

**Urban Politics (POLS 2220)****Meets MWF 1:10—2:00****Instructor: Prof. Bob Cropf****Contact Info: [robert.cropf@slu.edu](mailto:robert.cropf@slu.edu)****314-605-2499 (cell)****Overview of Course**

Are American cities undergoing a renaissance or are they dying? This question has received increased relevance because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has seen our biggest cities like New York City and Los Angeles battered by the pandemic. In this course we will examine this significant question and others that will help determine the future of urban politics and by extension, the whole country. This is not an exaggeration. According to the most recent Census, 80 percent of all Americans live in urban areas and this figure is likely to increase, despite the ravages of Covid.

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/12/18/americans-say-theres-not-much-appeal-big-city-living-why-do-so-many-us-live-there/>). As the Washington Post article in the above link says, while most Americans live in urban areas many would prefer not to. Interestingly, 27 percent of the Americans polled said they preferred to live in rural areas. Nonetheless, because so many Americans live in urban areas, the future of the country is inevitably linked to the future of these areas.

The reason why cities are likely to continue to grow is because they tend to be where the jobs and economic opportunities are. Big corporations like Amazon want to locate new corporate headquarters in cities like New York and Washington, DC, not in small towns. In this course, we examine why cities are economic engines of countries (not just the U.S. but elsewhere). Can cities continue to generate new jobs and economic opportunities for current and future residents?

While new jobs are mainly found in cities, many people still think rural life is more pleasant than urban living. Cities have higher rates of crime, mental illness, and poverty than rural and suburban places. In this course, we examine the forces that contribute to crime, poverty, drug addiction, and homelessness in urban areas. However, it should be pointed out that rural areas are not immune to social pathologies. Rural America has seen an upsurge in recent decade in unemployment, opioid addiction and suicide. This rural despair is a large part of the disaffection fueling the populism that is the foundation of Donald Trump's political success.

The 2008 Great Recession exposed the weakness of many American cities. The pandemic has only exacerbated these earlier trends. Our textbook discusses how Detroit went bankrupt in 2013. Alas, Detroit was not the only city to experience financial troubles during the last economic downturn. St. Louis still hasn't fully recovered from the Great Recession. There were fewer jobs in the St. Louis metropolitan area than there were before the recession. And that was before the pandemic hit. Rust Belt cities have, on the whole, emerged from the recession weaker economically than going in. This helps explain Donald Trump's 2016 success in the Midwest.

On the other hand, cities like New York, San Francisco, and Seattle have prospered like never before, at least prior to the pandemic. In fact, those cities have grown so much economically that it is harder for middle-class people to afford to live there. We examine the winners and losers in the urban economy and the political effects in this course. What insights can this give us to recommend policies that might assist cities like Detroit and St. Louis? How can places like Seattle and New York become cities that middle-class people can live in again?

The foundation of all we examine in this course is political in nature. But to understand fully the urban crisis we must draw on more than political science. As a result, this course will also draw upon geography, urban sociology, urban economics, urban planning, public policy studies, and public administration. It will also draw heavily on films. The films that are used in this course are mostly fictionalized accounts of urban living. Documentaries are excellent for understanding urban areas but fictional films allow us to perceive urban area and urban life through a unique personal, point-of-view. Some of the films are dystopian (*The Warriors* and *Blade Runner*). But all take as the starting point, current cities and their problems as viewed through the creative lens of some of the most significant cinema artists of recent decades including Spike Lee and Martin Scorsese.

#### Course Assignments:

This section is subject to change as the semester progresses. The only firm promise I can give is that we will finish both books by the end.

Date Due	Reading Assignment	Films
1/29	None (I will review the course)	
2/1	Levine: Chap.1	
2/3	Rothstein: Chap.1	
2/5	Rothstein: Chapter 1 (continued)	"The Warriors" (A 1979 movie that paints a portrait of cities eerily familiar to current Detroit at least in terms of the desolation.)

2/8	Levine: Chap. 2	
2/10 (Librarian Rebecca Hyde will be guest speaker. Class will meet in library.)		
2/12	Rothstein: Chap.2	"Gangs of New York" (Masterpiece that shows that anti-immigrant fervor is deeply engrained in American history.)
2/15	Rothstein: Chapter 2 (Continued)	
2/17	No Class (Feb. Break)	
2/19	(Prof. Vince Casaregola discusses how to "read" films and reads his urban poetry.)	"Milk" (Traces Milk's evolution from yuppie to gay activist and finally martyr.)
2/22	Rothstein: Chap.3	
2/24	Levine: Chap. 7 & Rothstein Chap. 3 (continued)	
2/26	Rothstein: Chap.4	
3/1	Rothstein: Chap. 4 (continued)	
3/3	Levine: Chap. 4	
3/5	Levine: Chap. 4 (continued)	"Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee's classic. Little has changed

		in terms of American attitudes about race.)
3/8	Rothstein: Chap.5	
3/10	Rothstein: Chap.5 (continued)	
3/12	Levine: Chap.5	
3/15	Levine: Chap. 5 (continued)	Paper outlines due.
3/17	Midterm Review	
3/19	Midterm	
3/22	Rothstein: Chap. 6	
3/24	Rothstein: Chap. 6 (continued)	
3/26	Levine: Chap. 8	"Chinatown" (How the criminal element shaped modern L.A.)
3/29	Rothstein: Chap.7	
3/31	Rothstein: Chap. 7 (continued)	"Pruitt-Igoe Myth" (Documentary explores the many falsehoods that grown up around the "projects")
4/2	No Class-Good Friday	
4/5	Levine: Chap.9	
4/7	Rothstein: Chap.8	
4/9	Rothstein: Chap.8 (continued)	

4/12	Levine: Chap. 10	
4/14	Levine: Chap.11	
4/16	Levine: Chap. 11 (continued)	"Holding Ground" (Another documentary about efforts in Boston to slow down gentrification.)
4/19	Rothstein: Chap.9	
4/21	Rothstein: Chap. 9 (continued)	
4/23	Levine: Chap. 3	
4/26	Rothstein: Chap.10	
4/28	Rothstein: Chap. 10 (continued)	
4/30	Levine: Chap.12	"Blade Runner" (1982) (Dystopian classic about L.A. in the future. Sequel is also very good I hear.)
5/3	Rothstein: Chap.11	
5/5	Rothstein: Chap. 12	
5/7	(John Wagner will talk about the future of Green Cities)	Paper due
5/10	Final Exam Review	
5/14	Online Final Due	

**Assignments:**

- 1) Bulletin Board (Brief responses to questions about the movies and readings.). This and class attendance will comprise roughly 25% of the total semester grade.
- 2) Midterm exam. (25% of grade).
- 3) Urban Politics paper. (25% of grade)
- 4) Online Final Exam. (25% of grade)

**Student Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- 1) Explain how globalization and other economic forces exert a powerful influence on urban areas for both good and ill;
- 2) Explain how formal rules and structures have a major impact on local politics;
- 3) Describe the important role played by the federal and state governments in cities;
- 4) Explain the importance of regional differences and their impact on urban affairs;
- 5) Describe why cities need economic development and what they do to attract jobs and business;
- 6) Explain the significant impact that race and ethnicity have in urban areas

**Grading Scale:**

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72

D	60-69
F	<60

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### **Attendance Policy:**

Your success in this course will depend on your ability to complete the daily reading and weekly writing and discussion assignments as well as your ability to read the biography of Benjamin Franklin as if you were having a conversation with the author each day. (The last is just to make sure you're paying attention!) Absence in three classes without a reason that is out of the control of the student will result in a one level drop in the final grade (i.e. illness, work conflict, medical emergency, etc.) see more information at link below:

<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/>

### **Courtesy Expectations:**

Students will treat their classroom obligations as they would treat any serious professional engagement. That includes:

**Laptops and other devices are frowned upon in this course. In other words, you will need to ask permission to use one in class.**

Preparing thoroughly for each session in accordance with the instructor's request;

Adhering to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor;

Providing constructive feedback to faculty members regarding their performance.

### **Mandatory Statement on Face Masks (Fall 2020)**

The University's [Interim Policy on Face Masks](#) governs all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors in all University-owned, leased, or operated facilities. All persons physically present in any such University facility associated with this course shall comply fully with this policy at all times. Masks must be worn before entry to all such University facilities (as well as outdoors on all University property when six feet of distance is unpredictable or cannot be maintained).

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services or Human Resources to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University's [ADA Policy](#). Inquires or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

As the instructor of this course, I shall comply fully with SLU's policy and all related ADA regulations.

Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to wear masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks at any time during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.

**Note: Accordingly, no consumption of any food will be allowed in class.**

Students who do not comply with a request by a SLU instructor to wear a mask in accordance with the University's *Interim Policy on Face Masks* may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:

- dismissal from the course(s)
- removal from campus housing (if applicable)
- dismissal from the University

To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with faculty or staff request to wear a mask in accordance with University policy.

Students are strongly encouraged to identify to their instructor any student or instructor not in compliance. Non-compliance may be anonymously reported via the SLU Integrity Hotline at 1-877-525-5669 (or confidentially via the Integrity Hotline's website at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>)

#### **Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.* The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity."

Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

<https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/faculty-resources/syllabi-statements.php>

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Specific College of Arts and Sciences Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures may be found at:

<http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

#### **Title IX Syllabus Statement**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct



(e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> [www.slu.edu/here4you](http://www.slu.edu/here4you) .

### **Student Success Center Syllabi Statements**

In an effort to be inclusive of students' learning styles and needs with regard to academic support, the following statement has been developed for use in course syllabi which identifies resources for student support in various areas of learning. As faculty members construct their syllabi for future courses, it is requested that they update materials to include new language regarding academic and career related support offered to students through the Student Success Center.

The syllabus statement will be available throughout the year by visiting the following websites, but we encourage you to place these resources on any departmental websites you feel necessary:

- Student Success Center: [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success)
- Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching & Learning: [www.slu.edu/ctl](http://www.slu.edu/ctl)

### **Student Success Center Syllabus Statement:**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

### **Disability Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

*Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to disability accommodations. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.*

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## **TEMPORARY** Mandatory Syllabus Statement on In-Class Attendance & Participation

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**Effective:** August 1, 2020 - TBD

### 1.0 Introduction

SLU's current [University Attendance Policy](#) does not address challenges related to in-class attendance (and in-person participation in class-related activities) raised in the COVID-19 era.

### 2.0 Scope

This statement is required for all syllabi for all courses at all locations (*except the Madrid Campus*) offered by the colleges/schools and other academic units reporting to the University Provost.

### 3.0 Mandatory Syllabus Statement on In-Person Class Attendance and Participation

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the [University Student Health Center](#) for immediate assistance.
2. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) but who feel well enough to a) attend the course synchronously in an online class session or b) participate in asynchronous online class activities, are expected to do so. Those who do not feel well enough to do so should absent themselves accordingly.
3. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activity per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive. They are expected to participate in synchronous or asynchronous online class activities as they feel able to do so, or absent themselves accordingly.
4. Students are responsible for notifying each instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible.
5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official shall be considered “Authorized” absences (effective August 2020 through May 2021).

#### 4.0 Development and Approvals

##### Development:

This statement was developed by a committee of faculty and staff from the Faculty Senate and Provost’s Office; members were:

Member	Constituency Represented	Appointment Method
Bobbi Shatto	University Faculty Senate	Per Senate President & FS Procedures
Shane Graber	University Faculty Senate	Per Senate President & FS Procedures
Sophia Izhar	Student Government Association	Per SGA President & SGA Procedures
Zahva Naeem	Student Government Association	Per SGA Academic VP & SGA Procedures
Cathy Cooke	Distance Education Office	Per Assoc. Provost of Distance Ed
Gina Merys	Reinert Center	Per Reinert Center Director

Donna Bess Myers	Student Development	Per VP of Student Development
Renee Jonas	Student Development	Per VP of Student Development
Steve Sanchez	Office of the Provost	Per Provost
Miriam Joseph	Office of the Provost	Per provost

**Approvals:**

1. Approved by CADD: August 10, 2020
2. Approved by Provost: August 10, 2020