Course Description

As the world becomes majority urban, cities are increasingly the sites and subjects of political contestations. This course explores these struggles, focusing primarily on current and historical examples in the Global North, with special emphasis on Canada and the US. We centre two key questions:

1. When residents of urbanized spaces cannot access or obtain what they need to survive and thrive: what can they do?

Most often, they seek to turn conditions into problems requiring political redress. These conditions, which often reflect the inequities of daily life in urban space, can stem from a range of underlying factors. These factors may include, among others: economic or employment status; race, ethnicity and indigenous status; gender and sexuality; national origin and immigration status; mobility/accessibility; housing/security of tenure; criminal justice and policing; as well as climate change, sprawl, and degradation of the physical environment.

We will examine a host of different efforts to remedy injustices across many of these dimensions, considering movements such as the Global Climate Strikes, Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, Occupy Wall Street, Right to the City, Fight for $15.

2. How do people turn urban conditions into political problems?

Constructing geographies of resistance, they engage with political opportunity structures, and organize for power and change, through urban social movements, interest groups, and coalitions. Through these organized efforts, they expose, propose, and politicize: they expose the root problems generating a condition, propose policy and planning solutions, and build political power to implement these
solutions, either through the government, or directly, without government involvement. They do this by using a set of tools, techniques and processes, sometimes called a repertoire of contention.

Their efforts may diffuse across cities, regions and nations, and “scale up” as global phenomena. Some may remain locally focused. Others may do both at the same time as “glocal” movements, maintaining a distinctly local character while also scaling and diffusing in space.

We will examine these processes in depth.

Course Objectives

This course has four main objectives, to provide students with a/an:

1. introduction to ways to effect urban and regional change through politics and planning.

2. representative overview of the range of issues addressed through current and historical urban social movements and political processes, particularly in Canada and the US.

3. venue in which to enhance and develop individual and group presentation skills.

4. opportunity to conduct in-depth research on a specific urban/regional sociopolitical issue.

Course Structure:

The course is structured into three parts. In the first part, we examine key ideas about achieving social change. We will read works by geographers, but also scholars of urban planning, public policy, politics, and sociology. In part two, we move beyond the world of ideas to examine how these ideas get translated into tools, techniques and processes used by real people in real places to effect change. In part three, we consider how these tools and techniques are collectively brought to bear on specific issues, by examining a range of movements by topic or theme.

Grading Scheme

100 points are available in this class. 40 of these points are only available if you come to class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total Points (Pts) Available</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation Exercises</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>• Two in-class problem sets on 2/3 and 3/2 to review Ideas/Tools sections. 20 pts total.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group Project</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>• All others unannounced 20 more pts, varies by week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project Proposal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Same due date for all groups: 1/27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation Dry Run</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Video of your practice run through; due one week before your group presents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Final Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Staggered in final four weeks of class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Teammate 360 Evaluation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Your teammates must approve your grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

**In-Class Group and Individual Participation Exercises, 20 points.** Some weeks, students will have an opportunity to earn points through exercises conducted during class time. These exercises may include brief writing exercises about an in-class group activity or video, pop quizzes on the readings, or other similar activities. The maximum number of points available in each week may vary. Some weeks, it may be zero. No make-ups are available for these exercises. No advance announcement of exercises will be made, because I really want you to come to class, so we can learn together.

**In-Class Individual Problem Sets, 20 points.** After the ideas/concepts and tools/techniques sections of the class, there will be an in-class problem set. You must come to class regularly to be prepared for this problem sets.

**Final Examination, 30 points.** The final exam will be cumulative and comprehensive, covering all material from the course, including student-generated content from the group project presentations.

**Group Project, 30 points.** The group project (see assignment document for more details) will consist of a 10-minute oral presentation examining a specific example of an urban social movement, preferably one with some grounding in the GTA, Ontario, or Canada. These presentations will be staggered through part three of the class. There are four separate parts of this assignment.

1. **Proposal, 4 points.** The group will submit a proposal explaining the topic they wish to present, and the format they will use.
2. **Dry Run Recording, 4 points.** One week before presenting, the group will submit a video recording of a full “dry run”, or practice run-through, of their presentation.
3. **Presentation, 15 points.** The group will present an audiovisual presentation of some kind for 10 minutes. Though powerpoint style slides are advisable, students can be creative in the use of visual and aural/audio aids.
4. **Group-Individual Dynamics, 7 points.** After presenting, the rest of your group will collectively decide if each individual made a sufficient contribution to the group. Each group member may be given up to 7 points.

**Lateness, Extensions and Accessibility Services:** Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Extensions are granted for documented medical/emergency situations, or for documented
accessibility needs. If any student in the class anticipates that they might utilize Accessibility Services, please let the Instructor know as soon as possible so that reasonable accommodation can be made. Please consult Student Life for further information.

Plagiarism. Quoting or paraphrasing others’ work without citation constitute plagiarism. This is an academic offense at the University of Toronto. Students should not submit academic work completed for other classes before consulting with the Instructor. Please see “Rules and Regulations”, Arts and Science Calendar and ‘How Not to Plagiarize’.

Classroom Etiquette Items

Food in Classroom: YES. Our class is held at dinner time. I have no problem with you bringing food to class to eat, provided you do not do so in a manner disruptive to the learning environment!

Phones/Distractions in Class: NO. You are all adults. Please keep phone and non-class laptop use to an absolute minimum. If I catch anyone using their phone extensively, I will ban phones in the classroom. I may also restrict laptop usage. Note the front row is reserved for those not using screens.

Communication. Email to the instructor and TA is to be used sparingly, and to ask simple yes, no, or short answer questions. Please send all emails to both the instructor and the teaching assistant. We will respond to emails within 48 hours. For questions or issues requiring more than a simple yes or no answer, please come to office hours. Use of office hours is strongly encouraged!

Course Schedule Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Introduction/Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>Ideas 1: Social Movements + Interest Groups</td>
<td>Look for Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Ideas 2: Policy Agendas + Political Opportunity Structures</td>
<td>Finalize Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Ideas 3: Urban Social Movements + City Politics</td>
<td>Group Proposal Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Ideas 4: Spatial Justice? Just Cities + Geographies of Resistance</td>
<td>In-Class Problem Set</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>Tools 1: Community Organizing: Public Narratives + Mobilizing Power</td>
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<td>2/17</td>
<td>Family Day/Reading Week – No Class or Office Hours</td>
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<td>2/24</td>
<td>Tools 2: Social Movement “Repertoires”: Direct Action, Digital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategies + Demonstrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>Tools 3: Politics: Local Elections, Public Participation, and Plans</td>
<td>In-Class Problem Set</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>Themes 1: Environmental Justice and Climate Change</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>Themes 2: Housing and Transit</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/23</td>
<td>Themes 3: Labour, Work, and Economy</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/30</td>
<td>Themes 4: Social Identity – Race, Indigeneity, Gender + Sexuality</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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Detailed Weekly Schedule

Part 1 – “Big Ideas”: Concepts and Theories

1/6: Introduction and Course Overview

1/13: Preliminaries: Interest Groups and Social Movements


1/20 From Condition To Problem: Policy Agendas and Political Opportunity Structures

*GROUP PROJECT ROSTERS/TEAMS MUST BE FINALIZED BY THE END OF CLASS*


1/27: Urban Movements, Coalitions, and Regimes

*ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: GROUP PROPOSAL BY THE START OF CLASS*


Mossberger, K. (2009), 'Urban Regime Analysis', in Davies, J. Imboscio, D. (eds), Theories of urban politics. Sage. OR Davies

2/3: Spatial Justice? Just Cities, The Right to the City, and Geographies of Resistance

**ASSIGNMENT: In-Class Problem Set #1**


**Part 2 – “Nuts and Bolts”: Tools, Techniques and Processes**

2/10 Community Organizing and Leadership: Building Narratives and Relationships, Mobilizing for Power


2/17: Reading Week – Family Day NO CLASS/OFFICE HOURS

2/24: Social Movement Repertoires: Digital Strategies, Direct Action, Demonstrations


ASSIGNMENT: In-Class Problem Set #2


The Centre for Active Transportation (2017). Bringing Planning to the People: Participatory Planning in Peterborough.


Part 3: Thematic/Topical Urban Politics and Movements

3/9: Environmental Justice and Climate Change

In-Class Presentation Groups


### 3/16: Housing and Transit: The Right to Housing and Transportation Equity

**In-Class Presentation Groups**


### 3/23: Labour, Work and Economy: From Occupy to Living Wages, Unions, and Cooperatives

**In-Class Presentation Groups**


### 3/30: Social Identity: Race, Indigeneity, Gender + Sexuality

**In-Class Presentation Groups**


