Course Themes:

In the first half of the course, we approach local politics in terms of a perspective that assumes places compete over the positive and negative aspects of development. We examine this with historical and contemporary examples. We also seek to identify what motives cities have in using public policies when competing with each other. A major theme is that development (zoning) policies are one of the few areas where cities exercise any political autonomy. We begin with an overview of the city in American political history, examine the relationship between urbanization and politics, then proceed to issues of conflict and inequality within (and between) cities. Emphasis is given to development issues and participation in local politics.

In the second half of the quarter, we examine how (or if) variation in state political institutions have implications for how politics works in different states. We also assess how (or if) politics are "different" in Washington state and the American west. For this reason, we spend some time examining how political institutions are structured in different states (e.g. governors' powers, political parties, courts, election rules). The last few weeks of the course focus on some of political phenomena that often characterize politics in the western states: direct democracy, tax revolts, and fiscal problems.

This course will help you achieve a number of the student learning outcomes of the Political Science Department, including: Developing substantive knowledge in the area of American Politics, identifying value conflicts in public issues, and demonstrating critical, independent thinking about politics and public life.

Religious accommodations policy (SB 5166)

Course Texts: (you will need the following books)


Additional required readings are listed in the syllabus and are available electronically through the WWU library. Check the web version of the syllabus for updated links to reading materials.

Several copies of the Donovan et al text will be available in the library reserve room for 2 hour and multi-day checkout, and digital versions can be rented for less than $30.
Tasks:

Your evaluation (grade) will be, for the most part, based upon comprehension and application of topics covered in readings and lecture. An essay (details posted online) is due in the ninth week of the quarter.

12.5% of the course grade is based on participation. This participation component requires attending class, submitting questions for guest speakers, submitting brief responses to two films we will view, and participating in the Week 10 budgeting exercise. (I will discuss these in class).

Your course grade will be calculated according to:

- Midterm: 25%
- Essay/Memo: 30%
- Final: 25%
- Participation, quizzes, tasks: 20%

Course Outline: These dates may change as we go. Discussion topics will be discussed in class.

Section One: Political Economy of Place (Sept. 25 & Sept. 27)

Reading: John Logan and Harvey Molotch. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine" American Journal of Sociology. (JSTOR or Proquest)

Recommended reading:

- The Study of Local Politics Sept. 25
- The Political Economy of Place Sept. 25
- Local development politics Sept. 27

Section Two: Cities in US History (Sept. 30 and Oct. 2)

Reading: Judd and Swanstrom, chpts 1 & 2

Recommended reading:

- American Cities in Historical Perspective Sept. 30
- The Urban Machine Oct. 2
- The Reform Movement Oct. 4
Section Three: The Reform Era and Consequences (Oct. 4th - Oct. 11th)

**Reading**: Donovan et al Chapter 3; Chapter 11;
**Reading**: Judd, Chpts 4, 5
**Reading**: (for Oct 9th): Clayton et al Chapter 10 (Courts and the Judicial System)

Recommended reading:

Post-reform Institutions Oct. 4th
Participation and the Irony of Local Politics Oct. 7th
**Visit from WA Supreme Court justices Oct. 9th**
Minority representation Oct. 11th

Section Four: Modern Suburbs (Oct. 14th - 16th)

**Reading**: Judd and Swanstrom, chtps 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10
**Reading**: Radley Balko. "How municipalities in St. Louis County, Mo. profit from poverty" pdf.

Recommended readings:

National Urban Policy / Rise of Suburbs Oct. 14th
Suburb/City Competition and Stratification Oct. 16th
State growth management plans Oct. 16th
**Film or guest Oct. 18th**

Section Five: Local Growth and Revenue Politics (Oct. 21st - 25th)

**Reading**: Judd and Swanstrom, chpts. 11 & 12
Donovan et al Chpt 12

Local Economic Development Competition Oct. 21st
Local Conflict Over Growth Oct 23rd
Local Revenue sources Oct 25th

MIDTERM (on or about October 28th)

Section Six: State Politics (Oct 30th - Nov 4th)

**Reading**: Donovan et al Chapter 1; Chpt 15; Clayton et al Chpt. 1 (Pol. Culture) & Chpt. 2 (Elections).

State Political Culture Oct 30th
Elections in Washington Nov. 1st
K-12 Funding in WA Nov 4th
No class Nov. 6 (task TBA)

Section Seven: State Institutions I (Nov. 8th - Nov 13th)
Reading: Donovan et al Chapter 5, 6 & 7; Clayton Chpt. 3 (WA Parties).

    Political Parties Nov 8th

Nov. 10th, Veterans Day, no class

Reading: Clayton et al Chpt. 8 (WA Legislature), & Chpt. 4 (WA Interest Groups)
    Interest Groups Nov 13th
    State Legislatures Nov 13th

Section Eight: State Institutions II (Nov. 15th - 18th)
Reading: Donovan et al Chapter 8, 9
    Donovan et al Chapter 4; Clayton et al Chpt. 9 (WA Governors); review Clayton Chpt. 10 (WA Courts).

Recommended reading:

    The Governor Nov 15th
    State Courts Nov 15th
    Progressive Reforms & Direct Democracy Nov 18th
    The Initiative Industrial Complex Nov 18th

Section Nine: State Policy (Nov. 20th – 22nd)
Reading: Donovan et al Chapter 10; Clayton et al Chpt. 11 (WA Policy).

    State Fiscal Politics Nov 20th
    Budget groups meet Nov 22nd

    Nov. 25th TBA

Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 27 - 29, no class)

Budgeting exercise into (Dec. 2nd)

Budget groups meet, initial reports (Dec. 2 & 4)

Budget group presentations (Dec. 6th)

Exam review, time permitting. Dec 6th

Final, Tues. Dec. 10th @ 3:30pm