

## SHAPING THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK CITY

HNRS 226  
W 9:15-12:05  
Spring 2012  
Queens College, CUNY

Prof. Alex Reichl  
Office: Powdermaker Hall, Rm 200S  
Phone: (718) 997-5472  
Office Hrs: Tu 12:15-2:00, W/Th 12:15-1:00  
Email: alexander.reichl@qc.cuny.edu

ITF: Tsai-Shiou Hsieh, PhD  
Email: tsaishiou@gmail.com  
Office Hours: Wed. 9:00-3:00  
Honors Hall 20

### Description

The goal of this semester is to develop an understanding of the forces that shape policy-making in New York City. You will become knowledgeable about what NYC does (policy), why it does those things (politics), and how it matters to New Yorkers (individuals). We approach our study of NYC in two primary ways:

- In the first half of the semester we analyze the underlying structure(s) of power that serve as the policy-making context in NYC. This includes an examination of the roles of public officials, the influence of the public, both groups and individuals (as these are divided along lines of race/ethnicity, class, and gender), and the impact of the economic system on the city's politics (i.e., the political economy of NYC). The analysis of power also requires that we consider NYC in the larger context of the region, the nation, and the world.
- In the second half of the semester we focus on several key public policy issues – economic development, neighborhoods, and transportation – in order to gain greater awareness of choices facing NYC today that will have important consequences for the city's future. We will also integrate discussion of the policies that you choose for your group research into our class sessions.

Running through the semester is an overarching concern with who has the power to define problems and determine outcomes in NYC, and who wins and loses under this system of power.

Through group research projects on current policy issues of your choice you will gain insight into where the city is going, who will make the decisions, and how the outcome will affect future New Yorkers.

### Books

Bloomberg's New York, by J. Brash (U of Georgia, 2011)  
The Death and Life of Great American Cities, by J. Jacobs (Random House, 1961)  
The Power Broker, by R. Caro (Knopf, 1974)

Note: Additional required readings will be available on Blackboard and/or E-Reserve (the E-Reserve password is "rei226").

### Requirements

The requirements of the course are:

- a midterm essay exam (20%);
- a 25-30-page group research paper (40%);
- a noncumulative final essay exam (20%); and

- class participation (20%), including participation in class discussion, posting weekly comments on blackboard, presenting your research, and serving one week as co-leader of discussion.

In addition, all students must comply with CUNY policies regarding academic integrity, which can be found at:  
<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/policies/AcademicIntegrityPolicywithoutmemo.pdf>.

### **Objectives**

1. To advance students' understanding of New York City politics and policies. Students will be able to explain important aspects of what New York City does (policy), why it does those things (politics), and how policy and politics affect New Yorkers (individuals).
2. To advance students' understanding of how political power operates in New York City. Students will be able to explain political outcomes in New York City from a variety of different political-economic perspectives.
3. To promote students' ability to evaluate critically the nature of democracy in New York City. Students will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of institutional and procedural arrangements in New York City politics.
4. To promote students' ability to think critically about different perspectives on New York City politics held among the public, politicians, scholars, individual stakeholders and others. Students will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of various political beliefs, ideologies, and theories regarding New York City politics.
5. To promote students' ability to engage effectively in debates about New York City politics and policy. Students will learn how to write and speak coherently and knowledgeably about important political issues in New York City.

### **Class Schedule**

**1/31 Seminar 4 Common Event: Leslie Koch, President, Trust for Governors Island (CUNY Grad Center, 6:00p)**

### **POWER AND POLITICS**

- 2/1 Introduction/Historical Perspective on NYC**  
 Video: "New York: A Documentary Film" (Episode One)
- 2/8 Participants and Processes I**  
The Power Broker, Ch's: Intro, 18, 20, 36-38
- 2/15 Participants and Processes II**  
The Power Broker, Ch. 42  
The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Ch. 1  
 Jackson, "Robert Moses and the Rise of New York" (E-RESERVE)
- 2/22 Political Economy I**  
 Freeman, "Working Class New York" (E-RESERVE)  
 Sassen, "The Global City" (E-RESERVE)  
 Harvey, "Cracks in the Edifice of the Empire State" (E-RESERVE)
- 2/29 Political Economy II**  
 Sites, "Remaking New York" (E-RESERVE)  
Bloomberg's New York, pp. 29-54  
 Wallace, "New York, New Deal" (E-RESERVE)
- 3/7 Mayors and Money I**  
 Mollenkopf, "New York: Still the Great Anomaly" (E-RESERVE)  
 Thompson, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (E-RESERVE)

"NYC's Fiscal Problem" (E-RESERVE)  
"Urban Experts Advise, Castigate, and Console..." (E-RESERVE)  
"NYC's Budget: An Overview" (BLACKBOARD)  
"Budget Options for NYC" (Table of Contents) (BLACKBOARD)

3/14

**Mayors and Money II**

Bloomberg's New York, Ch's 2, 3, 5

**Wed., Mar. 21: Midterm Exam**

**POLITICS AND POLICY**

3/28

**Economic Development I**

Bloomberg's New York, Ch's 4, 9

4/4

**Economic Development II**

Currid, "The Warhol Economy" (BLACKBOARD)

4/11

**No class (spring recess)**

4/18

**Neighborhoods**

The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Ch's 2, 3

4/25

**Transportation**

The Power Broker, Ch. 39

Hood, "Subways, Transit Politics..." (E-RESERVE)

**Fri. April 27: Group Research Papers Due**

5/2

**Class Presentations**

**May 6, 8, 9, or 10: Seminar 4 Conference**

5/11

**Field Trip**

Date TBA

**Final Exam**