Course Description
This course examines the politics and public policies of local governments in the United States. In the first part of the course we will explore the historical growth and change of cities and suburbs over the last 50 years. In particular, we focus on the structure of local government, the forms and functions of local jurisdictions, and the development of urban policy in the American federal system. In the second part of the course, we look more closely at the urban crisis of the 20th century, including issues of race and class, the city/suburban divide, and the various ways in which cultural values have contributed to American exceptionalism in residential patterns. The last part of the course examines more closely “urban policies and problems,” such as public housing, segregation, immigration, education and public health.

Learning Outcomes
• Students can expect to learn the following by the end of this course:
• Identify demographic, historic and social factors distinctive to US cities.
• Define and critically evaluate concepts of power as it related to urban governance.
• Apply factual knowledge about structures, political institutions and political actors in city politics to facilitate a broader understanding of American politics.
• Identify, critique, and apply an argument regarding an urban policy or problem.

Required Text

In addition to this text, we will be reading a number of articles and reports, available on D2L.

Course Format: Fully Online
Many students have the misconception that an online course will be less work or will be less rigorous. This is not the case. An online course has the same rigor as a face-to-face course, except that you have more flexibility regarding when and where you complete your work. So, the good news is that you can go to course in your pajamas or on your lunch hour. Night owl? No problem. Early bird? Have a worm. Is the baby sitter sick? Don’t worry. However, online classes are student-centered, active learning, so rather than listening to a lecture week after week, you will have work to complete and submit *each* week.
The online class is always open, and you can read the course content anytime. You can even talk about them anytime through threaded discussions. This gives you a chance to think about your response. Because of this, many online students come for the convenience and return for the quality. They find they make more thoughtful contributions to these asynchronous conversations than they do in traditional settings. And, everyone participates bringing a variety of viewpoints to bear on complex issues.

However, you also have to be self-disciplined and highly organized, learn how to communicate without meeting face-to-face, and learn how to effectively use the technology to do well in the course. You have to remember to go online and complete the reading and lecture, to actively participate in the discussions on a timely basis and communicate online, and to e-mail or call the professor or a classmate when you are lost or have questions.

**Time Commitment**
Even though we do not meet face-to-face, it is still important that you schedule time for yourself to go online. Make sure to schedule at least 3 days a week for one to two hours that you can be online. Further, you need to schedule time off-line to complete readings, develop responses for the discussion questions, and study for quizzes and exams.

You can plan to spend approximately 10 hours a week on this course: 3-6 hours a week online and 4+ hours reading the assigned text, reading the lecture notes, completing activities and creating posts for the discussions area, and studying for exams.

**Course Requirements**

**Module Agendas**
Module 1 begins in Week 1 (see schedule for details.) The course is divided into 11 modules, and so over the course you can expect to complete 2 modules per week. Therefore, you should visit the course site Monday morning to review the agenda for the module requirements.

**Reaction Essays (60%)**
Reaction essays are brief (350-400 words) responses to one or more assigned readings. Your essays should include a succinct but detailed summary of the argument(s) to which you are responding and develop your reaction, which may be one of skepticism, all out agreement or disagreement, epiphany, or whole-hearted endorsement. Regardless, your essay should exhibit a line of reflective thought in which you explain the logic and rationale that supports your reaction to the reading(s).

Reaction essays must be typed in 12-point font and free of grammatical and spelling errors. You are required to complete six (6) essays. I will not accept any reaction essays that are submitted late.
Exams (40%)
Three exams will be given during the course of this class. Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

Exams are meant to be closed book/note. You should study and prepare for these exams in the same way you would any closed-book exam and be prepared to complete the exam on your own.

You will have a 24-hour period to take the exam. But you will only have one opportunity to take it – once you begin the exam, you must finish it. You cannot start an exam, then enter again at a later time to finish it. Also, exams will be timed, so you will have a set amount of time to take the exam once you begin. You should make sure that you have set aside the whole time allotted to take the exam (in case you need it) and you should make sure you have a secure connection before you begin.

Grade distribution:
Letter grades will be assigned according to the following distribution:

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Students are encouraged to keep track of their progress in the course and consult with me in person should they have questions or concerns about their performance. Please note I will not discuss grades via email or telephone.

Expectations
It should go without saying that even though this is an online course, your work must still be your own. Quizzes are not opportunities to share with friends, the exam windows are not designed so that you might get a little heads up, and short answer discussions are not good times to commit plagiarism. Please take pride in and responsibility for submitting your own work.

Additionally, by taking an online course you have the responsibility to ensure regular access to adequate and reliable technology for all course requirements. Technological failures will not extend deadlines. Please make sure that your home, office or campus computers are appropriate for your needs and are not going to fail on you at key times.

I do not accept late assignments – all quizzes and short answer assignments not turned in by the due date will receive a zero.
Course Schedule and Topics  
(Subject to Change – Consult D2L)

Week 1: February 5-9
Module 1: What is Urban Politics?
Reading: (1) City Politics, Chapter 1; (2) American Urban Politics in a Global Age: The Reader: Editors’ Introductory Essay (pp. 1-6)

Module 2: American Local Government, Politics and Policy: A Primer

• Reaction Essay #1 Due Friday, February 9 at noon.

Week 2: February 12-16
Module 3: Party Machine and Immigrants
Reading: City Politics, Chapter 2

• Reaction Essay #2 Due Wednesday, February 14 at noon.

Module 4: The Reformers and Reform Crusades
Reading: City Politics, Chapter 4

• Exam #1 Open from Friday, February 16 at noon – Saturday, February 17 at noon.

Week 3: February 19-23
Module 5: Decision Making and Urban Politics

Module 6: Minority Political Incorporation
Video – Streetfight.

• Reaction Essay #3 Due Friday, February 23 at noon.
Week 4: February 26 – March 2
Module 7: Urban Voters and Community Organizing

Reading: City Politics, Chapter 5

- Reaction Essay #4 Due February 28 at noon.

Module 8: Suburbanization, Metropolitanization and Urban Sprawl

Reading: City Politics, Chapter 6

- Exam #2 Open Friday, March 2 at noon – Saturday, March 3 at noon.

Week 5: March 5-9
Module 9: Federalism and the Metropolitan Battleground

Reading: City Politics, Chapter 8, 12

Module 10: Segregation, Economic Inequality and the Metropolis

Reading: City Politics, Chapter 7, 10

- Reaction Essay #5 Due Friday, March 9 at noon.

Week 6: March 12-16


Reading: (1) Milwaukee Health Report 2011; (2) Evidence for Action: A Report on Violence and Health in Milwaukee (2011)

- Reaction Essay #6 Due March 14 at noon.


- Exam #3 Open Friday, March 16 at noon – Saturday, March 17 at noon.