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**UPADM-GP 215   
The Politics of New York**

**Spring 2023**

## **Instructor Information**

* Sarah Ludwig, Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning
* Email: [sil2005@nyu.edu](mailto:sil2005@nyu.edu)
* [Virtual office hours](https://nyu.zoom.us/j/99608768514): Tuesdays, 2:30–3:30 p.m., and by appointment

## **Course Information**

* Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 p.m.
* Class Location: 60 Fifth Avenue, Rm. 110 | Loc: Washington Square

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to be fun and engaging, and to ground students in vital questions about NYC politics. We will explore the structure of NYC government and public institutions, and the roles that public officials, civic groups, and advocates play in the city’s governance and decision-making. We will examine the role of the public sector in NYC’s physical and economic development and provision of municipal services. And we will delve into the forces that shape neighborhood development, land use, housing, education, transit, policing, climate, and parks and open space – and more.

Through class lectures, readings, discussions, films, and guest presentations, students will gain understanding of how NYC works and has changed over time, with emphasis on economic and racial inequality, and shifting demographics. Students will also explore ways in which state and federal governments influence the city. The course will integrate current events into readings and class discussions.

**Course Requirements**

* **Attendance:** Students are required to attend all class sessions and to come to class on time and prepared to discuss assigned readings and discussion questions. Unexcused absences or frequent lateness will lead to a lower final grade in the course. It is the responsibility of students who miss class to obtain notes from a classmate and keep up with the course material.
* **Brightspace:** Students are expected to check Brightspace on a regular basis, and to read all announcements posted.
* **Online and Class Discussion:** Students are expected to participate actively in discussions, and there will be ample opportunity for students to discuss course content, both in class and in online discussions on Brightspace.
* **Assignments:** Students are required to submit a midterm, policy memo, and final exam. Detailed instructions and deadlines will be posted in Brightspace.
* **Use of Laptops, Phones & Other Electronic Devices:** All phones should be put away (and silenced) during class. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for their classmates and professor by limiting the use of laptops during class to note-taking and other activities directly related to class discussion.

## **Required and Suggested Readings**

You will find weekly reading assignments in the Lessons tab on Brightspace for each corresponding week. All required and suggested readings will be accessible through Brightspace As you will see, lots of items on the reading list are short articles, as well as videos and podcasts. Many required readings are excerpted from books on New York City history, public policy, and planning.

We will be reading a lot of chapters in one book, in particular, which you might want to buy or borrow from the library:

* Caro, R. (1974). *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. Vintage.

Although not required, several other books on NYC that provide excellent background and context for the course include:

* Freeman, J. (2000). *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*. The New Press.
* Holtzman, B. (2021). *The Long Crisis: New York City and the Path to Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
* Phillips-Fein, K. (2017). *Fear City: New York’s Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*. Metropolitan Books.

**Brightspace**

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. Students will use Brightspace in this course to:

* View the most updated version of the course syllabus.
* Read course announcements.
* Retrieve assigned and suggested readings.
* Post discussion comments.
* Submit assignments.

As the course progresses, I may modify reading assignments and other items, and will provide ample notice before doing so.

Also posted on Brightspace is a list of web resources, including online news publications, magazines, journals, blogs, and other content focused on NYC politics and related subjects. Please feel free to share with the entire class additional online resources you find interesting and relevant.

## **Assignments and Grading**

Assignments must be submitted to Brightspace by the due date and time stated on the syllabus, and following the instructions provided. It is your responsibility to ensure that the uploaded assignment is in the correct file format and accessible. Delays caused by a student’s failure to follow instructions may lead to a lower grade on the assignment. Submitted assignments will be run through TurnItIn.

Detailed instructions regarding each written assignment will be posted on Brightspace throughout the semester. Please do not hesitate to speak with me during office hours, if you have questions. Your final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

**Class Participation (15%)** – Throughout the course, there will be ample opportunity for all students to participate in meaningful discussions, both during class time and in postings in the Discussion section of Brightspace. Discussion questions will be posted with the readings, so that students have time to reflect and prepare that week’s topic.

**Midterm Exam (25%)** – The midterm exam will be a take-home assignment in which you will write short answer responses to a set of prompts relating to course topics covered during the first half of the semester. Formulate your answers using all relevant course materials, write with brevity and purpose, and be sure to properly cite all your sources.

**Policy Memo (30%)** – Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on Brightspace later in the semester, after we determine as a class whether this will be a group or individual assignment.

**Final Exam (30%)** – The final exam will generally follow the same format as the midterm, and will be held in person (barring changed circumstances). The final exam will provide you with an opportunity to pull together themes and learnings from the course.

**Extra Credit (5-10%)** – Students will have several opportunities to receive extra credit in the course. These opportunities will be posted on Brightspace and discussed in class.

**Late Policy**

Extensions may be granted on deadlines, in cases of emergency or special circumstances. For assignments submitted late without approved extensions, grades will be lowered incrementally for each day the assignment is late.

## **Semester Overview**

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| **WEEK** | **DATE** | **TOPICS & KEY ASSIGNMENTS** |
| 1 | 1/24/2023 | Course Intro & Overview |
| 1 | 1/26/2023 | The Emergence of NYC |
| 2 | 1/31/2023 | Demographics:   * 8.8 million New Yorkers |
| 2 | 2/2/2023 | * Immigration and NYC Neighborhoods |
| 3 | 2/7/2023 | Power and Politics in New York City:   * State Limits on NYC’s Powers * The NYC Charter * The Mayor |
| 3 | 2/9/2023 | * The City Council |
| 4 | 2/14/2023 | * The Budget |
| 4 | 2/16/2023 | * City Agencies * Elections, Party Politics, Coalitions |
| 5 | 2/21/2023 | The Legacy of the New Deal and the Shift to Neoliberalism  **Midterm exam and policy memo instructions posted.** |
| 5 | 2/23/2023 | The Legacy of the New Deal and the Shift to Neoliberalism  **Midterm exam and policy memo instructions posted.** |
| 6 | 2/28/2023 | Robert Moses and *The Power Broker* |
| 6 | 3/2/2023 | Land Use, Zoning and Development |
| 7 | 3/7/2023 | The Housing Crisis in NYC **Midterm exam due by the end of the day on 3/9.** |
| 7 | 3/9/2023 | The Housing Crisis in NYC **Midterm exam due by the end of the day on 3/9.** |
|  |  | 3/14 and 3/26 - NO CLASSES / SPRING BREAK! |
| 8 | 3/21/2023 | Schools  **Policy memo proposals due by end of day on 3/30.** |
| 8 | 3/23/2023 | Schools  **Policy memo proposals due by end of day on 3/30.** |
| 9 | 3/28/2023 | Public Transit |
| 9 | 3/30/2023 | Public Transit |
| 10 | 4/4//2023 | Climate & Environmental Justice |
| 10 | 4/6/2023 | Climate & Environmental Justice |
| 11 | 4/11/2023 | Policing & Public Safety |
| 11 | 4/13/2023 | Parks & Open Space |
| 12 | 4/18/2023 | Community Organizing & Activism |
| 12 | 4/20/2023 | Community Organizing & Activism |
| 13 | 4/25/2023 | [TBD]  **Policy memo due by end of the day on 4/25.** |
| 13 | 4/27/2023 | Class presentations on policy memos. |
| 14 | 5/2/2023 | Class presentations on policy memos. |
| 14 | 5/4/2023 | Course Wrap-Up |
|  | 5/11/2023 | **Final exam (in person)** |

## **Weekly Course Content**

## See Weekly Lessons tab in Brightspace for readings, reading response prompts, and other helpful content.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/academic-oath). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you or how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## **Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities.  Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD(212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## **NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

## **NYU’s Wellness Exchange**

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.