

**URPL-GP 2415**

**Public Policy and Planning in New York City**

**Fall 2021**

**Instructor Information**

* Professor Mitchell L. Moss
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  + Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 p.m., or by appointment
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  + Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Information**

* Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays 4:55-6:35 p.m.
* Class Location: GCASL Room 275

**Course Description**

This course analyzes the role of public officials, civic organizations, advocates, and elections in the governance of New York City. We will explore the role of the public sector in the city’s physical and economic development, the financing of essential municipal services, and the forces affecting public safety, education, cultural life, and mass transit.

The course will also explore the way in which the state and federal governments influence the city, and the way in which demographic and ethnic change are shaping political participation in local elections. The course will integrate current events into readings and class discussions.

During this semester, we will focus on the way in which NYC has responded to disasters, such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911, the Spanish Flu of 1918-19, the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, and the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

**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 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; and
5. demonstrate command of lecture concepts through well-documented writing reinforced by data, maps, and other visuals, and through contributions to class discussions.

**Learning Assessment Table**

*Learning assessment table: Course objectives covered for each graded assignment*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Graded Assignment** | **Course Objective Covered** |
| COVID-19 Essay | #1 and 2 |
| Midterm Exam | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| Policy Memo | #1, 2, 4, and 5 |
| Final Exam | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |

**Required Readings**

Students will be expected to have read the required readings assigned for a given week prior to lecture. All required readings will be accessible online via Brightspace. Students can rent or purchase the following text at the NYU Bookstore, though PDFs will be made available on Brightspace:

* 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. In order to keep readings relevant to current events, readings will be updated a week prior to each class. Weeks with more extensive readings will be uploaded further in advance. Readings can be found in the Lessons tab on Brightspace for that corresponding week.

**Discussion**

During many classes, there will be allocated time for students to discuss themes of the class topic. Students will utilize the “raise hand” feature on Zoom to participate. Potential discussion questions will be posted each week with the readings so that students have time to reflect and prepare that week’s topic. While every question may not be directly asked in a class session, preparation of each question will help students comprehend that week’s material.

**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:](https://www.amny.com/) amny.com
* [Bklyner.:](https://bklyner.com/) bklyner.com
* [Chalkbeat | New York](https://www.chalkbeat.org/ny/): chalkbeat.org/ny
* [THE CITY:](https://thecity.nyc/) city.nyc
* [City & State New York](https://www.cityandstateny.com/): cityandstateny.com
* [City Journal:](https://www.city-journal.org/) city-journal.org
* [City Lab | New York:](https://www.citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/) citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/
* [City Limits:](https://citylimits.org/) citylimits.org
* [Crain’s Business New York](https://www.crainsnewyork.com/): crainsnewyork.com
* [Curbed New York](https://brightspace.nyu.edu/content/enforced/106920-FA21_URPL-GP_2415_1_001/ny.curbed.com?_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=wT6uvCa7BM76njgVNR3wK9pW1): ny.curbed.com
* [Daily Intelligencer, New York Magazine](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/): nymag.com/daily/intelligencer
* [Daily Politics (NY Daily News blog):](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/) nydailynews.com/news/politics/
* [Gotham Gazette](http://www.gothamgazette.com/): gothamgazette.com
* [Gothamist](https://brightspace.nyu.edu/content/enforced/106920-FA21_URPL-GP_2415_1_001/gothamist.com?_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=bckqKjpBfIYE4FR3qK37wgiKY&_&d2lSessionVal=wT6uvCa7BM76njgVNR3wK9pW1): gothamist.com
* [New York Post:](https://nypost.com/) nypost.com
* [The New York Times | N.Y.:](http://nytimes.com/section/nyregion) nytimes.com/section/nyregion
* [Next City](https://nextcity.org/): nextcity.org
* [Observer | Politics](http://observer.com/politics/): observer.com/politics
* [Politico | New York](https://www.politico.com/states/new-york): politico.com/states/new-york
* [Streetsblog | NYC:](https://nyc.streetsblog.org/) nyc.streetsblog.org
* [Times Union | Capitol Confidential](https://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/): blog.timesunion.com/capitol
* [The Village Voice:](https://www.villagevoice.com/) villagevoice.com
* [Wall Street Journal:](https://www.wsj.com/) wsj.com

**Academic Resources**

* [Center for an Urban Future](https://nycfuture.org/about): nycfuture.org
* [Center for New York City Affairs at The New School:](http://www.centernyc.org/) centernyc.org
* [Citizens Budget Commission](https://cbcny.org/): cbcny.org
* [Empire Center for Public Policy](https://www.empirecenter.org/): empirecenter.org
* [Fiscal Policy Institute](http://fiscalpolicy.org/): fiscalpolicy.org
* [Manhattan Institute for Policy Research](https://www.manhattan-institute.org/): manhattan-institute.org
* [Museum of the City of New York | The Greatest Grid](http://thegreatestgrid.mcny.org/): thegreatestgrid.mcny.org
* [NYU Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy](http://furmancenter.org/): furmancenter.org
* [NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management](https://wagner.nyu.edu/rudincenter): wagner.nyu.edu/rudincenter

**Government Agencies**

* [Department of City Planning:](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/index.page) nyc.gov/planning
* [Independent Budget Office of the City of New York](http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/): ibo.nyc.ny.us
* [Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/omb/index.page): www1.nyc.gov/site/omb/index.page
* [NYC OpenData:](https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/) opendata.cityofnewyork.us
* [Office of the New York State Comptroller](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/): osc.state.ny.us

**Podcasts**

* [10 Blocks, City Journal](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/city-journals-10-blocks/id273130612?mt=2)
* [The Bowery Boys: New York City History](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-bowery-boys-new-york-city-history/id258530615?mt=2)
* [Break in the Case, New York](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/break-in-the-case/id1483868671)
* [The Brian Lehrer Show, WNYC](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-brian-lehrer-show/id73331636?mt=2)
* [Brooklyn Deep Third Rail](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/brooklyn-deep-third-rail/id834770888?mt=2)
* [Brooklyn, USA](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/brooklyn-usa/id1166364708?mt=2)
* [The City Concealed | THIRTEEN](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-city-concealed-thirteen/id343870610?mt=2)
* [FAQ NYC](https://faq.nyc/)
* [Flatbush + Main: A Podcast from the Brooklyn Historical Society](https://www.bklynlibrary.org/podcasts/flatbush-main)
* [Firewall](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/firewall/id1199693682)
* [Max & Murphy, City Limits and Gotham Gazette](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/max-murphy/id1143579069?mt=2)
* [New York NOW, WMHT](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/new-york-now/id672341970?mt=2)
* [NYCEDC Economic Snapshot](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nycedc-economic-snapshot/id406252932?mt=2)
* [Public Affairs and Government, CUNY - Baruch College](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/public-affairs-and-government/id556537484?mt=2)
* [Secrets of NYC, NYC Media](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/secrets-of-new-york/id446120016?mt=2)
* [What's the [DATA] Point? Citizens Budget Commission and Gotham Gazette](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/whats-the-data-point/id1246487663?mt=2)

**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](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 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](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD (at 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.

**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 TurnItIn. Your final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

**COVID-19 Essay (5%)**

Due to Brightspace before our week 2 lecture on Wednesday, September 15 at 4:55 p.m., you will compose a short essay of approximately 200-400 words that answers the question: How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed New York City? There is no right answer to this question; your essay should reflect your personal perspective and original predictions about NYC’s post-pandemic future.

**Midterm Exam (30%)**

The midterm exam will be a take-home assignment in which you will compose short answer responses to a set of prompts relating to the 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. I will post more detailed instructions in regards to content, format, and submission for each of the written assignments you will complete for this course on Brightspace further into the semester.

**Policy Memo (35%)**

Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on Brightspace later in the semester.

**Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will take the same form as the midterm: a take-home assignment in which you will compose short answer responses to a set of prompts relating to the course topics covered during the second half of the semester.

**Late Policy**

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

**Overview of the Semester**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Lecture Topic and Deliverables** |
| 1 | 09/08/2021 | What Makes New York New York |
| 2 | 09/15/2021 | The Melting Pot That Never Was  Submit COVID-19 essay to Brightspace by 4:55 p.m. |
| 3 | 09/22/2021 | Power and Politics in New York City |
| 4 | 09/29/2021 | How a Mayor Makes a Difference  Midterm exam instructions posted to Brightspace. |
| 5 | 10/06/2021 | How NYC Raises and Spends Money |
| 6 | 10/13/2021 | How Disasters Shape NYC Policies |
| 7 | 10/20/2021 | Economic Development and Inequality  Submit midterm exam to Brightspace by 4:55 p.m. |
| 8 | 10/27/2021 | The Subway City and New Modes of Mobility |
| 9 | 11/03/2021 | Why Elections Matter  Policy Memo instructions posted to Brightspace |
| 10 | 11/10/2021 | The Politics of Public Safety |
| 11 | 11/17/2021 | Planning and Preservation  Policy Memo Topic Proposal due |
| 12 | 11/24/2021 | Neighborhood Change and Conflict |
| 13 | 12/01/2021 | Race, Achievement, and Choice in Education  Submit policy memo to Brightspace by 4:55 p.m.  Final exam instructions posted to Brightspace. |
| 14 | 12/08/2021 | The Politics of Open Space |
| — | 12/15/2021 | Submit final exam to Brightspace by 4:55 p.m. |