COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In recent years there has been an explosion of interest in the politics and governance of cities in Canada and around the world. Where once cities were seen as less important than national or international affairs, they are now increasingly understood to be vital engines of economic innovation and consequential sites of political conflict. The goal of this course is to increase your understanding of how Canadian cities are governed, and compare this experience with cities elsewhere.

The course is divided in two parts. First, we explore in general terms how cities are governed in Canada — how local governments work, how they interact with their federal and provincial counterparts, and how they are involved in public policy — and compare this experience with cities in the United States and Western Europe. We then set our sights closer to home, focusing on topics crucial to understanding politics in Toronto and its surrounding region, including amalgamation, suburbanization, and municipal finance.

By the end of this course, you will:
- Understand the dynamics of urban politics and governance in Canada, particularly in the Greater Toronto Area
- Appreciate the connections between politics and policy at the local, regional, and global scales
- Recognize potential solutions to some of today’s most pressing urban policy challenges
OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class 1 May 12 Why should we care about urban politics?
Public meeting field assignment introduced

Part I: Governing the Canadian City

Class 2 May 14 The local state
Reading response assignment introduced
Policy report assignment introduced

*** May 19 - No class (Victoria Day)

Class 3 May 21 Municipalities and multi-level governance
Finalize groups for policy report assignment

Class 4 May 26 The metropolitan dilemma

Class 5 May 28 Urban and local public policy

*** Week of June 2-6 - Meetings with groups to discuss policy report assignment

Class 6 June 2 Mayors, elections, and democratic engagement

Class 7 June 4 The Canadian city in comparative context
Hand in reading response assignment

Part II: Governing Toronto and the GTA

Class 8 June 9 “416” and the “905”

*** June 9 - Deadline to drop course without penalty

Class 9 June 11 Budgets and the fiscal squeeze, Pt. 1

Class 10 June 16 Budgets and the fiscal squeeze, Pt. 2 (in-class simulation)
Hand in public meeting field assignment

Class 11 June 18 Why urban politics? Redux / Exam review

June 20 Hand in policy report assignment

June 23-27 Final exam (exact date to be confirmed)
COURSE WEBSITE:

Readings, assignments, and course grades will be posted on the course website using
Blackboard: http://portal.utoronto.ca

REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:

Attendance and participation (5%)

Reading response (10%) – You will write a two-page critical response to the required readings
assigned in any two classes starting in Class 2 and ending Class 7. Due June 4.

Public meeting field assignment (20%) – You will attend and critically evaluate a municipal
public meeting, resulting in a 4-5 page reflection piece. Due June 16.

Policy report (35%) – Working in small groups, you will produce a 20-25 page report on an
important urban policy issue. Due June 20.

Final exam (30%) – Multiple choice, short answer, and long essay questions. Scheduled for the
week of June 23-27 (exact date to be confirmed).

COURSE POLICIES:

Email policy: As a general rule, I only respond to emails sent from a University of Toronto
account that clearly identify the sender and have “POL306” in the subject line. I will do my best
to get back to you within 48 hours.

Submitting assignments: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to
Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so,
students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference
database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that
apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web
site.

Turnitin.com class ID: 7886217
Enrolment password: pol306

I will NOT accept assignments by email. If you object to using Turnitin.com, please contact me
directly to discuss alternative arrangements.
Late assignments: The penalty for late assignments is 5% per day (including weekend days). A grade of 80% therefore becomes 60% in four days. Assignments more than 10 days late will not be accepted. The protocol for submitting late assignments is the same as above. Submit your assignment to Turnitin.com, which will log the appropriate time stamp.

Extensions due to illness require a medical certificate. If you foresee problems meeting submission deadlines please contact me as soon as possible; accommodations can always be made with adequate advance notice. This means at least a week before the deadline, not the night before the assignment is due!

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

Accessibility needs: If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: www.accessibility.utoronto.ca

Help with writing: Learning to express ideas clearly is a central goal of the university experience. If academic writing does not come easily to you, you are strongly encouraged to make use of U of T’s Writing Centres: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca
READINGS:

All required readings will be available via the course website.

Class 1  Why should we care about urban politics?

Required

Supplementary

Part I: Governing the Canadian city

Class 2  The local state

Required

Supplementary
Class 3  Municipalities and multi-level governance

Required

Supplementary

Class 4  The metropolitan dilemma

Required

Supplementary

Class 5  Urban and local public policy

Required


**Supplementary**


**Class 6 Mayors, elections, and democratic engagement**

**Required**


**Supplementary**


**Class 7 The Canadian city in comparative context**

**Required**


*Supplementary*


**Part II: Governing Toronto and the GTA**

**Class 8**

“416” and the “905”

*Required*


*Supplementary*


**Class 9**

Budgets and the fiscal squeeze, Pt. 1

*Required*


Supplementary

Class 10  
**Budgets and the fiscal squeeze, Pt. 2**

***In-class simulation - Readings will be provided in separate simulation package.***

Class 11  
**Why urban politics? Redux / Exam review**

Supplementary