

POSC 321, Spring 2008

URBAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50 a.m.
VKC 100

Professor Jefferey M. Sellers

Office: VKC 317

Telephone: (213) 740-1684

E-mail: sellers@usc.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 5:00-5:30 p.m. and Thursdays 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Course website: blackboard.usc.edu

The social and political questions the United States faces today are by and large problems of cities and their surrounding regions. The vast majority of us now live in or around urban areas. Economic and cultural globalization and their consequences have often concentrated in these settings. Not only economic development, but widespread problems like poverty, social exclusion, racial discrimination, crime prevention, and environmental degradation all center largely in places like Los Angeles. The twenty-first century politics of the United States can only be comprehended fully from an understanding of the politics of cities.

This course will examine an array of important contemporary urban political and social problems in present-day Los Angeles. We will consider these problems in light of the experience of other cities both now and in the past, including cities outside the United States. Internet presentations, study visits and student assignments will offer a chance for close exposure to urban problems and their potential solutions. Throughout the course, in considering a variety of issues, we will ask:

What problems do contemporary urban regions face, what role does politics play in those problems, and how can those problems be solved?

In particular, the course this semester will scrutinize the major social political transformations that are taking place in Los Angeles and in towns throughout the region. On the one hand, new immigrants and changing ethnic compositions have brought far-reaching changes for politics and policy that analysts are only beginning to understand. On the other, in the U.S. and abroad, politics within cities like Los Angeles, as well as policy toward them, have increasingly been dominated by relations between the central city and its changing but ever more dominant suburbs. By comparing a variety of urban and suburban settings within the region alongside the central city, we will examine the emerging politics and governance of the more and more “de-centered” urban region.

Readings

The following required books are on sale in the bookstore.

CQ Press, *Urban Issues*, Third Ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2007).

Paul Kantor and Dennis Judd (eds.), *American Urban Politics in a Global Age*. Fifth Edition (New York: Longman, 2008).

OR

Dennis Judd and Paul Kantor (eds.), *American Urban Politics: The Reader*. Fourth Edition (New York: Longman, 2006).

Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*. Sixth Edition (New York: Longman, 2008).

OR

Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*. Fifth Edition (New York: Longman, 2006).

Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Jefferey M. Sellers, *Governing From Below: Urban Regions and the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Required readings marked with an asterisk (*) may be found in a Course Reader to be ordered online at Mozena Publishing (www.mozenapublishing.com). In addition, students will be expected to keep abreast of urban contemporary issues through regular reading of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times* and other issues.

Depending on planned field trips, video presentations, class projects and current events, the scheduled readings may be altered.

Course Requirements

Assignments for the course during the term will consist of two short papers (3-5 pages and 6-8 pages), a presentation, a set of related postings on an electronic Blackboard for class discussion, and a group project, a research paper, and the Final Examination.

The group project will center around a group presentation of around 5 minutes (per person) on a specific urban issue that integrates themes and evidence concerning one of the themes that begin immediately after spring break. The presentation should take the form of a debate, a role playing exercise (e.g., a commission deliberation, a public hearing), a series of related oral reports, or construction of a Powerpoint or website presentation to be presented and described in class. You are encouraged to design your presentation creatively. Each group will consist of 2-4 students. With permission of the instructor it will also be possible for a group to select a topic beyond those listed. Sign-ups will take place in the first week of the course, and each group will be expected meet with the instructor between to plan the project.

An initial 3-5 page research paper due February 5, and described in a separate handout, will require you to apply alternative theories of power from the readings of January 23-February 1 to a specific contemporary case or issue of your choice. A second research paper of 6-8 pages will be due February 25 at 5 p.m. This assignment will require you to take one town in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and address its social and political evolution. You may find a more detailed description of this assignment in an additional handout. Five to eight minute reports on these towns will be presented in class on February 26 and 28.

Over the course of the semester you will also be required to participate in our discussions by means of postings on an internet discussion board on Blackboard (see the site for this course at <<https://blackboard.usc.edu>>; from the entry page click the "Discussion" button on the left). Every student will be required to submit at least THREE postings of 250-750 words (equivalent to 1-3 typewritten pages) each. At least one of these postings should address issues in the second part of the course as they have played out in the town on which you did your initial paper. You can also submit additional postings for extra credit. Other postings should contain either an argument, a well-articulated point, or a series of questions addressed to the readings, an account of a recent, related news story or an assessment or account of web materials on closely related topics. You are encouraged to coordinate your postings with the group project. All postings are due *by 5 p.m. on the day preceding the relevant class session*. Exceptions will be made for postings that relate to news events that take place after the class section.

All students are expected to attend all classes on time, do all the required readings, submit assignments on the date due, and participate in class discussions and exercises. Shortcomings in any of these areas will be taken as just cause for lowering your grade. With this caveat, the assignments will be weighted as follows:

First ("Power") paper: 8%
Town research paper: 15%
Presentation on town paper: 5%
Group project: 15%
Internet postings: 15%
Final term paper: 27%
Final exam: 15%

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Readings and Class Schedule

(Note that additional supplementary readings will also be given out periodically in class)

**To be given out in class

*Reprinted in Course Reader

January 15: Introduction

***For an overview of Los Angeles history, read the following in the first weeks of the course:* Edward W. Soja and Allen J. Scott, "Introduction to Los Angeles: City and Region," in Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja (eds.), *The City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 1-20.

January 17, 22, 24: Understanding Urban Political Problems II: Views of Urban Power

(The Ecological View)

**John M. Levy, *Urban America* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), pp. 37-43.

**Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," in Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), pp. 47-62.

(The Elitist View)

**Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (University of North Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 1-25.

(The Pluralist View)

**Dahl, *Who Governs?* (Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 89-103, 163-165, 223-228.

(The translocal political economy)

Paul Peterson, "The Interests of the Limited City," in Dennis R. Judd and Paul Kantor (eds.), Third Edition (New York: Longman, 2001), 14-25, OR Fourth Edition, pp. 15-26, OR Fifth Edition, pp. 14-25.

(The national and international context)

Jefferey M. Sellers, *Governing From Below* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-27.

(Local regimes)

Clarence Stone, "Urban Regimes," in Judd and Kantor, Third Edition, pp. 26-40, OR Fourth Edition, pp. 27-43, OR Fifth Edition, pp. 26-42.

January 29, 31: Political Machines and Reform Politics

Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*, Sixth Edition, pp. 70-102, Fifth Edition, pp. 72-105, Fourth Edition, pp. 70-102, Third Edition, pp. 78-109 (New York: Longman).

*William Riordon, "To Hold Your District: Study Human Nature and Act Accordin,'" in Judd and Kantor, Third Edition, pp. 98-100 OR Fourth Edition, pp. 84-86.

J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 175-186.

*William Fulton and Paul Shigley, "Putting Los Angeles Together," *Governing* (June 2000), (September 12, 2000).

February 5: FIRST ("POWER") PAPER DUE IN INSTRUCTOR'S BOX, VKC 327 BY 5 P.M.

February 5, 7: Suburbanization and Segregation

(Begin reading, to be completed over the next two weeks) Judd and Swanstrom, Sixth edition, pp. 103-207, 237-272, OR Fifth edition, pp. 135-229, 263-269.

Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 272-327.

Oliver, pp. 42-67, 77-98.

Philip J. Ethington, "Segregated Diversity: Race-Ethnicity, Space and Political Fragmentation in Los Angeles County, 1940-1994," pp. 3-6 (and examine animated and interactive maps), at http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/history/historylab/Haynes_FR/index.html

February 12, 14: Social Division in Los Angeles

Judd and Swanstrom, Sixth Edition, pp. 210-236., OR Fifth Edition, pp. 235-258
Viewing and discussion of "Crash"

February 19, 21: Ethnic Politics and Urban Coalition-Building

Judd and Swanstrom, Sixth Edition, pp. 362-387, OR Fifth Edition, pp. 392-421.

Reuel Rogers, "Minority Groups and Coalitional Politics," in Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, pp. 161-185, OR Fourth Edition, pp. 189-213.

*Newspaper articles on the 2005 Los Angeles mayoral election and the aftermath.

Oliver, pp.109-133.

Alan Greenblatt, "Race in America," in CQ Press, *Urban Issues* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2007), pp. 1-29.

David Masci, "Latinos' Future," in CQ Press, pp. 81-100.

****February 25, 5 p.m.: TOWN RESEARCH PAPER DUE; BE PREPARED TO PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DAY IN CLASS!****

February 26, 28, March 4: Reports on Towns Around the Region; The Context of Urban Governance

Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, "New Immigrants in Suburbia," in Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, pp. 221-229.

Eric Avila, "Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles," in Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, pp. 230-241.

Judd and Swanstrom, Sixth Edition, pp. 302-326, OR Fifth Edition, pp. 330-357.

**March 6, 11, 13, 25: Economic Development, Globalization and Urban Politics
[March 18, 20: SPRING BREAK]**

*Roger Keil, *Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization and Social Struggles* (Chichester, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), pp. 8-13, 97-136.

Jefferey M. Sellers, *Governing from Below* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 178-190, 238-289, 292-307, 374-383.

Judd and Swanstrom, Sixth Edition, pp. 331-358, OR Fifth Edition, pp. 362-387.

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

*Alison Mathie and Gord Cunningham, "From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy for Community-Driven Development," *Development in Practice* 13(5) (2003), pp. 474-486.

Alan Greenblatt, "Upward Mobility," in *CQ Researcher*, pp. 33-52.

March 27, April 1: Crime, the Police and Homeland Security

*Sarah Glazer, "Declining Crime Rates," in *CQ Press*, Second Edition, pp. 143-161.

Pamela M. Prah, "Disaster Preparedness," in *CQ Press*, pp. 151-174.

Pamela M. Prah, "Port Security," in *CQ Press*, pp. 175-197.

Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles," in Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, pp. 253-271, Fourth Edition, pp. 307-325.

Peter Marcuse, "Life in Cities after September 11, 2001," in Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, pp. 291-301.

*Terry McDermott, "Inside LAPD's 'Us Versus Them' Culture," *Los Angeles Times* (2000) (case study of the Rampart scandal)

April 3, 8: Education

Marcia Clemmitt, "Evaluating Head Start," in *CQ Press*, pp. 105-127.

Barbara Mantel, "No Child Left Behind," in *CQ Press*, pp. 129-150.

*Kathy Koch, "Reforming School Funding," in *CQ Press (Second Edition)*, pp. 99-120.

California School Finance History, online at

<http://californiaschoolfinance.org/FinanceSystem/History/tabid/68/Default.aspx>.

April 10, 22: Social Services, Poverty and Homelessness

April 14, 16: NO CLASS

Denise F. Polit, Laura Nelson, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, and David C. Seith with Sarah Rich, "Welfare Reform in Los Angeles," 2005. Online Summary Report at <<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/415/summary.pdf>>.

Weingart Center Fact Sheets: *Poverty in Los Angeles, Hunger and Food Insecurity in LA*, :

Homelessness in Los Angeles, Housing and Poverty in LA (Online at

<http://www.weingart.org/institute/research/facts/index.html>).

Peter Katel, "Minimum Wage," in *CQ Researcher*, pp. 57-79.

*Jane Tanner, "Affordable Housing," in *CQ Press (Second Edition)*, pp. 249-268.

Donald R. Spivack, *History of Skid Row in Los Angeles, Paper 1*

(Online at

<http://www.unitedwayla.org/getinformed/rr/research/basic/Documents/HistoryofSkidRow.pdf>).

Gary Blasi, "Policing Our Way Out of Homelessness? The First Year of the Safer Cities

Initiative on Skid Row" (Los Angeles: UCLA Law School, 2007). Online at

<http://www.bringlahome.org/docs/policingourwayoutofhomelessness.pdf>

April 24, 29: Sustainable Cities and Land Use

Mary H. Cooper, "Smart Growth," in *CQ Press*, pp. 199-218.

Kenneth Jost, "Property Rights," in *CQ Press*, pp. 221-239.

Brian Hansen, "Big-Box Stores," in *CQ Press*, pp. 267-286.

Michele M. Betsill, Harriet Bulkeley (2004). "Transnational Networks and Global

Environmental Governance: The Cities for Climate Protection Program," *International Studies*

Quarterly 48 (2), 471-493. Online at < [http://www.blackwell-](http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2004.00310.x)

[synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2004.00310.x](http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2004.00310.x) >.

**Kent E. Portney, *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the*

Environment and Quality of Life in American Cities (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 1-

30.

Optional additional reading: Kantor and Judd, Fifth Edition, selections from pp. 308-351.

May 1: Conclusion and Review

Tuesday, May 6: Term paper due in instructor's box, VKC 327 by 5 p.m.
Tuesday, May 13, 8 a.m., VKC 100: FINAL EXAMINATION