



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

UPADM-GP 215.001 The Politics of New York Spring 2020

Instructor Information

- Professor Mitchell L. Moss
- Email: moss.mitchell@gmail.com
- Office Address: Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., Room 2318
- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00–5:00 p.m., or by appointment.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
- Class Location: Silver Center, 32 Waverly Pl., Room 401

Course Description

New York City depends on politics to resolve fundamental conflicts and allocate land and money among competing groups. This course explores the way in which the public sector in New York City influences physical and economic development in the city: the buildings, parks, streets, mass transit systems that people depend on. The course will examine the structure of municipal government, the role of the mayor and city council, how New York City raises and spends money, plus the role of the state government in New York City. Topics to be covered include: how demographic change is influencing political power, technological change and economic development, and the role of the media in setting the municipal agenda.

During the semester, we will examine the politics of public safety, the debate around the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway project, the MTA, recent changes in environmental policy, land use planning and development, school reform and governance, as well as the long term impact of the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center.

Course and Learning Objectives

During this course, you will:

1. analyze the economic, political, technological and demographic forces that influence New York City's approach to urban policy and planning;
2. identify the key actors, organizations and processes that influence planning and development;

3. understand how political activity shapes city policies and the values that elected officials pursue, increasing economic mobility, improving the environment, and strengthening public health;
4. apply this knowledge to think critically about public policy debates (e.g. school integration, congestion pricing, etc.) and generate your own evaluations of proposed policies; and
5. demonstrate your command of lecture concepts through coherent and well-documented writing reinforced by data charts, maps and other visuals, and through meaningful contributions to class discussions.

Learning Assessment Table

Graded Assignment	Course Objective Covered
Midterm Exam	#1, 2, 3, and 4
Policy Essay	#1, 3, 4, and 5
Final Exam	#1, 2, 3, and 4

Required Readings

Students will be expected to have read through the required readings assigned for a given week prior to lecture. While all other required readings will be accessible online (either via NYU Classes or the URL provided in the Course Content section of this syllabus), students must rent or purchase the following two texts (both are available at the NYU Bookstore):

- Caro, R. (1974). *The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York*. New York, NY: Knopf.

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.

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

- [Bklyner.](http://bklyner.com): bklyner.com
- [Chalkbeat | New York](http://chalkbeat.org/ny): chalkbeat.org/ny
- [THE CITY](http://city.nyc): city.nyc
- [City & State New York](http://cityandstateny.com): cityandstateny.com
- [City Journal](http://city-journal.org): city-journal.org
- [City Lab | New York](http://citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/): citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/
- [City Limits](http://citylimits.org): citylimits.org
- [Crain's Business New York](http://crainsnewyork.com): crainsnewyork.com
- [Curbed New York](http://ny.curbed.com): ny.curbed.com
- [Daily Intelligencer, New York Magazine](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer): nymag.com/daily/intelligencer

- [Daily News | Big Town, Big Time: An Amazing History of NYC](https://interactive.nydailynews.com/project/archive/amazing-history-nyc): interactive.nydailynews.com/project/archive/amazing-history-nyc
- [Daily Politics \(NY Daily News blog\)](https://nydailynews.com/news/politics/): nydailynews.com/news/politics/
- [Gotham Gazette](https://gothamgazette.com): gothamgazette.com
- [Gothamist](https://gothamist.com): gothamist.com
- [New York Post](https://nypost.com): nypost.com
- [The New York Times | N.Y.](https://nytimes.com/section/nyregion): nytimes.com/section/nyregion
- [Next City](https://nextcity.org): nextcity.org
- [Observer | Politics](https://observer.com/politics): observer.com/politics
- [Politico | New York](https://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://villagevoice.com): villagevoice.com
- [Wall Street Journal](https://wsj.com): wsj.com

Academic Resources

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

- [Department of City Planning](https://nyc.gov/planning): nyc.gov/planning
- [Independent Budget Office of the City of New York](https://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](https://osc.state.ny.us): 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](#)
- [City Between - A New York History Podcast](#)
- [The City Concealed | THIRTEEN](#)
- [FAQ NYC](#)

- [Flatbush + Main: A Podcast from the Brooklyn Historical Society](#)
- [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](#)

NYU Classes

Students will use NYU Classes 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 readings
- 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 mosecsd@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](#) 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

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

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 NYU Classes further into the semester.

Policy Essay (35%)

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

Final Exam (35%)

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.

Overview of the Semester

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	Jan. 28	What Makes New York New York
Week 1	Jan. 30	Population, Immigration, Diversity, and Racial Change
Week 2	Feb. 4	Power and Authority in NYC Government
Week 2	Feb. 6	How a Mayor Makes a Difference
Week 3	Feb. 11	How the Media Influences Public Policy
Week 3	Feb. 13	How Disasters Shaped NYC Policies: The 1831 Cholera Epidemic, the Great Blizzard of 1888, 9/11, the 2008 Financial Crisis, and Superstorm Sandy
Week 4	Feb. 18	The MTA and Mass Transit
Week 4	Feb. 20	How NYC Raises and Spends Money
Week 5	Feb. 25	The Politics of Public Safety, Part I: Howard Beach, the Central Park Jogger, Crown Heights, and Eric Garner
Week 5	Feb. 27	The Politics of Public Safety, Part II: Stop-and-Frisk, Broken Windows, Closing of Riker's Island, and Criminal Justice Reform Midterm exam instructions posted to NYU Classes
Week 6	Mar. 3	School Reform and Education Policies, Part I
Week 6	Mar. 5	School Reform and Education Policies, Part II
Week 7	Mar. 10	Planning, Preservation, and Development
Week 7	Mar. 12	Parks, Open Space, and Waterfront Development Policy essay instructions posted to NYU Classes Submit midterm exam to NYU Classes by 11:00 a.m.

Week	Date	Topic
Week 8	Mar. 17	SPRING RECESS
Week 8	Mar. 19	SPRING RECESS
Week 9	Mar. 24	New York State Government's Influence Over NYC
Week 9	Mar. 26	Caro's <i>The Power Broker</i> Submit policy essay topic
Week 10	Mar. 31	Politics of Neighborhood Change and Gentrification
Week 10	Apr. 2	Mobility Politics: Taxis, Uber, Bikes and Scooters
Week 11	Apr. 7	Case Study: Brooklyn-Queens Expressway Project
Week 11	Apr. 9	The Politics of Animal Welfare: Horse Carriages, Foie Gras, Fur Ban, Bird Law, Meatless Mondays
Week 12	Apr. 14	Climate Change in NYC, Part I: Resiliency Submit policy essay to NYU Classes by 11:00 a.m.
Week 12	Apr. 16	Climate Change in NYC, Part II: Environmental Policy
Week 13	Apr. 21	Food Politics: Food Security, Street Vendors, and Delivery Services
Week 13	Apr. 23	Public Health Policies: Sugar and Smoking Final exam instructions posted to NYU Classes
Week 14	Apr. 28	Political Participation, Civic Groups, & Lobbying in NYC
Week 14	Apr. 30	The Trump Administration and its Impact on NYC
Week 15	May 5	The Future of New York City and Technological Change
Week 15	May 7	TBA
———	May 14	Submit final exam to NYU Classes by 11:00 a.m.