Course Syllabus

**UPADM-GP 215.001**

**The Politics of New York**

**Fall 2024**

**Instructor Information**

• Professor Mitchell L. Moss

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• Teaching Assistant: Annie Nelson

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o Office Hours:

* Wednesdays 3:45 pm - 4:45 pm
* Email to confirm

**Course Information**

● Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays 4:55pm-6:35pm

● Class Location: 194 Mercer St Room 206

**Course Description**

New York City is the nation's largest city, with a municipal budget of more than $100 billion and 8.3 million people, including more than one-third who are foreign-born. The course will initially focus on what makes New York City different from other large cities. Class lectures will analyze the sources of power in New York City, the demographic, civic and economic forces that influence political life, and the role of the mayor, other elected officials, and state and regional agencies. The second part of the course explores public policies in key areas: public safety, economic development, education, transportation, and immigration.

The course readings are accessible online, and students will be expected to do them prior to the assigned class session. The course requirements will include a report on a public hearing, a midterm exam, and a group policy presentation and memo focusing on a current public policy or project in New York City.

**Course and Learning Objectives**

1. analyze the economic, political, technological, and demographic forces that influence New  York City’s growth and development;

2. identify the key actors, organizations, and political processes that influence planning and policy-making;

3. understand how the media can drive city policies;

4. think critically about specific public policy debates (e.g., race relations, criminal justice, mass transit) and generate your own evaluations of proposed policies

5. demonstrate command of lecture concepts through persuasive writing reinforced by data, maps, and other visuals and through contributions to class discussions.

**Required Readings**

Students will be expected to have read the required readings assigned for a given week prior to lecture. While all other required readings will be accessible online via Brightspace, students must  rent or purchase the following text at the NYU Bookstore or elsewhere:

● Caro, R. (1974). The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York. Vintage.

Immediately below each week’s required reading list is a set of suggested readings that I  encourage you to read but doing so is optional. To keep readings relevant to current events, readings will be updated a week before each class. Readings can be found in the  Lessons tab on Brightspace for that corresponding week.

**Web Resources**

The following are news publications, magazines, journals, blogs, and other providers of content focused on New York City and/or New York State politics, policy (budget, education, economic,  housing, and transportation, to name a few), or (history of) capital planning.

**News Sources**

● amNY: amny.com

● Bklyner.: bklyner.com

● Chalkbeat | New York: chalkbeat.org/ny

● THE CITY: city.nyc

● City & State New York: cityandstateny.com

● City Journal: city-journal.org

● City Lab | New York: citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/

● City Limits: citylimits.org

● Crain’s Business New York: crainsnewyork.com

● Curbed New York: ny.curbed.com

● Daily Intelligencer, New York Magazine: nymag.com/daily/intelligencer ● Daily Politics (NY Daily News blog): nydailynews.com/news/politics/

● Gotham Gazette: gothamgazette.com

● Gothamist: gothamist.com

● New York Post: nypost.com

● The New York Times | N.Y.: nytimes.com/section/nyregion

● Next City: nextcity.org

● Observer | Politics: observer.com/politics

● Politico | New York: politico.com/states/new-york

● Streetsblog | NYC: nyc.streetsblog.org

● Times Union | Capitol Confidential: blog.timesunion.com/capitol

● The Village Voice: villagevoice.com

● Wall Street Journal: wsj.com

**Academic Resources**

● Center for an Urban Future: nycfuture.org

● Center for New York City Affairs at The New School: centernyc.org

● Citizens Budget Commission: cbcny.org

● Empire Center for Public Policy: empirecenter.org

● Fiscal Policy Institute: fiscalpolicy.org

● Manhattan Institute for Policy Research: manhattan-institute.org

● Museum of the City of New York | The Greatest Grid: thegreatestgrid.mcny.org  ● NYU Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy: furmancenter.org  ● NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management: wagner.nyu.edu/rudincenter

**Government Agencies**

● Department of City Planning: nyc.gov/planning

● Independent Budget Office of the City of New York: ibo.nyc.ny.us

● Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget: www1.nyc.gov/site/omb/index.page ● NYC OpenData: opendata.cityofnewyork.us

● Office of the New York State Comptroller: osc.state.ny.us

**Podcasts**

● 10 Blocks, City Journal

● The Bowery Boys: New York City History

● Break in the Case, New York

● The Brian Lehrer Show, WNYC

● Brooklyn Deep Third Rail

● Brooklyn, USA

● The City Concealed | THIRTEEN

● FAQ NYC

● Flatbush + Main: A Podcast from the Brooklyn Historical Society

● Firewall

● Max & Murphy, City Limits and Gotham Gazette

● New York NOW, WMHT

● NYCEDC Economic Snapshot

● Public Affairs and Government, CUNY - Baruch College

● Secrets of NYC, NYC Media

● What's the [DATA] Point? Citizens Budget Commission and Gotham Gazette

**Brightspace**

Students will use Brightspace in this course to

● view the most updated version of the course syllabus,

● read course announcements,

● access presentation slides used in previous weeks’ lectures

● retrieve any assigned and suggested readings (Lessons tab), and

● submit assignments.

**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. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner 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 and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

**Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses  Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD (at 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students 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 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.

**Assignments and Grading**

Assignments must be submitted as a Word Document to Brightspace by the due date and time denoted on the syllabus. It is your responsibility to check that the uploaded assignment is in the correct file format and accessible, or the assignment will be penalized for lateness. All submitted assignments will be run through Brightspace’s built-in TurnItIn application. Your final grade for this  course will be calculated as follows:

**Class Participation (10%)**

During many classes, there will be allocated time for students to discuss their opinions on that week’s assigned readings. Students are expected to come to class prepared to share their perspectives on course material.

**Public Hearing Report (10%)**

In the first five weeks of the course, students are expected to attend a meeting of either a city council committee, community board, or the Panel for Educational Policy, Students will write a brief report of at least 750 words on one policy topic discussed in the hearing, including key issues, relevant actors, and decisions made (if any). This assignment is due Wednesday, October 9th.

**Take-Home Midterm Exam (30%)**

The midterm exam will be a take-home assignment in which students will compose short answer responses to a set of prompts relating to the course topics covered during the first half of the semester. Students are expected to formulate answers using all relevant course materials, write with brevity and purpose, and properly cite all your sources. We will post detailed instructions for the midterm two weeks prior to the due date. This assignment is due Wednesday, October 23rd.

**Group Policy Presentation  (20%)**

Students will work in groups of two to present a on a policy or initiative currently under consideration by New York City government officials. Students will be paired based on area of policy interest among the following five issue areas: housing/land use, education, public safety, transportation and immigration. Presentations should last roughly 15 minutes, with 10 minutes reserved for questions and feedback. These presentations will occur over the course of three class periods from November 27th through December 11th.

**Policy Memo (30%)**

Students will write a 1,500 - 2,000 word policy memo on the same topic they presented to the class. While the policy presentations will be delivered in groups (for which groups receive a singular grade), the policy memos will be submitted and graded individually; groups may share research and ideas, but the reports should be written separately. These memos are due on Friday, December 13th, and instructions will be posted later in the course.

**Late Policy**

Assignment deadline extensions will be granted in cases of emergencies. Assignments submitted late without extensions will be penalized.

**Overview of the Semester**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Lecture Topic and Deliverables** |
| 1 | 09/04/2024 | What Makes New York New York   * Immigration and demographic change |
| 2 | 09/11/2024 | The Sources of Power in NYC, Pt. I - City Charter & Roles of Elected Officials |
| 3 | 09/18/2024 | The Sources of Power in NYC, Pt. II - The State and Federal Role in New York City   * MTA & Port Authority |
| 4 | 09/25/2024 | How a Mayor Shapes Policy - Giuliani, Bloomberg, De Blasio, Adams |
| 5 | 10/02/2024 | How NYC Raises and Spends Money |
| 6 | 10/09/2024 | How Urban Planning Has Shaped New York   * Robert Moses and *The Power Broker*   **Submit public hearing report to Brightspace by 4:55pm**  **Midterm instructions posted to Brightspace** |
| 7 | 10/16/2024 | Guest Lecture with B.J. Jones, Director of the "New" New York |
| 8 | 10/23/2024 | The Politics of Public Safety  **Submit midterm exam to Brightspace by 4:55 p.m.** |
| 9 | 10/30/2024 | Policy Case Study - Rikers Island |
| 10 | 11/6/2024 | Policy Case Study - Right to Shelter |
| 11 | 11/13/2024 | Student policy presentations |
| 12 | 11/20/2024 | Student policy presentations |
| 13 | 11/27/2024 | **ZOOM CLASS:**How Disasters Shape NYC Policies, The 1832 Cholera Epidemic, 1918 Flu, September 11th, the 2008 Financial Crisis, COVID-19 |
| 14 | 12/04/2024 | Student policy presentations |