JPG 1512  Place, Politics and The Urban
University of Toronto
Department of Geography and Planning
Autumn 2018

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Seminar Time/ Location: Thursdays, 3pm  (1st meeting: Thursday Sept 13)
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Office Hours: Thursdays after class (Sid Smith 5027a), or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines the relationship between urban geography, planning and politics. In particular, it seeks to interrogate the theoretical importance of place, space and urban form in the production of political and social values, practices, strategies, and discourses, and in turn, analyze the implications of the place-politics nexus for understanding shifts in the direction and form of urban policy, governance, identity and citizenship. The course begins with a broad examination of the theoretical bases for linking place and politics, particularly as this relates to the construction of urban and non-urban places, with literature drawn from a number of sources, including geography, urban studies, political science, and planning theory. The course then examines a number of specific cases, including but limited to: the politics of automobility, gentrification as a political practice, the politics of community and neighbourhood aesthetics, the politics of homelessness and anti-panhandling legislation, the politics of suburbanization, the privatization of public space, the right to the city… topics that inform and challenge our understanding of the relationship between place and political praxis, and the political construction of the city.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The course meets once per week in seminar format. Students in the class are asked to make short presentations on the readings in the seminar, participate in class discussion, prepare a term-paper proposal (of approximately 4 pages), and write a full-length term paper (of approximately 20 pages) on a topic of their choosing.

TEXT

There is no specific text for this course. Readings are listed below. Most of the readings are accessible online, and digital copies of book chapters will be made available.

GRADING

Class participation 10%
Seminar Presentations 15%
Term Paper Proposal (due Oct 11) 15%
Term Paper (due last class) 60%

Late proposals and term papers can be assigned a penalty of 10% per day late. Assignments may not be accepted more than one week after the due date.
SEMINAR TOPICS

Course seminars will relate to the following topics (seminar titles and readings may change slightly):

Week 1: Introduction to the course
Week 2: Placing Politics, Placing Ideology - Phenomenological Foundations
Week 3: The ‘Urban’ as a Basis of Politics?
Week 4: The City Politic: Urban Community, Citizenship, and the Other
Week 5: Contextual Effects, Consumption, and Ideological ‘Dealignment’
Week 6: Political Fragmentation and the Politics of Suburbia
Week 7: The Politics of Automobility and Velomobility
Week 8: Urban Aesthetics and Geographies of Exclusion
Week 9: Gated Communities and the Privatization of Space
Week 10: The Politics of Gentrification and the New Urban Middle-Class
Week 11: Politics of Social Mix and Social Housing Redevelopment
Week 12: Politics of Homelessness, Public Space, and the “Right to the City”

The full reading list will be made available on the first day of class.