

HUNTER COLLEGE, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
Urban Affairs and Planning

**Political Economy of Cities** URBG 78718

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Spring 2015

Monday, 5:35pm – 7:25pm

West Bldg W113

**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Cities are at once sites, products, and constituents of political and economic change. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has ushered in an ‘urban age’ where more than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. But this demographic fact obscures the complexity of the interconnection between cities, politics, and the economy. At the beginning of the so-called ‘urban age’, cities have been critical sites of both significant political and economic transformations. The protests of Occupy Wall Street, ‘Los Indignados’ in Spain, and the more recent protests over policing are *urban political* movements. The global recession has urban roots in the housing bubble of the 2000s, and the economic dislocations from the financial crisis continue to reverberate through the urban world, restructuring how cities develop, are governed, and the everyday experience for urban dwellers. Beyond the simple arithmetic of an urban-based population rests questions about the nature, scale, and consequences of urban political economic change.

This course will begin with an introduction to different ways of understanding how cities fit into the larger political economy, and the limits and/or opportunities that such a position presents for planning and governing cities. Theories of urban political economy situate the role of cities in political economy, variously asserting that cities are active participants in shaping change or passive receivers of outside forces which they must respond to or face decline. Furthermore, each perspective of urban political economy uses different methods to assess what is driving urban change—focusing on local political elites, private actors, urban dwellers themselves, or on political and economic actors at other levels beyond the city. Urban political economic theory will provide the tools to reflect on urban change in historical and geographical context (and also to critique the theories themselves), using examples from the U.S. urban experience. The topics will include how cities have changed through periods of de/industrialization and urban crisis, reinvestment, and gentrification. The final part of the course will expand the urban frame to include international perspectives, providing insight into how urban political economy and the study of it continue to change through global urbanization.

## COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Become familiar with different theories, frameworks, and views on the political economy of cities
- Be able to follow major debates about how cities grow and change
- Gain understanding about historical periods of urban political economic change, both in the U.S. and in broader international perspective

## EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Reading and active participation in class discussions (10%).

This course is taught as a *graduate-level seminar*, which means that students drive weekly discussion. Each member of the class shares responsibility to participate in the teaching and learning each week. This requires each member of the class to:

- Attend class regularly
- Complete the assigned readings in full before each of the class meetings
- Reflect on readings and prepare for class discussion
- Engage with other members of the class in a respectful and constructive exchange of thoughts and discussion of ideas

### 2. Leading group discussion (15%).

Each week a student will take the lead in class discussions. The student who is leading the class for the week should come prepared with a set of topics and questions to facilitate discussion.

### 3. Completion of two essay assignments and a final paper.

The two essay assignments will serve as draft sections that will become part of your final course paper. All papers should be submitted in hard copy, and must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and conform to professional standards of grammar, punctuation and citation format. In general, late work is not accepted. If you cannot meet a deadline, you must contact me *before* the due date.

#### Topic Selection - Due February 9 - 10%)

Students write a brief (one page) summary of the specific city and political economic change that will be the topic of the final paper.

#### Essay 1 – Due March 9 - (15%): Theories of Urban Political Economy

Students will **summarize and evaluate** the approaches to understanding the political economy of cities discussed in Part I of the course in a **5-7 page essay**. What do the differing approaches tell you about the how cities change? What do theories tell you to be looking for

in terms of the important actors and forces that produce political economic change? The paper must not only summarize, but also evaluate the different ways to understand and study urban political economy.

**Annotated Bibliography – Due March 23<sup>rd</sup> (10%)**

Submit a bibliography of at least 2-4 sources with brief descriptions of what information the source contributes to the selected topic.

**Essay 2 - Due April 13 - (15%): Urban Change**

Using their selected city, students will examine one important political economic change in a **5-7 page essay**, for example, the transformation of the Lower East Side of Manhattan since the 1970s. Using one (or more) of the methods reviewed in the first essay, the paper should describe the specific case of political economic transformation.

**Final Course Paper – Due May 18 - (25%)**

Students will write a final paper of **15-20 pages** that incorporate and expand on their two previous essays. The final paper should 1) summarize the relevant urban political economy theory and explain which theory provides the best framework for studying the particular case; 2) describe the specific case of political economic change in the city; 3) explain, analyze, reflect on that change using the theoretical frameworks outlined; 4) make conclusions about the case study—what is its significance for understanding how cities are changing?; 5) make conclusions about how the political economy frameworks help (or impede) us in understanding urban change, and if the case study makes new contributions in understanding contemporary urban political economy.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES / ESL**

Please advise me if you have a documented disability that needs to be accommodated or if English is your second language. In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encourage to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For

information and appointments contact the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214 or call 212-772-4857 or VRS 646-755-3129.

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### PART I: INTRODUCTION TO URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

#### **February 2 Introduction and Overview**

*Themes and Topics:* Review syllabus, introductions, expectations (all around)

*Required Readings:* **Watch 'The Urban Age' in Question, begin at 10:00 minute mark,**  
<http://urbantheorylab.net/videos/the-urban-age-in-question/>

*Additional Readings:*

#### **February 9 Urban Political Economy**

*Themes and Topics:* What is 'urban political economy'? Why study cities this way?

*Required Readings:* Brenner, N. (2013). Theses on urbanization. *Public Culture*, 25(1 69), 85-114.  
Brown, W. (2002). At the edge. *Political Theory*, 30(4), 556-576.  
Mitchell, T. (1998). Fixing the economy. *Cultural studies*, 12(1), 82-101.

*Additional Readings:*

### PART II: URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMIC THEORY

#### **February 16 Origins and Purpose of Cities**

*Themes and Topics:* Enclosure, Urbanization, Modernization

*Required Readings:* Polanyi, Karl. (1944/2001). Ch. 3 "Habitation versus improvement", pp. 35-43; Ch. 7 "Speenhamland, 1795", pp. 81-89; Ch. 8 "Antecedents and Consequences", pp. 90 -107 in *The Great Transformation*.  
Williams, Raymond. (1973). Ch. 7 "The morality of improvement," pp.60-67 and Ch. 19 "Cities of darkness and light," pp. 215-232 in *The Country and the City*.

*Additional Readings:* Burgess, Earnest W., and Bogue. (1964). "Research in Urban Sociology: A Long View", in *Urban Sociology*, Burgess and Bogue, eds, pp. 1-16  
Jacobs, Jane. (1969). "Cities First—Rural Development Later" in *The*

*Economy of Cities.*

**February 23**

*Themes and Topics:*

**Views of the Urban**

What are cities for and how do we know? How/why do they grow and decline?

*Required Readings:*

Florida, Richard (2002). "The rise of the creative class," *Washington Monthly*, May.

Glaeser, Edward. (2009). Growth: The Death and Life of Cities. In *Making Cities Work: Prospects and Policies for Urban America*. Robert Inman (ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 22-62.

Harvey, D. (1978). The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 2(1-4), 101-131.

*Additional Readings:*

Jacobs, Jane. (1992). "The Kind of Problem a City is" in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Jacobs, Jane. (1961). "The uses of sidewalks: contact," from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Modern Library, pp. 72-96.

Porter, Michael. (1995). The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City. *Harvard Business Review*, May-June: 55-71.

**March 2**

*Themes and Topics:*

**Urban Politics**

Pluralism, Urban Regime, 'Growth Machine'

*Required Readings:*

Brenner, N. (2009). "Is there a politics of 'urban' development? In R. Dilworth (Ed.), *The City in American Political Development*, pp. 121-140.

Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. *American journal of Sociology*, 309-332.

Stone, C. N. (1993). Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: A political economy approach. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15(1), 1-28.

*Additional Readings:*

D. Judge. 1995. "Pluralism," in D. Judge, G. Stoker, and H. Wolman, eds., *Theories of Urban Politics*, pp. 13-35.

Ward, Kevin, et al. (2011). "Urban Politics: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue" in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(4): 853-871.

### **PART III: URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMIC CHANGE**

#### **March 9 Urban Restructuring I: Post-War Urbanization**

*Themes and Topics:* Urban Renewal, Suburbanization, Disinvestment, Deindustrialization, Redlining

*Required Readings:* Beauregard, R. A. (2006). "Parasitic Urbanization", in *When America Became Suburban*, pp. 40-69.  
Sugrue, T. J. (2005). "'The Damning Mark of False Prosperities': The Deindustrialization of Detroit", in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, pp. 125-152.  
Craig Steven Wilder, *A Covenant with Color*, Chapter 9, "Vulnerable People, Undesirable Places", pp. 175-217.

*Additional Readings:* Bluestone, B., & Harrison, B. (1982). *The Deindustrialization of America*.  
Hirsch, A. (1983). *Making the Second Ghetto*.

#### **March 16 'Back to the City'?**

*Themes and Topics:* Post-Industrial Economy, Post-Fordism, Gentrification, Uneven Development

*Required Readings:* Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly. (2008). "Contemporary Gentrification" from *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge.  
Smith, Neil (2005), "Gentrification, the frontier, and the restructuring of urban space," from *The Urban Geography Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 128-138.  
Marcuse, P. (1985). Gentrification, abandonment, and displacement: Connections, causes, and policy responses in New York City. *Wash. UJ Urb. & Contemp. L.*, 28, 195-240.

*Additional Readings:* Zukin, Sharon. (1983). *Loft Living*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

#### **March 23 Urban Restructuring II: 'Neoliberalization' of the City**

*Themes and Topics:* Urban Entrepreneurialism, Creative Class, Devolution

- Required Readings:* Hackworth, Jason. (2007). "Choosing a Neoliberal Path" in *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*, pp. 17-39.
- Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B. Human Geography*, 3-17.
- Re-read** Florida, Richard (2002). "The rise of the creative class," *Washington Monthly*, May.
- Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the creative class. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 29(4), 740-770.
- Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2005). Neoliberalism and the urban condition. *City*, 9(1), 101-107.

- Additional Readings:* Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and the geographies of "actually existing neoliberalism". *Antipode*, 34(3), 349-379.
- Fitch, R., & Fitch, R. (1993). *The Assassination of New York*. New York: Verso.
- Brash, J. (2011). *Bloomberg's New York: class and governance in the luxury city*. University of Georgia Press.
- Moody, K. (2007). *From welfare state to real estate: Regime change in New York City, 1974 to the present*. The New Press.

### **March 30**

#### *Themes and Topics:*

#### **'Financialization' of the City**

Finance-led development, role of finance in urban governance and community development

#### *Required Readings:*

- Weber, Rachel. (2010). Selling City Futures: The Financialization of Urban Redevelopment Policy, *Economic Geography*, 86, 251-274.
- Fields, D. (2014). Contesting the financialization of urban space: Community organizations and the struggle to preserve affordable rental housing in New York City. *Journal of Urban Affairs*.
- Ashton, P., Doussard, M., & Weber, R. (2014). Reconstituting the state: City powers and exposures in Chicago's infrastructure leases. *Urban Studies*.

#### *Additional Readings:*

- Krippner, G. R. (2011). *Capitalizing on crisis*. Harvard University Press.

**April 6 – Spring Break; No Class**



**April 13***Themes and Topics:***Post-Crisis Urban Restructuring**

Austerity

*Required Readings:*

Tabb, W. K. (1982). "The Imposition of Austerity" pp. 21-36, "State of Siege: Consequences of Balancing the Budget" pp. 37-54, and "The Political Economy of Blame" pp. 55-68, in *The Long Default*.

Akers, J. M. (2013). Making markets: Think tank legislation and private property in Detroit. *Urban Geography*, 34(8), 1070-1095.

Peck, J. (2012). Austerity urbanism: American cities under extreme economy. *City*, 16(6), 626-655.

Joshua Akers and John Patrick Leary, "Detroit on \$1 Million a Day", *Guernica*, July 2014. <https://www.guernicamag.com/daily/joshua-akers-and-john-patrick-leary-detroit-on-1-million-a-day/>

*Additional Readings:*

Schafran, A. (2013). Origins of an urban crisis: The restructuring of the San Francisco Bay area and the geography of foreclosure. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(2), 663-688.

Crump, J., Newman, K., Belsky, E. S., Ashton, P., Kaplan, D. H., Hammel, D. J., & Wyly, E. (2008). Cities destroyed (again) for cash: Forum on the US foreclosure crisis. *Urban Geography*, 29(8), 745-784.

**April 20***Themes and Topics:***No Class***Required Readings:**Additional Readings:***PART IV: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN CHANGE****April 27***Themes and Topics:***Global Urbanism**

Global Cities, Planetary Urbanization, Urban Comparison, policy 'mutation' and 'mobility'

*Required Readings:*

**Re-read** Brenner, N. (2013). Theses on urbanization. *Public Culture*, 25(1 69), 85-114.

Sassen, Saskia (2010). "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," in

*The Blackwell City Reader*, pp. 126-132.

Robinson, Jennifer (2002). "Global and world cities: A view from off the map," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26(3), 531-554.

Peck, J. (2011). Geographies of policy From transfer-diffusion to mobility-mutation. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(6), 773-797.

*Additional Readings:*

**May 4**

**Urban Informality**

*Themes and Topics:*

Informal housing, markets, legal property rights

*Required Readings:*

Roy, A. (2009). Why India cannot plan its cities: informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning theory*, 8(1), 76-87.

De Soto, Hernando. (2000). "The Mystery of Missing Information" and "The Mystery of Capital" in *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Elsewhere*, 15-67.

Mitchell T. (2007). "The properties of markets", in *Do Economists Make Markets? On the Performativity of Economics* Eds D MacKenzie, F Muniesa, L Siu (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ) pp 244-275

*Additional Readings:*

Davis, Mike. (2006). "The Illusions of Self-Help," from *Planet of Slums*. Verso, p. 70-94.

**May 11**

**Urban Marginality**

*Themes and Topics:*

'territorial stigmatization', slums

*Required Readings:*

Auyero, Javier (1999). 'This is a lot like the Bronx, isn't it?' Lived Experiences of Marginality in an Argentine Slum, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23(1): 45-69.

Davis, D. E. (2013). Zero-Tolerance Policing, Stealth Real Estate Development, and the Transformation of Public Space Evidence from Mexico City. *Latin American Perspectives*, 40(2), 53-76.

Ghertner, D. Asher (2011). "Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi," in A. Roy and A. Ong (Eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Blackwell, pp.279-306.

*Additional Readings:*

Wacquant, Loïc (2010). Stigma and Division: From the Core of Chicago to the Margins of Paris, in *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative*

*Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. London: Polity, pp. 162-198.  
Simone, Abdoumalig. (2004). People as infrastructure: Intersecting  
fragments in Johannesburg, *Public Culture* 16(3): 407-439.