

Urban Politics (POLS 2220)**Meets MWF 1:10—2:00****Instructor: Prof. Bob Cropf****Contact Info: robert.cropf@slu.edu****314-605-2499 (cell)****Title: Urban Politics: Transformations and Challenges in American Cities****Course Description:**

This course explores the evolving landscape of American cities, a topic that has garnered renewed interest in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Major urban centers such as New York City and Los Angeles have faced significant challenges during this period, prompting us to reevaluate the future of urban politics and, by extension, the future of the nation. This is particularly pertinent given that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 80% of Americans reside in urban areas, a trend expected to continue despite the pandemic's impact.

Our exploration begins with a critical question: Are American cities experiencing a renaissance or facing decline? This overarching query leads us to examine various dimensions that shape the future of urban spaces and their inhabitants. We will delve into why cities, historically the hubs of jobs and economic opportunities, attract corporations like Amazon seeking to establish headquarters in urban rather than rural settings. This course will investigate the enduring role of cities as economic engines, not only in the U.S. but globally, and assess their capacity to sustain and generate employment and economic growth.

However, urban living is not without its challenges. While cities are often associated with innovation and progress, they also grapple with higher rates of crime, mental illness, and poverty compared to rural and suburban areas. We will analyze the factors contributing to these urban issues and contrast them with the growing concerns in rural America, such as rising unemployment, opioid addiction, and suicide rates. This rural distress, we will argue, has significantly influenced the political landscape, contributing to the rise of populism and figures like Donald Trump.

The course will also address the economic vulnerabilities of American cities, as highlighted by the 2008 Great Recession and further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. We will use case studies like Detroit's bankruptcy in 2013 and the ongoing economic struggles of Rust Belt cities like St. Louis to understand these vulnerabilities. Conversely, we will examine cities like New York, San Francisco, and Seattle, which have experienced economic growth yet face challenges in maintaining affordability for middle-class residents.

Finally, this course aims to offer insights into formulating policies that could aid struggling cities like Detroit and St. Louis, while also making thriving urban centers more accessible to the middle class. Through a combination of theoretical frameworks, case studies, and policy

analysis, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics shaping American urban politics today.

Required Reading:

Donovan, Smith, Osborn, and Mooney (DSOM). 2015. *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform: The Essentials*. 4th ed.

Levine, Myron. *Urban Politics: Cities and Suburbs in a Global Age*.

Weekly Reading Assignments:

Unit 1: 1/16, 1/18 (Levine Preface & Chapter 1; DSOM Introduction & Chapter 1)

Unit 2: 1/23, 1/25 (Levine Chapter 2; DSOM Chapter 2)

Unit 3: 1/30, 2/1 (Levine Chapter 3; DSOM Chapter 3)

Unit 4: 2/6, 2/8 (Levine Chapter 4; DSOM Chapter 4)

Unit 5: 2/23, 2/15 (Levine Chapter 5; DSOM Chapter 5)

Unit 6: 2/20, 2/22 (Levine Chapter 6; DSOM Chapter 6)

Unit 7: 2/27, 2/29 (Levine Chapter 7); DSOM Chapter 7

3/5 (midterm review), Mid-term Exam Released 3/6 (midterm due by 11:59 pm on 3/8)

Spring Break (3/11—3/15)

Unit 8: 3/19, 3/21 (Levine Chapter 8; DSOM Chapter 8)

Unit 9: 3/26 (Levine Chapter 9; DSOM Chapter 9)

Easter Break (3/28)

Unit 10: 4/2, 4/4 (Levine Chapter 10; DSOM Chapter 10)

Unit 11: 4/9, 4/11 (Levine Chapter 11; DSOM Chapter 11)

Unit 12: 4/16, 4/18 (Levine Chapter 12; DSOM Chapter 12)

Unit 13: 4/23, 4/25 (DSOM: Chapters 13 and 14)

Unit 14: 4/30, 5/2 (DSOM Chapter 15)

Final Exam (online due 5/12 by 11:59 pm)

Breakdown of Assignment Grading:

1. Attendance: students must attend every class but I assume you know that. Participation in class discussion: Besides showing up, getting involved in class discussions helps you engage with the material and learn better. (5%)
2. Online Discussion Board: several times during the semester, I will post a question on Canvas. You will have a few days to respond to my questions and the responses of 2 fellow students. Your ability to post on the Discussion Board intelligently and insightfully based on the lectures, the assigned text, and outside media coverage will give you full credit for this requirement. (10 points for completion on time and replying to 2 persons, 5 points for responding to 1 person or not completing on time, 0 points for not replying to anyone and not completing on time).
3. Online quizzes: Multiple-choice quizzes on Canvas (25 points per quiz)
4. Exams: Mid-term exam will be on Canvas and consist of multiple-choice questions and short essay questions (100 points). On-line Final exam consisting of short-essay questions. Once you open the exam you will have 2 hours to complete the exam before Canvas kicks you out. (200 points)

Student Learning Objectives

1. **Globalization and Urban Transformation:** Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of how globalization and economic forces shape urban areas, analyzing both their positive and negative impacts in the context of social justice and ethical considerations, reflecting SLU's commitment to understanding and transforming society.
2. **Governance Structures and Urban Politics:** Articulate how formal rules and structures influence local politics, integrating this knowledge with the Judeo-Christian values of leadership and service, to foster a deeper understanding of responsible governance.
3. **Federal and State Influence in Urban Settings:** Examine the role of federal and state governments in urban areas, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and public service in line with SLU's dedication to community involvement and leadership.
4. **Regional Diversity and Urban Affairs:** Analyze regional differences and their impacts on urban affairs, incorporating an appreciation for the diversity of God's creation and the Jesuit ideal of respecting and learning from all cultures and societies.
5. **Urban Economic Development:** Understand the necessity of economic development in cities and the strategies employed to attract jobs and business, relating these concepts to the Jesuit principle of promoting social welfare and the common good.
6. **Race, Ethnicity, and Urban Dynamics:** Explore the significant impact of race and ethnicity in urban areas, fostering an environment of inclusivity and understanding that

aligns with the university's mission of service to all communities and dedication to social justice.

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	<60

Course Administration:

Attendance Policy:

Your success in this course will depend on your ability to complete the daily reading and weekly writing and discussion assignments. Absence in three classes without a reason that is out of the control of the student will result in a one level drop in the final grade (i.e. illness, work conflict, medical emergency, etc.). for more information regarding SLU's attendance policy see https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/?_ga=2.219908889.1085800153.1704469060-1382042669.1703265196&_gac=1.39979670.1703779066.EAlalQobChMIzqyPzr-ygwMVDfXlCh0ViwPmEAAYASAAEgLxBvD_BwE.

Courtesy Expectations:

Students will treat their classroom obligations as they would treat any serious professional engagement. That includes:

- 1) Preparing thoroughly for each session in accordance with the instructor's request;
- 2) Adhering to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor;
- 3) Providing constructive feedback to faculty members regarding their performance.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to disability accommodations. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean’s office.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator that you shared an experience relating to Title IX.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to Title IX. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center (SSC) supports students in reaching their goals in and out of the classroom. Providing a variety of resources, the Student Success Center houses both the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) and Academic Support, which includes Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, University Writing Services, and Student Success Coaching. The Student Success Center is located in the Busch Student Center, Suite 331, and students can make an appointment with any SSC resource via EAB Navigate. To learn more about the Student Success Center and its resources, please visit: <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php>.

University Writing Services

University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations with trained writing consultants who help with everything from brainstorming, outlining, and proposing research questions to documenting

sources, revising, and implementing feedback. These consultations can take place in-person, asynchronously, or via Zoom and can be scheduled through EAB Navigate – Student. Getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels on different writing projects (including but not limited to class assignments, conference papers, cover letters, dissertations, group projects, multimedia assignments, personal statements, senior capstone projects, short answer questions on applications, speeches, and theses). For additional information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php> or send an email to writing@slu.edu.