Urban Political Economy

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. POSC 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 POSC 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. Written submission will not be a requirement
unless class discussion falters; if you are having trouble participating, try sending me a paragraph or two with
your ideas. 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.

WEEK ONE

For Wednesday:

THEORY: Pluralism


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.

Focus on the four quadrants in Wilson's article; grasp the insight of how salient the problem of collective
action is for Distributed Cost-payers or Distributed beneficiaries and, conversely, how the paradox of
collective action enables smaller coalitions of Concentrated groups to organize more readily; consider the
critique of Pluralism regarding what type of policies are not investigated by scholarship within the Pluralist
school in light of this article.

For Friday:

Urban Growth Machine

· J. Logan and H. Molotch, Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place (Berkeley: UC Press, 1987),
chs. 2-3.

· Harding, “Elite Theory and Growth Machines,” in Judge, Stoker and Wolman, eds. Theories of Urban

In what way are the problems of collective action central to this argument?. What is the role of the public and
where do they stand on growth? Who are the members/actors of the Growth coalition?

Week Two

For Monday:

Dexterity with Theory

· Caves, "Seattle, Washington: Capping Downtown Growth"

· Elkin, "State and Market in City Politics."
266: Do these articles illustrate Pluralism, or Growth Machine Theory, or what? 
Does the concept of a college fraternity, or some exclusive, self-selected community, explain the Growth Machine in Dallas? 
Does the distinction in regime types made by Elkin seem crucial for explaining policy outcomes? 
Come to class prepared to discuss each article, having already organized the evidence from the article that points toward either Pluralist or Growth Machine decision making processes. If there is an in class writing assignment, you will be ready if you have already prepared an outline of the answers to these questions.

366: In addition to the 266 readings, 366 students should read the following. Be prepared to offer an oral summary of this article.


For Wednesday:

**Case Study History = Data Immersion**


Not all cities “hit bottom” in the same time period, 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. But when they do hit bottom, **do you see any similarities in coalitions and strategies that are prescriptions for renaissance?**

For Friday:

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


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

**Week Three**

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

- Baade, "Professional Sports as Catalysts for Metropolitan economic development,"

  OR

- D. Coates and B. Humphreys, "The Stadium Gambit," *Regulation* 23:2
AND these four


366 Assignment: E. Strom, “Converting Pork into Porcelain,” *Urban Affairs Review* (Sept. 2002). Submit prior to the start of class, a typed summary of the argument of this article, the evidence used, and, most crucially, the relevance for understanding the evolution of ubiquitous urban economic development strategies. Two pages, double spaced, maximum. All quotes and paraphrases should be accompanied by a page citation. Anticipate printer problems; don't be victimized by them.

266/366: Be prepared to answer: From Wilson's perspective of the 4 quadrants of policy, who/which groups are the *beneficiaries* and which groups are the *cost payers* of stadiums and festival markets, and are these two categories concentrated or distributed? What are the pros and what are the cons of taxpayer financing of a sports stadium?

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Are Solution Sets examples of policy making that are innovative or safe, outside of the box or inside? Why would inside the box policy making be considered safe rather than stale? Does this concept help us to understand previous readings? What about understanding the behavior of mayors, newspapers, and other urban elites? Are all Solution Sets by definition likely to not perform to expectations?

366:


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From Suburbanites to the Globally Mobile: Reclaiming Space from Iniquity
Who are the tourist class? What might be their connection to suburbia, from the perspective of an urban mayor? Why might one argue that tourism is a “win-win solution set?” What arguments could be made to claim that tourism produces distributed benefits?

What is revanchism and what is the moral argument about reclamation?

Assignment 366: Drawing on the articles for today (and any others from this week), choose one of the following two prompts and respond in 3-4 double spaced pages submitted by email prior to class. Don't forget to put your name on the document. Formal rules of citation.

1. Think about tourism as an economic product, and as a research topic to investigate a place that you know and want to know far more deeply. What is being sold, who are the consumers, who are the beneficiaries of the policy, how is this a political process, not just an economic policy? How are land use policies related to tourism promotion? How is local or national identity related to tourism sites with which you are familiar?

2. What is the relationship between tourism spaces and gated communities? Think about politics, land use, consumption, re-imaging of place, what constitutes the environment for entertainment, and the psychology of security in a world of growing inequality, diversity, violence, and terror.

Week Four

· S. Zukin et al., “New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change.” City and Community 8:1 (March 2009).


BE READY TO DISCUSS: Are these articles examples of growth machines? Aren't parks a public good and therefore a distributed benefit? Is there a logic in conflating an article on shopping and gentrification with an article about redevelopment and revitalization of run down railroad pathways?

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**Diffusion of the US Model: From Growth Machine to Neoliberal Regime**


266: For this next section of the course, you should be thinking like a comparativist. Of course the context of each country is different, there are local histories and cultures that are unique. But do global forces, like capitalism or neoliberal regimes or international financial institutions, shape cities across the globe towards some convergence, towards far more similarities than once existed, towards discernible patterns? Or do the differences remain so crucial that they produce a wide range of outcomes that are only invisible to those blinded by macro terms like globalization? Be prepared to discuss multiple similarities between the portrayal of neoliberalism in today's articles and the theory and praxis of growth machine development.

366:


Be prepared to discuss multiple similarities between the portrayal of neoliberalism in today's articles and the theory and praxis of growth machine development. This is a good time to recall the idea of growth machine diaspora articulated by Surborg and his two coauthors in week two's readings.

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**Surplus Labor, Disorganized People and State Power**

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

What themes unite these articles? What does sweatshop labor have to do with urban rebellions? And are these urban rebellions at all similar? Are they similar to the Occupy Movement in any truly important ways? Are they similar to the Ferguson, Missouri riots?

**Week Five**

**Spatial Fortification in Neoliberalism**

• S. Sengupta, "Inside Gate, India's good life; outside, servant's slums,” *New York Times* (June 9, 2008).

1) Is spatial apartheid a term that you feel accurately describes the narrative presented in these articles? Provide 2-3 specific examples for both a yes and no argument.

2) Are earthquakes unique in the kind of impact that Candan and Kolluoglu describe, or can you think of other events, natural or human-orchestrated, that produce similar "opportunities" for change-oriented elites?

366:


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366:  

366 Assignment (2 pages, double spaced, formal citations, by email or at start of class. Anticipate printer problems.)

What debate about the significance of the proximity of gated communities and slums is suggested in this week's articles? Is there a silver linings playbook here that does not exist in US *suburban* gated communities? What are your thoughts about the significance of this research for a Planet of growing inequality and widespread joblessness?

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• 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

• "Poor, Minorities Push Back against booming Turkey's urban renewal"


**Week Six**

**MIDTERM BREAK MONDAY**

**POSC 266 MIDTERM EXAM DUE WEDNESDAY AT 9 AM. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY AND DO NOT FORCE ME TO ASSESS A LATE PENALTY.**

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266: NO READINGS


**Assignment 366** (3-4 pages, double spaced, formal citations, due at 9 pm Friday of this week): Comparisons of the US or Europe to China, India, Brazil may be viewed as apples to oranges. Or they may raise questions about the relevance of regime type (Democratic vs. Authoritarian), degree of civil society development, or extent of income inequality IF dependent variable outcomes such as gating, pauperization, militarization or neoliberal decision processes (Growth Machine not Pluralist) are found across cases. Choose the US or Europe and compare to one of these non-Western cases on one dimension (e.g., gating, pauperization, economic decision making). Draw a conclusion based on this empirical comparison on the question of apples to apples (Red Delicious and Granny Smith aren't even the same color) or apples to oranges.

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• A. Barrionuevo, "Fearful Brazilians Keep Armored Car Sales Booming," NYT (May 14, 2009).

Is there a connection between mid-1980s Minneapolis and contemporary Northern and Western European cities? Think: “Like other cities in the heartland, Minneapolis now confronted a largely benign but visually offensive street population that had previously only been obvious in cities on the coasts and the Great Lakes” (Boddy 139). What prevents the US from reaching the extremes of Sao Paulo, or does this question make unwarranted assumptions?

Week Seven

Mike Davis, PLANET OF SLUMS (course text, read about half)

Be attentive to the historical links between the dependent variable of urbanization and the independent variables of industrialization and agricultural productivity. How do IMF stabilization plans, monetarism, and neoliberal austerity relate in the contemporary period?

Mike Davis, PLANET OF SLUMS (finish the book)

366:


266 and 366 assignment (3-4 pages, due 9 am WEDNESDAY, graded; no submissions accepted after class) Point out echoes of some aspects of PLANET OF SLUMS that resonate with ANY of our previous readings. Extreme specificity about comparisons and citations to the other course material and to the Planet of Slums narrative is expected. At least two very separate comparisons required. Be sure you select comparisons that are worthy of our attention and that you explain why this similarity is significant and not a meaningless coincidence.

“The Fillmore”

Week Eight

Growth Machine Opposition

- 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,”

- 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.
Identity and Culture in the Politicized Economy


Do you see evidence for the claim that the marginalized may gain leverage about decisions in their locale? Have you encountered anything like ethnoscapes in your own travels?

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“FLAG WARS”

Week Nine

Monday: No Readings

“Holding Ground”

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Wednesday: No Readings

“My Brooklyn”

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Friday:


With which articles that we previously have read are these two articles, each separately, in dialogue?

Week Ten

Discuss Films

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“Chavez Ravine”