

GVPT 461

Seminar in Local Politics and Government

Spring, 2019

M, W: 2:00-3:15, Tydings Hall, Room 2102

Dr. Richard N. Engstrom

Email: rengstro@umd.edu

Office: Tydings Hall, Room 1140D, and

Institute for Governmental Service and Research, 4321 Hartwick Road, Suite 208

Phone: 301-405-3997

Office Hours: Mondays, 12 – 1:30 (in Tydings office, and by appointment)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to local government and politics in the U.S. context. We will explore the evolution of local jurisdictions, particularly cities, and the politics that goes into local level decision making. At the end of the course you will have a better idea of the challenges faced by localities, as well as the different outcomes associated with different choices about local governance. You will also be able to develop informed opinions about how local governments can and do adapt to political and policy challenges, and conduct a short research project on the topic.

Classes will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays, and will involve both discussions led by the instructor and discussions led by students. The subject of the discussions will be the readings for the week, the media supplements assigned most weeks, and relevant additional topics as they come up. Your active participation in this seminar is important both for both the quality of the discussions and for your grade in this class.

Grades

In this class you will be assessed based on the following:

1. Performance on three **quizzes** (20% each, for a total of 60%)
2. Performance on a **seminar discussion assignment** (10%)
3. Performance on **final paper** (20%)
4. Quality of **participation** in seminar discussions (10%)

Quizzes will be short-essay tests, requiring 2-3 paragraphs per answer. Questions will be drawn from readings and seminar discussions. Each student will be paired with another student and assigned to lead part of a class discussion based on the week's reading and/or the media supplements, and the instructor will assess the students' preparation, presentation, and the

extent to which the students generate and sustain a useful discussion. The **final paper** is an 8 to 10-page paper examining an aspect of local government covered in the course, the topic of which must be approved by the instructor. **Participation** in seminars will involve an evaluation of the frequency and quality of student participation in discussions.

Final grades will be assigned on the following scale:

A+	98-100%
A	92-97%
A-	90-91%
B+	88-89%
B	82-87%
B-	80-81%
C+	78-79%
C	72-77%
C-	70-71%
D+	68-69%
D	62-67%
D-	60-61%
F	59% or lower

Textbooks

There are five required textbooks in this course:

- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Modern Library.
- Glaeser, Edward. *Triumph of the City*. Penguin Books.
- Oliver, J. Eric. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small Scale Democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Florida, Richard. *The New Urban Crisis*. Basic Books.

- Sadik-Khan, Janette. 2016. *Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. Penguin Books.

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Readings
Week 1	1/28-30	Jacobs, Part 1: The Strengths of Cities
Week 2	2/4-6	Jacobs, Part 2-3: Declining Cities Media: TED Talk, " <i>How to Protect Fast Growing Cities from Failing</i> "
Week 3	2/11-13	Jacobs, Part 4: Repairing Cities Oliver, Intro-Ch 3: Local Elections and Participation Media: Paul Stekler, Postcards from the Great Divide (in class)
Week 4	2/18-20	Oliver, Ch 4-6: Systemic Factors in Local Elections Media: documentary " <i>Daley: The Last Boss</i> " (in class)
Week 5	2/25-27	Review Session, 2/25 QUIZ 1, 2/27
Week 6	3/4-6	Glaeser, Intro-Ch 3: How Cities Address Challenges Media: Freakonomics Podcast, " <i>Why Cities Rock</i> "
Week 7	3/11-13	Glaeser, Ch 4-7: Development of Cities Media: TED Talk: <i>Why Glass Towers Are Bad for City Life –And What We Need Instead</i> "
Week 8	3/18-20	SPRING BREAK
Week 9	3/25-27	Glaeser, Ch 8-Conclusion: Triumph of Cities?

		Media: TED Talk, " <i>Who Belongs in a City?</i> "
Week 10	4/1-3	Paper Workshop, 4/1 Review Session, 4/3
		QUIZ 2, 4/8
Week 11	4/8-10	Florida, Preface-Ch 3: The Creative Class and Urban Change Media: Radiolab podcast, " <i>Cities</i> "
		Florida, Ch 4-6: Inequality in Cities
Week 12	4/15-17	Media: WNYC Radio Podcast: " <i>Forget 'The Bronx is Burning.' These Days, The Bronx is Gentrifying</i> "
		Florida, Ch 7-10: Toward a More Inclusive City
Week 13	4/22-24	Media: TED Talk, " <i>The Biggest Risks Facing Cities –And Some Solutions</i> "
		Sadik-Khan, Intro-Ch 4: Transportation and Infrastructure
Week 14	4/29-5/1	Media: This American Life Podcast, " <i>What Kind of Country</i> " (Act Three, " <i>Do You Want a Wake Up Call?</i> ")
		Sadik-Khan, Ch 5-8: Old Ideas
Week 15	5/6-8	Media: John Oliver, "Special Districts" (in class)
		Sadik-Khan, Ch 9-13: New Ideas and Future Cities
Week 16	5/13	Media: TED Talk, " <i>Why Mayors Should Rule the World</i> "
		FINAL PAPER DUE, 5/13, AT THE END OF CLASS
Final Exam	5/20 1:30pm	QUIZ 3

Make-up Assignments

Make-up Exams and Assignments will be given as a result of a documented, unexpected emergency or as the result of a university-authorized commitment.

Contacting the Instructor

Students with requests or questions about the class should feel free to contact the instructor. I am happy to meet with students to discuss issues related to DSS accommodations, class content, or other issues related to the class.

Additional Course Information

The syllabus is tentative, and mid-semester changes to the class may be necessary. Changes are at the discretion of the instructor, and will be announced in class. Students are required to ensure that their emails are registered with ELMS.

Additional information about course-related policies at the University of Maryland, including academic integrity, sexual misconduct, and discrimination, can be found on the Course Related Policies page, hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Studies:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>