |
| 2/27 | Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch.9 Assignment: family histories/ Film, “Eyes on the Prize” |
| | IV. Governmental Structure and Policy-making |
| 3/03, 3/05, 3/10, 3/12 | The Structure of NYC Government Reading : What Makes NYC Run? Speaker on Community Boards and the City Council |
| 3/17 | City Budgets and Public Policy Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch. 12 |

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| 3/19 | Review for First Exam |
| 3/24 | No classes |
| 3/26 | First Exam |
| 3/31, 4/2 | Ethnic Politics and Political Participation Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Chs. 14, 10 Speaker on Immigrant Empowerment |
| 4/2 | First paper due |
| 4/7, 4/9 | V. National Policy and the Cities The New Deal and the Cities Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch.5 Federal Policies: Segregation and Suburbanization Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Ch.6 |
| | VI. Urban Politics and Its Impact on Policy Issues |
| 4/14, 4/16 | Housing and Land Use Policy Reading: TBA |
| 4/21, 4/23 | Spring Recess |
| 4/28 | Environmental Policy Reading: Noxious New York, Ch.4 |
| 4/30 | Transportation Policy Reading: |
| 5/5, 5/7 | Metropolitan Governance Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, Chs. 10, 11 |
| 5/5 | Second paper due |
| 5/12, 5/14 | VI. Course Summary and Review |

Useful Web sites for this course include:

New York City Council - <http://www.nycouncil.info>
State Assembly - <http://assembly.state.ny.us>
State Senate - <http://www.senate.state.ny.us>
The Official New York City website - <http://home.nyc.gov>
New York State - www.state.ny.us
Find US Government sites - www.firstgov.gov
League of Women Voters of NYC--- www.lwvnyc.org