

**INTL 190: Urban Politics**  
COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRINT QUARTER 2020

TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS, 11:00am-12:20pm  
(zoom schedule on Canvas)

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OH Wed 1:30PM-3:00PM (sign up on google sheet [here](#))

Syllabus will be updated regularly during the quarter – check on Canvas

**Course Description**

It is an exciting time to study local politics! In the age of partisan polarization and gridlock in Congress, city governments in the U.S. are emerging as a form of government at the forefront of policy change and innovation. Moreover, local elected offices are increasingly being created or strengthened throughout the developing world. Finally, with the rise of computational social science, field experiments and causal inference, much of cutting-edge political economy research is becoming local in nature and turning to city governments to take advantage of micro data and opportunities for quasi-experimental designs.

This course will introduce you to the study of local politics in the U.S. and abroad. The focus on this class will be on politics rather than policies: we will focus on how local political institutions and political selection at the local level affect the balance of power and, ultimately, the policies adopted.

The first part of the course will focus on U.S. Municipal government and study their impact on the day-to-day of citizens. We will explore city policies and their limits, the impulse toward reform of city governments in the U.S., and the effects of reform efforts on the distribution of power in and across communities. The second part of the course will explore local governments in a comparative perspective, with a focus on developing countries.

Throughout, one goal of the course will be to help you familiarize and become informed consumers of state-of-the-art quantitative research in local political economy.

At the end of the course students will produce a research paper exploring a topic of choice in local politics.

**Final Papers**

Each student will submit an individual project: 15 pages original research project. The purpose of the project is to expand on one of the topics covered in class, and to develop and test an original hypothesis. Support for your hypothesis can be found in data (empirical project) or in the existing literature (literature project).

**Course Format**

Classes are discussion-based. Readings are mandatory and are to be completed before each class. The last two classes will be devoted to presentations of final projects.

**Course Materials**

The textbook *City Politics* (9<sup>th</sup> edition), by Judd and Swanstrom, is required and available at the bookstore. All other readings will be posted to Canvas.

**Grading**

Participation: 60%

Final Paper: 40%

**Laptop Policy**

This course will be laptop free. Please bring a notebook and pen or pencil to take notes. We will periodically take time to compare and review notes as a class to aid your learning. After the first 5 weeks, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on how the laptop free environment is working for you, and I may adjust the policy at that point.

**Academic Integrity:**

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. All final papers will be submitted through Canvas. Students are welcome to write their course paper on a subject on which they have worked previously, but any students doing so will be asked to turn in the previous version of their paper at the beginning of the quarter and will be graded based on the additional content of the paper generated during the course of the quarter.

**Course Outline:**

**Week 1 – March 31: Class Presentation and Overview**

- No readings

**Week 1 – April 2: City Limits?**

- Peterson, Paul E., *City Limits* (p. 3-4; 15-16; 29-38)
- Ferreira, Fernando, and Joseph Gyourko (2009) “Do Political Parties Matter? Evidence from U.S. Cities,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (1): 399-422.
- Gerber, Elisabeth R., and Daniel J. Hopkins (2011) “When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2): 36-339.  
Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:
  - Why does Peterson write that “cities are limited”? What does the Tiebout Model say (based on what we learn in Peterson)? What are the assumptions of the model? What are the consequences for the types of policies that can/cannot be enacted at the local level?
  - Do Ferreira and Gyourko (2009) find support in the data for the Tiebout/Peterson hypothesis?
  - What does Gerber and Hopkins (2011) show about the Tiebout/Peterson hypothesis? This paper proposes an additional explanation that centers on accountability and federalism: can you identify it? What is the main difference between the two papers? Can this difference explain the results?

**Week 2 – April 7: Early Days of City Politics**

- Judd, Dennis R., and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics* (chapter 2)
- Dahl, Robert A., *Who Governs?* (p.1-8; 11-17; 20-24; 25-62; 85-86) [[presentation](#)] [Sabrina](#)

- Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz (1962) “Two Faces of Power” *American Political Science Review*, 56(4): 947-952.

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- What is the link between the economics structure of American society and political inequality according to Dahl? What are the main phases?
- Did the rise of industrial society eradicate political inequality? Was the process affected by changes in political institutions as well?
- Is there political equality in the pluralist system?
- What role did immigration play? What is the link between immigration and the limited city?
- What role did city policies like transportation play?
- Can we understand who governs by observing the decision-making process and its outcomes?

**Week 2 – April 9: Machines – good or bad?**

- Judd, Dennis R., and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics* (chapter 3)
- Rioran, William L., *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics.* (Introduction; Preface; ch1, ch3, ch4, ch9, ch12)
- Royko, Mike. *Boss. Richard J. Daley of Chicago.* (chapter 1)
- Stone, Clarence (1996), “Urban Political Machines: Taking Stock,” *PS: Political Science and Politics.*

[\[presentation\]](#) Hunter

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- Identify pros and cons of political machines?
- What role did immigrant voters play in political machines?
- Were immigrant voters better or worse off because of political machines? Why?
- What motivates Plunkitt’s hatred of the Civil Service Reform?

**Week 3 – April 14: Reform**

- Judd, Dennis R., and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics* (chapter 4)
- Ornaghi, Arianna, “Civil Service Reform. Evidence from U.S. Police Departments,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) Anika

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- What are the main institutional changes proposed by reformers? What are the intended effects of each of them?
- Under what conditions do at-large and district elections deliver the same electoral result?
- What were the long-term consequences/legacy of the reform?
- What created a fertile environment for reform?
- Did reform kill the machines?
- What does Ornaghi (2019) find regarding the relationship between the civil service system and bureaucratic performance?

**Week 3 – April 16: Forms of Government - Mayors and City Managers**

- ICMA, “Council Manager Form of Government”
- Enikolopov, Ruben (2014) “Politicians, Bureaucrats and Targeted Redistribution,” *Journal of*

*Public Economics.* [presentation] Ethan

- Ruhil, Anirudh (2003) “Structural Change and Fiscal Flows. A Framework for Analyzing the Effects of Urban Events,” *Urban Affairs Review*.
- Bae, Jungah, and Richard Feiock (2013) “Forms of Government and Climate Change Policies in US Cities,” *Urban Studies*. [presentation] Stephanie

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- What are the main differences between a Council-Manager and a Mayor-Council form of government? How does the role of the mayor differ between the two systems? What is the role of city managers?
- What reasons can you think of in favour of having an appointed bureaucrat (City Manager) running the government?
- Are politicians more or less likely than bureaucrats to engage in targeted redistribution? Why? How does Enkilopov (2014) test this?
- Do Council-Manager and Mayor-Council governments differ in terms of the policies that they enact? What differences would you expect? What does Ruhil (2003) find? Should we interpret the estimates in Ruhil (2003) causally? Think of potential challenges to identification. What do Bae and Feiock (2012) find on climate change policies?

#### **Week 4 – April 21: Political Power**

- Trountine, Jessica. *Political Monopolies in American Cities. The Rise and Fall of Bosses and Reformers*.
- Folke, Olle, Shigeo Hirano, and Jim Snyder, (2011), “Patronage and Elections in U.S. States,” *American Political Science Review*. [presentation] Do

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- What do political machines and reform regimes share?
- What are “Political Monopolies”? What are the conditions for the creation of political monopolies? What are the main consequences of political monopolies?
- Does control of patronage jobs increase a political party’s chances of winning an election? How does Folke, Hirano, and Snyder (2011) test this question? What do they find? What alternative channels do they explore?

#### **Week 4 – April 23: Elections I**

- Hankinson, Michael, and Asya Magazinnik (2019) “How Electoral Institutions Shape the Efficiency and Equity of Distributive Policy,” Working Paper. [presentation] Gabi
- Anzia, Sarah F. (2011) “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups,” *Journal of Politics*.
- Hajnal, Zoltan, and Jessica Trountine (2005) “Why Turnout Does Matter: the consequences of uneven turnout in city politics,” *Journal of Politics*. [presentation] Tu
- Hajnal, Zoltan L. and Paul G. Lewis (2003) “Municipal Institutions and voter Turnout in Local Elections,” *Urban Affairs Review*.

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- What are the pros and cons of off-cycle elections? Why is turnout lower in off-cycle elections? Is the effect on turnout homogeneous for all citizens or are there winners and losers from this institution? What kinds of policies are more likely to be enacted in the presence of off-cycle elections? How does Anzia (2011) test this theory? What does she find?

- How does the choice between district and at-large elections affect the equity/efficiency trade-off? What are example of public goods with concentrated costs and diffuse benefits? How do district elections affect i) the interests of underrepresented groups and ii) the provision of public goods with concentrated costs and diffuse benefits? Why? How do Hankison and Magazinik (2019) test this theory? What do they find?
- Which institutions can increase turnout in local elections according to Hjnal and Lewis (2003)?
- What consequences does low turnout in city elections have? How do Hajnal and Trounstine (2005) study this question? What do they find?

**Week 5 – April 28: Presentation of proposal for Final project**

**Week 5 – April 30: Minority Group Politics**

- Beach, Brian, Daniel B. Jones, Tate Twinam, and Randall Walsh (2018) “Minority Representation in Local Government,” NBER Working Paper.
- Einstein, Katherine Levine, and David M. Glick (2017) “Does Race Affect Access to Government Services? An Experiment Exploring Street-Level Bureaucrats and Access to Public Housing,” *American Journal of Political Science*. [\[presentation\]](#) [Zane](#)
- Sances, Michael W., and Hye Young You (2017) “Who Pays for Government? Descriptive Representation and Exploitative Revenue Sources,” *Journal of Politics*. [\[presentation\]](#) [Kenny](#)
- Rogers, Reuel R. (2004) “Race-Based Coalitions among Minority Groups: Afro-Caribbean Immigrant and African Americans in New York City,” *Urban Affairs Review*.

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- Do minorities benefit from an increase in the number of minority legislators? How do Beach et al answer this question? What outcomes for minority citizens improve with an increase of non-white legislators introduce? Why/How? Under what conditions is this effect strengthened?
- Can descriptive representation to alleviate biases in city policy? How do Sances and You test this claim? What do they find?
- Does race affect access to government services? How does the experiment in Einstein and Glick answer this question?
- Are race-based coalitions between minority groups rarer than we would expect? Why? What are the possible explanations that emerge from the study of New York City by Rogers?

**Week 6 – May 5: Decentralization: pros and cons**

- Bardhan, Pranab (2002) “Decentralization of Governance and Development,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- Chacon, Mario (2018) “In the Line of Fire: Political Violence and Decentralization in Colombia,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) [Jie](#)
- Enikolopov, Ruben, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2003) “Decentralization and Political Institutions,” *Journal of Public Economics*.

Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- Before reading the papers due for today, try and think about i) possible pros and cons of decentralization (creating or increasing the powers of local governments) in your opinion, and ii) how these might differ across developed and developing countries.
- What are the main pros and cons of decentralization according to Bardhan? Bardhan suggests that decentralization poses some different issues in the institutional context of developing and transition countries vs, for instance, the U.S.. Why? What are “community failures”?
- Under which conditions does decentralization lead to more efficient governance, better public goods, and higher economic growth according to Enikolopov and Zhuravskaya? What are “externalities from local policies”? What is the rationale behind the hypothesis that strong parties provide political incentives for local politicians to conduct efficient policies?
- What is one of the main threats to the effectiveness of decentralization in war-torn countries according to Chacon (2013)? Why? How does Chacon (2003) test his theory? What does he find?

### Week 6 – May 7: Political Selection

- Gulzar, Saad, and Muhammad Yasir Khan (2019) “Political Candidacy and Performance: Experimental Evidence from Pakistan,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) Irene
- Gulzar, Saad, Zuhad Hai, and Binor Kumar Paudel (2019) “Information, Candidate Selection, and the Quality of Representation,” *Journal of Politics*.
- Beath, Andrew, Fotini Christia, Georgy Egorov, and Ruben Enikilopov (2016) “Electoral Rules and Political Selection: Theory and Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan,” *Review of Economic Studies*.
- Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan (2011) “Motivating Politicians. The Impacts of Monetary Incentives on Quality and Performance,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) Nick

#### Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:

- Why do voters often face a trade-off between competent politicians and politicians with policy preferences similar to their own? Why/How do electoral rules mediate this trade-off? What is the result on the composition of representative bodies and the quality of policy outcomes shown in Beath et al (2016)? What is the mechanism behind this result?
- How can candidacy of non-elite candidates be encouraged according to Gulzar and Khan (2018)? How do they test their hypothesis?
- Why would we expect higher/lower wages to select different politicians? How do Ferraz and Finan (2011) test this hypothesis? What do they find?
- How can the quality of representation be improved according to Gulzar, Hai and Paudel (2020)? How do they test their claim?

### Week 7 – May 12: Corruption

- Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan (2008) “Exposing Corrupt Politicians” the Effect of Brazil’s Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Bandiera, Oriana, Andrea Prat, and Tommaso Valletti (2009) “Active and Passive Waste in Government Spending: Evidence from a Policy Experiment” *American Economic Review*



- Olken, Ben (2007) “Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia,” *Journal of Political Economy*. [\[presentation\]](#) [Cristina](#)  
Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:
  - Theoretically speaking, what are the pros and cons of these two different strategies to decrease corruption: top-down monitoring and grassroots participation? How does Olken (2007) test which one is more effective? How does he measure corruption?
  - Do Ferraz and Finan show that voters hold politicians accountable for their performance in office? Do public audits increase or decrease accountability? How? How do their result speak to the importance for political selection of an informed electorate and the role played by the media?
  - What is the different between active and passive waste? Can both be considered forms of corruption? What are the sources of active and passive waste? What kind of waste decreases with more bureaucratic discretion? Why? How do Bandiera et al (2009) test these questions? What do they find?

**Week 7 – May 14: Local governments under autocracies**

- Martinez-Bravo, Monica, Gerard Padró i Miquel, Nancy Qian, and Yang Yao (2017) “The Rise and Fall of Local Elections in China: Theory and Empirical Evidence on the Autocrat’s Tradeoff,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) [Zimo](#)
- Chen, Jidong, Jennifer Pan, and Yiqing Xu (2016) “Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Montinola, Gabriella, Yingyi Qian, and Berry R. Weingast (1995) “Federalism, Chinese Style. The Political Basis for Economic Success in China,” *World Politics*.  
Reading Guide/Questions for discussion:
  - Why would authoritarian regimes introduce local elections? What trade-off do autocrats face when considering local elections? How do Martinez-Bravo et al (2017) test this? What do they find?
  - Theoretically speaking, do we expect an authoritarian government to be at all responsive? If yes, how? Why? How do Chen, Pan and Xu (2016) test this? What do they find?
  - What is *market-preserving federalism*? What conditions created the right institutional environment for *market-preserving federalism* according to Montinola, Qian and Weingast (1995)? Why/How did these characteristics matter?

**Week 8 – May 19: No class**

**Week 8 – May 21: Patronage Today**

- Colonnelli, Emanuele, Edoardo Teso, and Mounu Prem. 2020. “Patronage and Selection in Public Sector Organizations,” *Working Paper* [\[presentation\]](#) [Alfred](#)
- Fiva, John H., Benny Geys, Tom-Reiel Heggedal, Rune Sørensen (2019) “Political Alignment and Bureaucratic Pay,” Working Paper.

- Cruz, Cesi, Julien Labonne, and Pablo Querubin (2017) “Politician Family Networks and Electoral Outcomes: Evidence from the Philippines,” *American Economic Review*.  
[\[presentation\]](#) Riko

**Week 9 – May 26: Captured local governments**

- Martinez-Bravo, Monica, Priya Mukherjee, and Andreas Stegman (2017) “The Non-Democratic Roots of Elite Capture: Evidence from Soeharto Mayors in Indonesia,” *Econometrica*. [\[presentation\]](#) Ki-June
- Carreri, Maria and Oeindrila Dube (2017) “Do Natural Resources Influence Who Comes to Power and How?” *Journal of Politics*.
- Di Cataldo, Marco, and Nicola Mastroiocco (2020) “Organised Crime, Captured Politicians and the Allocation of Public Resources,” Working Paper. [\[presentation\]](#) Shitong

**Week 9 – May 28: Open topic**

- TBD
- TBD
- TBD [\[presentation\]](#) David Alexander

**Week 10 – June 2: Presentations**

**Week 10 – June 4: Presentations**

**Papers Due June 6**