

POLITICS 207
LOS ANGELES POLITICS
SPRING 2015

T-Th 1:30-2:55 PM - Mosher 3

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Office Hours
T 3-4:30pm
W 1-3pm
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course about urban politics that takes Los Angeles as its case study. Many look to Los Angeles as a paradigmatic city. We will query the appropriateness of this observation as we identify key concepts in urban politics, apply them to Los Angeles, and then consider how much Los Angeles sets, follows, or deviates from trends. Because of the pattern of growth in the area, Los Angeles is broadly defined to encompass the city, the county, and the region. Since politics is the study of power we will examine power in the context of the city; who has it, who seeks it, how has it shifted over time, and what consequences result from it being exercised? Significant attention will be paid to the agency of those who have at various times had the least power in the city; how are they represented or not represented, how can they influence the exercise of power?

COURSE TEXTS

The following required text is available and should be purchased in the bookstore:

Ross, Bernard H. and Myron A. Levine. 2006. *Urban Politics: Power in Metropolitan America, 7th Ed.* Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth or 2012. *Urban Politics: Cities and Suburbs in a Global Age, 8th Ed.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Additional readings will be posted on the course Moodle site or you can use library search engines to locate them yourself.

Students are also required to **read the *Los Angeles Times* daily**. In an effort to help students meet this requirement, there will be time set aside each class period to survey relevant news of the day. All students should be prepared to offer insights. You may read the *Los Angeles Times* on-line (LATimes.com), but I strongly suggest you purchase a subscription. The expectation is that you read the entire paper, looking for articles that relate to class. Pay particular attention to the “Local” section, but don’t neglect others like “Business”. Do not simply stop at the first relevant article and do not rush to read the paper just before class begins. The *Downtown News* (www.downtownnews.com), another source for local political news can also be accessed on-line. Of course you are encouraged to read other sources including newspapers, and magazines. Students should also watch and listen to local public affairs shows like “Which Way LA” on KCRW 89.9 (www.kcrw.com/news/programs/ww) and public access channels that televise public

meetings and other events. Finally, you may want to follow and participate in LA Politics blogs: mayorsam.blogspot.com, blogging.la/, capitalandmain.com, lavoicel.org, laobserved.com, lacurbed.com, citywatchla.com, and others.

Course Requirements

(The professor reserves the right to amend these requirements during the semester.)

Assignment	Worth
<i>Reaction/Research Papers (R/R)(5%each)</i>	25%
<i>Midterm</i>	20%
<i>Cross-City Comparison Presentation</i>	10%
<i>Final Research Paper (5% Bibliography; 20%Final Paper)</i>	25%
<i>Attendance & Participation</i>	20%

Students must complete a total of **5 Reaction/Research Papers (R/R)** over the course of the semester. These can be selected at each student’s discretion. These 1-2 page papers (12 pt. font and double spaced with one inch margins) are intended to maintain students’ engagement with the topics and readings for each week. The assignments for each R/R paper are included in the syllabus and they are due the day the topic is discussed in class. No late papers will be accepted and lateness is defined as being after 1:35pm that day of class. These papers will be graded for grammar, style, effort, and insight. When the assignment focuses on a particular reading for the week, you must offer an analysis of the reading. What is the main point/argument? What questions does it answer and provoke? How does it contribute to your understanding of the topic for that day? This should not be a simple summary of the reading. When the assignment calls for outside research, you should do this independently, not in conjunction with other students.

The **Midterm** will be a take home essay passed out on **Tuesday, 2/17** and due **Thursday, 3/3**. This exam will be based upon all of the lectures, readings, discussions, field trips, and films up to and including “Elections, Ethics and Redistricting”.

The **Cross-City Comparison** will be an in-class group project that requires students to research an assigned city using outside sources, compare and contrast this city with Los Angeles along important dimensions identified in class, and then present findings to the entire class. The outside sources may include web-based ones, but must include at least three scholarly articles or books about your assigned city. More information about the expectations will be distributed as the assignment due date approaches.

The **Final Research Paper** requires you to conduct research on a current policy issue in Los Angeles. Starting with an overview of the LA based history and background of the broad policy area that covers your specific topic (eg; the labor and the economy, education, the environment, housing, criminal justice, transportation), your paper will then employ theory we’ve studied to analyze the issue. The assignment includes a **research proposal due Tuesday, 3/17**, an **annotated bibliography including at least**

10 sources, 5 of which are scholarly, due Tuesday, 4/7 and the final 7-10 page paper due at 12noon on Friday, May 8. More detailed information about this assignment will be handed out in class.

Attendance and Participation are vital to the success of this class. Consistent participation in discussion is expected. The class will only be interesting and meaningful if you are faithfully in attendance, conscientiously do **ALL** of the assigned readings, and consistently contribute to discussion. You can improve your participation grade by keeping abreast of current events related to Los Angeles politics and bringing these to the attention of the class. I reserve the right to sporadically take roll, or administer pop quizzes if attendance and participation dramatically decline. In order to encourage active participation most classes we will begin with a 5-minute “In The News” debrief in order to keep abreast of current events related to Los Angeles Politics. All students are required to follow news sources on a daily basis in order to be able to contribute to this debrief and contributions must offer an analysis of how and why the story relates to LA politics. Each student will also be assigned a city official to follow throughout the semester. This entails doing initial research on the official and the office they hold, and following them on the web and in the news.

Extra-credit is given for participation in a local political campaign (this includes candidates as well as particular issues) or work with an elected official or organization directly impacting policy-making in the City of Los Angeles. The city will be having elections in March and May (<http://clerk.lacity.org/elections/candidates/index.htm>) including a race for City Council in the district that includes Occidental College. All placements must be pre-approved by the professor by the third week of classes. This credit is only given for work done during the semester and you must complete at least 25 hours total. To receive this credit you must turn in a 3-5-page paper that details your activities and analyzes how your co-curricular experience supplemented course material. Did it support or challenge what you learned in class? You must also have verification from a supervisor from the campaign or office that you did in fact complete at least 25 hours of work. Finally, you must be prepared to discuss your experiences in class during the semester as they relate to topics being discussed. If all these requirements are satisfactorily met your final course grade will be raised by 1/3 (eg; a B+ becomes an A-).

Plagiarism

Part of our responsibility as members of a scholarly community is to acknowledge the hard work behind the development of ideas. In this spirit it is important that you avoid plagiarizing the work of others. Please review Occidental College’s policy on plagiarism located within the statement on Academic Ethics:

<http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics> or

<http://www.oxy.edu/center-academic-excellence/writing-center/citing-sources>.

NOTE: I encourage you to consult the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), located on the ground floor of the Library, to assist you with all aspects of the essay writing process (from brainstorming to final revision). The CAE offers evening drop-in sessions

with trained Peer Writing Advisors, appointments with Faculty Writing Specialists, and Student Success Seminars (which deal with notetaking, reading efficiency, test-taking, time management).

***Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.**

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

All reading should be completed prior to the lecture for that day.

***Introduction**

T 1/20

(no R/R papers)

Read:

<http://projects.latimes.com/mapping-la/neighborhoods/>

<http://www.lacity.org/>

***Why study urban politics? Why study Los Angeles politics?**

Th 1/22

(no R/R papers)

Read:

-Wirth “Urbanism as a Way of Life”

-Dear and Dahmann, “Urban Politics and the Los Angeles School of Urbanism”

-Erie and Mackenzie, “The L.A. School and Politics Noir: Bringing the Local State Back In”

*** Film: “Los Angeles Now”**

T 1/27

(no R/R papers)

Read:

-Ross and Levine 7th ed pp 11-40 and Ch 2 pp 41-74 or 8th ed pp 11-25 and Ch 2 pp 26-53

*** Los Angeles History – Growth of a City**

Th 1/29

(R/R paper topic: How are race and growth connected in LA?)

Read:

-Ethington “The Spatial and Demographic Growth of Los Angeles”

-Avila “The Nation’s White Spot”

***Old Guard and Founding Elites - Wealth, Power, and Politics in Old LA**
T 2/3

(R/R paper topic: Davis)

Read:

- Davis "Powerlines"; pp 99-149
- Sitton "Did the Ruling Class Rule at City Hall in 1920s Los Angeles?"

***Alternative Politics - Beyond The Old Boys Network**
Th 2/5

(R/R paper topic: What explains the emergence of radical politics in LA?)

Read:

- Gottlieb et al. "Mosaic of Movements" pp 9-48
- McWilliams "The Politics of Utopia"; pp 273-313

*** The Progressive Era and Reform - For the Public Good?**
T 2/10

(R/R paper topic: The pros and cons of progressive era reforms)

Read:

- Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch 6; pp 173-196 and Ch 7; pp 197-221 or 8th ed Ch 6 pp127-157
- Sonenshein *City at Stake* pp.3-5; 29-33
- Fogelson "The Politics of Progressivism"

***Structures and Leadership - So Who Runs This Place?**
Th 2/12

(R/R paper topic: Who holds the balance of power in Los Angeles?)

Read:

- Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch 5; pp 131-164 or 8th ed Ch 5 pp 95-126
- Los Angeles City Organization Chart
- Sonenshein *Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government* on-line:
<http://www.lwvlosangeles.org/structure.html>
- Ingram "The History of the Weak Mayor-Strong Council Concept in the City of Los Angeles Government"
- Willon, "Trutanich Ups the Ante in Battle Over L.A. Live Signs"
- Newton, "Herb Wesson: City Council's New Boss"
- Newton, "Harmony and City Hall"
- Zahniser, "Garcetti Stays Within Familiar Territory on City Appointments"

***Bureaucracy - So This Is Who Really Runs This Place?!**

T 2/17

(R/R paper topic: Does LA Have Too Much Bureaucracy?)

Read:

-Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch 9; pp 267-289; 300-309 or 8th ed Ch 8 pp 180-185, 189-193, 202-207

-LA City Open Data Portal <https://data.lacity.org/>

-“How Many Agencies Does it Take to Make a Better LA Street?”

-Lacey “What’s in a Name? A Lot of City Hall Bureaucracy”

-Galperin, “Pouring Money into Potholes”

***Citizen Participation**

Th 2/19 (Midterm Handed Out**)**

(R/R paper topic: Is Participatory Democracy in Los Angeles Strong or Weak?)

Read:

-Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch 8; pp 233-266 or 8th ed Ch 7 pp158-179

-Final Report of the Neighborhood Council Review Commission located at:

http://www.lacityneighborhoods.com/ncrc_report.htm

-Department of Neighborhood Empowerment/Empower LA website:

<http://done.lacity.org/dnn/>

-Newton, “L.A.’s Neighborhood Councils”

-Musso et al, “Toward ‘Strong Democracy’ in Global Cities”

-Reyes, “When Efficiency Provokes Anger”

***Field Trip – Los Angeles City Hall**

T 2/24

***Elections, Ethics, and Redistricting**

Th 2/26 and T 3/3 (Midterm Due T 3/3**)**

(R/R: How Should Voter Turnout Be Improved? *note, due 2/26)

-LA City Clerk, “Why People Don’t Vote”

-Welsh, “L.A. Mayoral Runoff Another Low Mark in Voter Turnout”

-LA Times Election Maps, <http://graphics.latimes.com/la-mayoral-maps/#10/34.0504/-118.5995>

-“How the Heck Do You Get Angelenos into the Streets?:

<http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2013/12/03/how-the-heck-do-you-get-angelenos-into-the-streets-and-maybe-even-to-the-polls/ideas/up-for-discussion/>

-Carey, “Changing City Elections To Even Years The Wrong Way To Drive Civic Engagement” <http://www.dailynews.com/opinion/20150113/changing-city-elections-to-even-years-the-wrong-way-to-drive-civic-engagement-guest-commentary>

-Morrison, “Voting For Dollars” <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-morrison-hochman-20140827-column.html#page=1>

-“City Council Oks Voting Maps”

-“L.A.’s Flawed Redistricting Process”

-Linthicum, “LA Council Backs Overhaul of Campaign Finance Law”

***Debrief Field Trip and Election**
Th3/5

SPRING BREAK T 3/10 & TH 3/12 NO CLASS

***The Economy and Finance - Where's the Middle? Can We Afford the Future?**
T 3/17

(R/R paper topic: Should L.A. Raise the Minimum Wage?)

Read:

-Holland, L.A. County Leads California in Poverty Rate”:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/sep/30/local/la-me-poverty-20131001>

-Economic Roundtable, “Effects of \$15 an Hour Minimum Wage in the City of Los Angeles”:

http://www.economicrt.org/summaries/Effects_15Dollar_MinWage_LA_City.html

-Central City Association, “Regarding Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Minimum Wage Proposal”:

<http://ccala.org/downloads/CCA-Statement-on-Minimum-Wage-9-12-14.pdf>

-Kirkham and Hsu, “Would An L.A. Minimum Wage Hike Push Businesses To Nearby Cities?” <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-minimum-wage-borders-20141227-story.html#page=1>

-Flamming, “State of the Los Angeles Economy” in State of the City 2011 – Pat Brown Institute

-“Los Angeles on the Edge Pt 1 and 2” Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)

-Lopez “Income Gap More Like Chasm”

-Krol and Svorny, “How to Make Lethargic L.A. Grow”:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2014/jan/17/opinion/la-oe-krol-los-angeles-2020-report-20140116>

***Budget and Finance – Budget Simulation Exercise**

(no R/R papers)

Th 3/19

T 3/24

Th 3/26

Read:

-Open Budget <http://www.lamayor.org/openbudget>

-Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Summary http://cao.lacity.org/budget14-15/2014-15Budget_Summary.pdf

-“Following the Money: Understanding Los Angeles City’s Finances and Impacting the Budget”:

http://www.advancementprojectca.org/sites/default/files/imce/Following_the_Money_EP_F_10-14-11.pdf

-TBA

***Regimes - Public/Private Partnerships, Who Has The Power?**

T 3/31

(R/R paper topic: Does Regime Theory Help Explain Power in LA?)

Read:

- Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch 4 pp 103-130 or 8th ed Ch 4 pp.77-94
- Davis “The Mercenaries” and “Epilogue”; pp 70-97 and “Fortress LA”; pp 221-263
- Gottlieb et al. “Setting an Agenda” pp 173-186

***Downtown Football Stadium - A Case Study**

Th 4/2

(R/R paper topic: What are the pros and cons of a downtown stadium?)

Read:

- Nelson, “Resist the NFL Blitz” <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jan/19/opinion/la-oe-nelson-stadium-20110119>
- Eisinger, “The Politics of Bread and Circuses: Building the City for the Visitor Class”
- Hawthorne, “Critic’s Notebook: Los Angeles Needs a Game Plan”
- Linthicum and Zahniser, “Privatize the Convention Center?”
- “AEG’s Convention Center” Op Ed LA Times
- Kaplan, “Can Inglewood Survive The NFL and Gentrification?”
<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kaplan-inglewood-nfl-gentrification-20150113-story.html>

***Intergovernmental Relations – Beyond the City Limits**

T 4/7 (*Bibliography Due***)**

(R/R: Promise Zones)

Read:

- Ross and Levine 7th ed Ch. 14; pp 441-472 or 8th ed Ch 11, pp 268-293
- Olopade, “What Happened to the Office of Urban Policy?”
- Finnegan, Zahniser, Smith, “Anti-Poverty Zone Leaves Out L.A.’s Poorest”
<http://articles.latimes.com/2014/apr/06/local/la-me-obama-garcetti-promise-zone-20140407>

***County Governance**

Th 4/9

(R/R paper topic: Los Angeles County Jail Reform or Child Welfare System Reform)

Read:

- Hoene et al. “The Development of Counties as Municipal Government”
- “The Organizational and Fiscal Challenges of Providing Public Services in Los Angeles County” (Public Policy Institute of California Research Brief)
- “Just the Facts – Los Angeles County” (Public Policy Institute of California)
- Los Angeles Times Editorial “Unsupervised; From CAO to CEO”
- Therolf “Report Criticizes County’s Structure”

- Newton, “Five Angry Bosses”
- Newton, “L.A.’s Sniping Supervisors”
- Los Angeles Times Op-Ed, “New Ideas By L.A. County Leaders Are Welcome – But Are They Right?” <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-supervisors-county-organazition-20150113-story.html>

***Race, Ethnicity, and LA Politics - The Bradley Years, 1992, and Beyond**

T 4/14

(R/R paper topic: Sonenshein, “Biracial Coalition Politics in Los Angeles”)

Read:

- Gottlieb et al “Shifting Coalitions” pp 153-172
- Sonenshein “Biracial Coalition Politics in Los Angeles”
- Sonenshein, “Do Asian Americans Count in LA?”
- Kaplan, “Black vs. Brown; We Aren’t All in the Same Boat”
- Rodriguez, “Demography Isn’t Destiny”:
<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jan/07/opinion/la-oe-rodriguez-politics-l.a.-mayor-demographics-20130107>

***Mayoral Races - Winners and Losers**

Th 4/16

(R/R paper topic: one of articles below)

Read:

- Kaufman “Still Waiting for the Rainbow Coalition”
- Austin and Middleton “The Limitations of the Deracialization Concept in the 2001 Los Angeles Mayoral Election”
- Sonenshein and Pinkus “The Dynamics of Latino Political Incorporation”
- Adbullah and Freer “Pushing and Pulling Towards Coalition”
- LA Votes for Mayor Report <http://studyla.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/LA-Votes-for-Mayor-Report.pdf>
- “Campaign Contributions By Special Interests” <http://graphics.latimes.com/mayoral-contributions/>

-TBA

***Assessing the Mayors – Villaraigosa and Garcetti**

(R/R Was Mayor Villaraigosa a Successful Mayor?)

T 4/21

Read:

- Villaraigosa’s Inaugural Address
- Villaraigosa’s Annual State of the City Addresses 2009:
<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2009/04/full-text-of-villaraigosas-state-of-the-city-speech.html>
- Leibowitz, “Dear Mr. Mayor”: <http://www.lamag.com/article.aspx?id=15528>
- Dreier, “Judging Mr. Mayor,”:
http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/article/judging_mr_mayor_20090610/

-Various Authors, “And Another Thing”: <http://www.lamag.com/article.aspx?id=15540>
-Editorial, Daily News, “Mayor Villaraigosa Finds Some Improvement but He Still Has a Long Way to Go.” http://www.dailynews.com/opinions/ci_16544442
-“Straight From the Heart of L.A.: The Villaraigosa Years 2005-2013”
-TBA

*** Cross-City Comparison Presentations**
(no R/R papers)
 Th 4/23
 T 4/24

*** The Future of Los Angeles - Evaluations**
(no R/R papers)
 Th 4/30

-“A Time For Truth: 2020 Commission Report”:
http://www.metalscoalition.com/Time_For_Truth_LosAngeles.pdf