Urban Policy and Policymaking

Cities are where many of our most pressing social, economic, and environmental problems are addressed: innovation and economic development, poverty, infrastructure expansion, and environmental sustainability are all subject to urban policies and investment priorities. In this course we will examine the *intergovernmental* or *multi-scalar* dimensions of urban policy as a way of explaining and evaluating the emergence of, and solutions to, pressing urban problems. We will focus primarily on cities in the U.S. and Canada, but will also consider the ways in which cities elsewhere face similar or different conditions. Our aim will be to develop a fuller picture of the position of city governments in multi-scalar governance and how these dynamic systems shape the development and implementation of urban policies.

The course is divided into five parts. First, during Weeks 1 - 3, we will familiarize ourselves with scholarship that positions urban policy and city governments in a multi-scalar context. We will then turn our attention to three particular urban policy challenges. During Weeks 4-6, we will focus on the Flint water crisis and the policy choices and responses that have contributed to this public health disaster, from the federal to the local levels. We will also consider the likelihood of this happening in other cities. Third, during Weeks 7 and 8 we will focus on climate change mitigation policy in New York City: the strategies the city is using and how these intersect with the powers and preferences of other actors. We will spend Weeks 9 and 10 focused on transit policy in Toronto and the role that federal, provincial, and local politics have played in shaping outcomes in the city. Finally, in Weeks 11 and 12 you will be presenting the results from your own research on the multi-scalar dimensions of urban policy and policymaking.

**COURSE READINGS**
The majority of the readings can be found electronically through the University of Toronto Library's holdings; those that can't will be hyperlinked or posted on the course Quercus site.

**REQUIREMENTS**
The course will be run as a seminar, and therefore will be discussion-based. Students are expected to complete each week’s assigned readings and actively participate in class discussions. Final grades will be based on participation, two critical response papers, and a final project.

**Participation**
You are expected to attend each class and arrive on time. Before each class, you should have finished the readings assigned for that day. In order to be sure you are as prepared for class as possible, be sure to complete the readings with a critical eye: What point is the author making? Are the most important aspects of the issue discussed? How does this reading compare to other literature exploring the same topic? To your own ideas and experiences? Can you spot weaknesses
in the author’s arguments? You may find it easier to participate in class discussions if you take notes as you go.

Critical Response Papers

You will be required to write **two** critical reading responses due on **January 15** and **January 22**. These should be approximately 500 words long (12 point font, double spaced) and critically evaluate the arguments and findings from the week’s assigned readings. These are not to be summaries only; they must engage the readings and evaluate them in relation to one another and your own thinking. Reading responses should be turned in during class in hard copy barring exceptional circumstances.

Final Project

The aim of this project is for you to write an authoritative assessment of a specific urban policy issue and the role that multiple levels of government are playing in producing and/or responding to it. You can focus on any city you like, or a group of cities, but it should be every specific about what the issue is, where it can be found and with what evidence, and the specific actions being taken by city, national, or subnational governments and their consequences.

**Paper (Due April 2, 2019)**

The final product should be around 15 pages in length, not including references. You can draw on both scholarly and non-scholarly sources as necessary. Scholarly sources include journal articles and academic books; non-scholarly sources include newspaper and magazine articles, websites, and non-academic books. You should use 12 point font, double space your text, and a consistent and established citation style. Final papers should be submitted via Quercus. The paper should consist of three parts:

Part 1: A description of the policy problem being evaluated and the city or cities that are experiencing it.

Part 2: An in-depth assessment of what role policy decisions at local, national, and/or subnational (state/provincial) levels are playing in causing the problem or in helping to solve the problem. Examples include planning tools, regulations, incentives, services or requirements. You should include your own assessment of the policymaking landscape and have a clear argument or thesis throughout your paper.

Part 3: A synthesis of your findings, including recommendations for decision makers going forward.

**Presentation (March 26 and April 2, 2019)**

Each student will give a 8-10 minute presentation in class on their findings. You are welcome to use Power Point or other presentation software. Your presentation should mirror the structure of your paper.
GRADING
Reading Responses .................................................................25% (12.5% each)
Final Project Paper.......................................................................35%
Final Project Presentation..............................................................20%
Participation................................................................................20%

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Participation
You are expected to attend each class on time, having completed the readings for that week. This is
a discussion-based course and so your preparation is critical for your success (and enjoyment!). As
described above, 30% of your final grade will be based on your participation in class discussions,
including helping to facilitate one week's discussion.

Email
Please send emails via your University of Toronto account and include the course code in the
subject line. I will do my best to get back to you within 48 hours.

Submitting Assignments
Reading responses should be submitted in class as a hard copy. Your final papers should be
submitted electronically via Quercus.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) of the total
marks for the assignment. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be
assigned a grade of zero. Assignments handed in AFTER the work has been returned to the class
cannot be marked for credit. Accommodations due to late registration into the course will not be
approved.

Academic Honesty
It is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of his or her work.
Failure to properly reference figures, concepts, and quotations that are not your own will result in
academic penalties, as required by the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism. At a minimum,
for every assignment, the sources of all data and ideas must be properly referenced using a
standard academic referencing style such as Chicago, APA, or MLA. If you are unclear about what
constitutes plagiarism or how to reference sources, please visit:
http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize
COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Part I. Urban Policy Primer

Week 1 (January 8): Introduction to Urban Policy and Policymaking: Policy IN Cities vs. Policy FOR Cities


Week 2 (January 15): Powers in Multi-scalar Urban Policy


***First Reading Response Due***

Week 3 (January 22): Process in Multi-scalar Urban Policy


***Second Reading Response Due***
Part II. Urban Policy Challenges

Week 4 (January 29): The Flint Water Crisis: It’s contours and consequences

- Time pipe GIFs: http://time.com/4191864/flint-water-crisis-lead-contaminated-michigan/

Week 5 (February 5): The Flint Water Crisis: Who's to blame?


Week 6 (February 12): The Flint Water Crisis: Could this happen elsewhere?


Week 7 (February 26): Urban Climate Change Mitigation: An Introduction

Week 8 (March 5): Urban Climate Change Mitigation in New York City


Week 9 (March 12): Toronto Transit Policy


Week 10 (March 19): Toronto Transit Policy: Light Rail vs. Subways


Week 11 (March 26):

Presentations

Week 12 (April 2):

Presentations

***Final Project Paper Due***