Urban Political Economy

POSC 266 WINTER 2018

The study of political economy emphasizes the role of capital in politics and policy making. Urban political economy focuses specifically on the relationship between the “local state” (urban and suburban governments) and capital, especially financial and real estate, both local and global. However, this relationship does not exist in a local vacuum; the behavior of cities, states, and other nations as well as the actions of national and international capital have profound impacts on this relationship.

Many important questions will emerge during this term, particularly since this course is a survey of a broad subfield. Two classical questions of democratic theory provide an overarching framework for this course, however: **Who governs, and Who benefits?** We are particularly concerned with whether capital dominates the local state and wields undue influence in agenda setting and policy making. Are elected officials pawns of capital or segments of capital, or are elected officials actors with their own agency that may conflict with local and/or global capital? Do the public’s desires for patterns of residential development, work locales, and entertainment land use set the agenda for capital in a democratic, “invisible-hand” manner? Does capital operate within parameters set by a regulatory state or is capital often exempted from the regulatory state? How different is economic policy-making in a democracy compared to a non-democracy, particularly with respect to these two classical questions? Keeping in mind a desire for clarity and parsimony, how else might we describe the relationship between capital and the local state? These questions raise normative concerns about how political economy “ought” to be in an enlightened society and students should not be hesitant to proffer normative evaluations. In addition, questions are often listed on the syllabus accompanying particular readings. Every student should come to class prepared to answer these questions; quizzes may be given when the instructor deems them necessary.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, cities could emerge as manufacturing centers by outcompeting other locales within their region or nation. In the 21st century economy, manufacturing has become very mobile and the competition to attract it has become far more intense. Competition between the global North and South or between nation-states is arguably less intense these days than competition between cities across the globe. The leaders of many cities have recognized, sometimes quite belatedly, that they must find a new role in the international division of labor. The grand theme of this course is how cities, their leaders -- political, economic and, increasingly, cultural -- and their inhabitants cope with the new terrain that is a global economy not a national economy.

POSC 266 and 366 share a core reading list but there will be additional readings for the upper division course as well as more demanding requirements. POSC 266 is designed for sophomores and those who do not want to embark on a self-directed research project; the majority of the grade will be based on midterm and end of term take-
home exams (40% each and 20% for participation and assignments). The emphasis of the POSC 266 syllabus is cities in the United States. POCS 366 should be taken by junior or senior Political Science majors seeking to fulfill the 300-level asterisk requirement of the major, by POEC concentrators for the capstone requirement, or by students ready and willing to meet the additional requirements listed on the syllabus as well as a research paper of about 25 pages (50% for final paper, 20% for participation and 30% for assignments). The POCS 366 curriculum is designed to raise comparative questions about global cities and the export of development models from innovative cities across the globe (adding a dynamism to the static idea of a fixed center and periphery).

Format: Being able to articulate ideas, respond to questions, and listen effectively to the criticisms of others are important life skills. My teaching philosophy stresses the value of proffering ideas and subjecting those ideas to examination. I seek to stimulate discussion and disagreement but never combat. Coming to class with a list of ideas from our readings that you feel merit discussion -- because they are significant, because they are incorrect or overdrawn, because they reshaped the way you think about something else, because they redound back to earlier discussions or an earlier text and because you want to nominate them as agenda items for our discussion -- is my expectation of your class participation. If you wish to share these with me prior to class, you can send me e-mail and I will do my best to respond in a timely manner and perhaps incorporate your ideas into class. Written submission will not be a requirement unless class discussion falters. Considering that class participation is a non-negligible 20% of the grade, students should be sure that they can meet these requirements. Any form of academic dishonesty is ground for failure in the course. Students requiring academic accommodations should notify the instructor in writing.

There is one course text, M. Patillo, *Black On The Block*, that is available at the Bookstore.

**WEEK 1**

*Theoretical Frameworks for the study of Urban Political Economy:*

Wednesday: Due to a New Year’s Day tragedy in my extended family, I will not be present on the first day of class. My apologies.

Your assignment is to watch the Video entitled “The Fillmore” in the Neighborhoods of San Francisco series by PBS. It is not an online video, it is in the holdings of the college DVDs. We will be building on this video, this was planned for showing during class on Wednesday and Friday, so this is not filler.

Friday:
Pluralism is rooted in a Madisonian perspective on the functioning of democracy. Winning a policy battle is not the definition of democracy. Be sure you understand the significance of both process and outcome in Pluralism.

WEEK 2

Monday:


Be ready to discuss: Who are the first tier actors of the Growth Machine, who are secondary, and who are occasional but not central actors? How is the Growth Machine distinctive from Pluralism? *What type of policies are not investigated* by scholarship within the Pluralist school, according to Harding?

366:


Graded Assignment (Typed, submitted as an email attachment prior to the start of class): Focus on the discussion of the four quadrants in Wilson's article, not the rest; in a paragraph, explain why the problem of collective action (i.e., *how hard it is to get a large number of people to cooperate in a group effort and how common free-riders are*) is actually centrally important for the prevalence of Distributed Cost-payers and the rarity of Distributed beneficiaries; in a second paragraph, explain how the successes of concentrated beneficiaries represents a paradox (that is labeled the paradox of collective action) in majoritarian democracies. Apply Wilson's concepts that illustrate this problem/paradox, don't just repeat my definition. There is an expectation that you have been exposed to the collective action paradox in classes prior to this 300-level course.

Wednesday


Not all cities “hit bottom” in the same time period (or even all neighborhoods within a city), some encounter economic disinvestment and decay later than others because they have more diversified economies, better infrastructure, differing demographic pressures, or politicians with more allies, skill, or luck. **We see similar patterns of decay and restructuring at different times in neighborhoods, cities in different regions, even different countries.**

What kinds of expenses are cities incurring that drive them toward fiscal crisis and what are the causes of those expenses?

Are Solution Sets a policy response to an economic problem, a political problem, or both?

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Friday

**Why these Policies, what are they thinking?**


N. D. Bloom, Merchant of Illusion, ch. 2 (“Reinventing the Capitalist City”) (Ohio State University Press, 2004).

366:

Holcomb, “Revisioning Place: De-Constructing and Re-Constructing the Image of the Industrial City.”

**Assignment:** Submit by email attachment, prior to class, double-spaced, formal citations. No more than 3 pages. Analyze Holcomb’s article, offering insights that link this to our course focus on (a) pluralist or growth machine process of policy making, (b) distributive outcomes (concentrated vs. distributed), and solution sets.

**WEEK 3**

**Why these Policies, what are they thinking?**

D. Coates and B. Humphreys, “The Stadium Gambit,” Regulation 23:2

A bunch of very small news clips that you can use for examples, examples of what?

J. Walters, “After the Festival is Over,” *Governing* (August 1990): 27-34R.


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Globalization of Solution Sets? Can these concepts travel across borders and time?

C. Hamnett and N. Shoval, “Museums as Flagships of Urban Development.”


366:


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Assessing your ability to apply concepts and see patterns


L. Farmer, “Disaster Recovery.” What intellectual concept from our course is echoed here?

“Poor Push Back … Turkey’s Urban …” What historical public policy is echoed in this reading?

Y. Zhang & K. Fang, “Is History Repeating Itself? From Urban Renewal … to … China.” How does a discussion of contemporary China help us to understand patterns of elite responses to economic decay and restructuring?
Feel free to make some notes in case you are put on the spot for a written or oral assessment!

366 Assignment: Submit a 2 page, double spaced synopsis of an article that piqued your interest from the bibliography of a course article. Tell me the source article, provide a citation of the new article, provide a synopsis, and then offer at least one paragraph explaining how this article could be a stepping stone to a course project.

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WEEK 4

Economic Restructuring and Surplus Labor: LA as harbinger?


"Gap Between Rich and Poor Grows in Germany." Spiegel Online 9/8/12.


366:

R. Morales and P. Ong, “Immigrant Women in Los Angeles.”

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Citizens and Disposables? Disorganized People and State Power

MacLeod, “From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a Revanchist City?” Spaces of Neoliberalism (Blackwell 2002).

S. Zukin et al., “New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change.” City and Community 8:1 (March 2009).
L. Gottesdiener, "A Tale of Two Detroits, Separate and Unequal,"

http://inthesetimes.com/article/print/17372/inequality_in_detroit

366:


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Global Restructuring: First World vs. Third World or 1% vs. 99%?


I. Johnson, New China Cities: Shoddy Homes, Broken Hope,” NYT 11/9/13. Article is posted below, but online there is also a slide show, links to other articles in this NYT series, and you can read the article in Chinese!


366: A. Becker and M.-M. Muller, ”The Securitization of Urban Space and the “Rescue” of Downtown Mexico City.” Latin American Perspectives (March 2013).

WEEK 5

Is Gentrification a sibling of Urban Renewal and Revanchism? Progress? State-led or Market driven?

<This week represents the last opportunity for class participation prior to the midterm assessment.>

M. Patillo, *Black on the Block*, chs. 3-5.

Assignment 366: Submit (by pdf attachment via email by 10 am, with your name on the page) one quote from any of today's chapters, with page citations. For each explain in about a third of a page (typed, double-spaced) why this is very salient to the narrative of the book; if it is not very salient, then don't choose this quote. Then explain how this quote is relevant for larger themes of the course (specify the theme, topic, concept) and previous authors. This discussion of theme/concept and specific authors should be written to an audience of a student who is not in this class and therefore needs some explanation, detail or illustration. Two pages maximum.

M. Patillo, *Black on the Block*, chs. 6-end of book.

Assignment 266: Submit (by pdf attachment via email by 10 am, with your name on the page) one quote from any of today's chapters, with page citations. For each explain in about a third of a page (typed, double-spaced) why this is very salient to the narrative of the book; if it is not very salient, then don't choose this quote. Then explain how this quote is relevant for larger themes of the course (specify the theme, topic, concept) and previous authors. This discussion of theme/concept and specific authors should be written to an audience of a student who is not in this class and therefore needs some explanation, detail or illustration. Two pages maximum.

366 Assignment: Submit a 2 page, double spaced synopsis of an article that piqued your interest from the bibliography of a course article. Tell me the source article, provide a citation of the new article, provide a synopsis, and then offer at least one paragraph explaining how this article could be a stepping stone to a course project.

WEEK 6

Monday:

MIDTERM BREAK

Tuesday: POSC 266 MIDTERM EXAM DUE WEDNESDAY MORNING 2 AM. LATE PENALTY OF ENTIRE LETTER GRADE, PER DAY.
Wednesday: 366 presentations (15 min each X 4). Or pick your own, with permission from Professor. Purpose is to advance toward a research topic. 366 students will be divided into 2 groups, each responsible for 2 of the 4.


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Friday: (15 min. X 3)


and more 366 presentations.

WEEK 7

Resistance? Disorganized, Organized, and Institutional


O. Unsal and T. Kuyucu, “Challenging the Neoliberal Urban Regime: Regeneration and Resistance.” In Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?

S. Mitrani, “Stop Kidding Yourself: The police were created to control working class and poor people,” LaborOnline (find via Google)

S. Romero, “Slum Dwellers ... Rio Olympics,” NYT

366 Assignment: Submit a 2 page, double spaced synopsis of an article that piqued your interest from the bibliography of a course article. Tell me the source article, provide a citation of the new article, provide a synopsis, and then offer at least one paragraph explaining how this article could be a stepping stone to a course project.

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Savage, “Geographies of Organizing: Justice for Janitors in LA,” in Organizing the Landscape.

L. Alderman, “Greeks take to the streets, some violently, in a strike over austerity,” NYT 10/8/12. Find on your own.

K. Bradsher, “Facing Protests, China’s business Investment Slows,” NYT (11/06/12).

Keiser, “Collective Action and Voting ... Sports Stadium.”
I have been told that Carleton students do not like reading scholarship written by their professors because they feel uncomfortable in offering criticism. We could call it engagement, not criticism.

366:

Dreier, “The War Over Wages, City by City,”

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“Community Benefits Agreements: Growing a Movement in Minnesota.” Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

366:

Waddoups, “Union Wage Effects in Nevada’s Hotel and Casino Industry,”
The actual question of this article, threat vs. spillover, is not really up our alley. Our focus has more to do with that 40% wage difference between the two cities. How does this article overlap with the J4J article? Yes, they discuss unions; that is a bit too obvious. Think about the variable of spatial concentration of an industry that the LA article raised. Think about the immobility of capital, a concept that does not fit with globalization. Think about the costs of visible protest for casino owners.
WEEK 8


E. Molina, "Foreclosures, Investors, and Uneven Development ... Los Angeles"

Assignment 366, due 10 am: Choose a pair of quotes from the Gottlieb article that speak to a single theme or concept, perhaps across groups, across time, or space. Explain your choice and how these quotes relate in about one page, double-spaced. Then take another page to link these ideas to the broader course bibliography. Be specific in the links, as if you are explaining to someone who cannot recall earlier readings.

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Paper Topic Proposals for 366 Due: 1-2 pages of non-bibliography: explain your topic in no more than 3 sentences, how does your topic build upon the questions of our course, which specific literature from the course are you building upon, and bibliography of at least 10 scholarly articles or 4 books. Conversations with the professor prior to this deadline are advisable.

Tourism: Commodification of Culture


"Fake Soldiers Turning Brandenburg Gae into 'Disneyland" Spiegel Online 4/15/09.

366:
L. Vicario and P. M. M. Monje, "Another Guggenheim Effect? ... Gentrifiable Neighborhood"

R. Fogelsong, "Walt Disney World and Orlando: Deregulation as a Strategy for Tourism."


WEEK 9

TOURISM

Identity and Culture in the Politicized Economy

266 Read any two of these three; 366 read all three


C. Ashley, C. Boyd and H. Goodwin, "Pro-poor Tourism: Putting poverty at the heart of the tourism agenda." Natural Resources Perspectives 51 (2000), 1-6.

Do you see distributed benefits? Do you see broadening of political power and inclusion in decisions? Do you see another form of the exploitation of the poor, like animals in a zoo?

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K. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown, chs. 4-5.

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WEEK 10

AMSTERDAM: Growth Machine(s): Evolution or Conflict


P. Terhorst, J. van de Ven and L. Deben, "Amsterdam: it's all in the mix,"

"Mapping Amsterdam's Creative Class." Der Spiegel 8/20/07.

"Law could hamper drug tourism in the Netherlands." NYT 4/2/12.

"Amsterdam to create 'scum villages." www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/netherlands