Graduate Colloquium: Urban Politics

Fall 2008
Monday, 2:10-4:00pm
326 International Affairs

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-4 pm & by appointment

Course Description

This seminar is designed as an overview of the major debates in Urban Politics. The primary goals of the course are to familiarize students with the principal questions being asked by scholars in this subfield, the methodological approaches employed, and the avenues available for future research. Methodological diversity will be emphasized.

Course Requirements

Reading & Discussion
This course is conducted in a discussion format so it is essential that students complete all of the required readings prior to class. Our seminar discussions will sacrifice scope for the rigorous examination of each of the week’s readings. All students must be prepared to participate. Participation grades will be determined by the quality of informed commentary contributed during our discussions.

For each book or article, students should focus on the following:
1) What is the research question?
2) What is the author’s argument?
3) What evidence does the author use to answer his/her question?
4) What conclusions are reached?
5) Is this article/book convincing? Why?
6) How might the author’s research be improved?
7) How (if at all) does this article/book contribute to our existing understanding of urban politics?

Assignments
Students are required to complete six short (4-5pages) review papers reacting to the week’s readings. Students are free to write papers for the weeks of their choosing. However, these papers must be turned in (via e-mail) no later than 5 p.m. on the Sunday prior to class. No late papers are accepted. These papers must address all of the week’s readings. Furthermore, students should avoid summarization and instead present critical analysis.
Grades for the seminar will be based upon performance in two areas:

Class Participation: 30%
Review Papers: 70%

TOPICS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

September 15th: Pluralism & Regime Theory
(3) Clarence Stone (1989). *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta*

September 22nd: The City as a Growth Machine

September 29th: Bureaucratic Power

October 6th: The Market, Globalization, and Neoliberalism
(2) Paul Peterson (1981). *City Limits*

October 13th: No Seminar
October 20th: Machine & Reform Politics
(2) Amy Bridges (1997). Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest

October 27th: Racial Coalitions and Conflict

November 3rd: University Holiday

November 10th: Voting in Multi-Racial Cities

November 17th: Urban Political Participation & Civic Engagement

November 24th: Urban Political Institutions and Reform
(2) Raphael J. Sonenshein (2004). The City at Stake: Session, Reform, and the Battle for Los Angeles
December 1st: The Fragmented Metropolis
(1) Nancy Burns (1994). *Formation of American Local Governments: Private Values in Public Institutions*
(2) Gary Miller (1981). *Cities by Contract: The Politics of Municipal Incorporation*

December 8th: Addressing Urban Poverty
(1) William Wilson (1987). *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*
(2) Nicole P. Marwell (2007). *Bargaining for Brooklyn: Community Organizations in the Entrepreneurial City*

Makeup Course?: The Future of Urban Politics Research