

POWER AND ACTION IN AMERICAN LOCAL POLITICS

Tutorial – Sophomore Year

Government 97

Harvard University

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1-3pm in CGIS Cafe, or by appointment.

Many of contemporary America's most pressing issues – in policy areas like housing, policing, education, environmental sustainability, and transportation – will require political action at the local level. But local politics is different in many ways from the federal politics of presidents and senators that we are used to hearing about every day. Who has power in America's nearly 100,000 local governments?² How are decisions made by entities like city councils and school boards, and how can political change happen at the ground level? More generally, how can we use political science as a discipline to inform how we can impact our own communities?

This course will explore the ways that local politics affects our lives every day and how political change happens at the local level of American government. We will discuss local politics in different places (urban, suburban, and rural) and from the perspectives of different people (members of the local community, mayors, school board members, bureaucrats like police officers and teachers, etc.). Along the way, we will learn how local politics is shaped by many of the institutions you may be familiar with from other settings (elected vs. appointed offices, unions, local public service providers, etc.). As newly declared Government concentrators, a core focus throughout this course will be helping you acquire the necessary skills to analyze, critique, and create your own political science research.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Course Meetings: This course will meet once a week for 2 hours. There are two sections of the course, **one** of which you will be assigned to:

- Tuesdays from 3-5pm in **CGIS K031**.
- Wednesdays from 9:45-11:45am in **CGIS K109**.

¹ I am grateful to Jennifer Hochschild, Ryan Enos, Connor Phillips, Sun Young Park, and Justin de Benedictis-Kessner for invaluable advice while creating this syllabus.

² <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/governments/cb12-161.html>

For our first meeting, you should complete the readings under Week 1 below. Nothing is formally due until Week 2, but you should prepare to discuss the readings for Week 1 before we meet.

Students are expected to attend all sessions and actively participate in all class discussions and activities. Students are also expected to substantively engage with the readings.

In addition to in-depth exploration of the material from the readings, this class includes training in social science research skills, including writing as a social scientist. Some portion of this research skills training will occur asynchronously. Students are expected to complete all assigned skills training activities.

Slack: We will use Slack throughout the semester for communicating, posting questions, and short weekly assignments (described in more detail below). You should join the Slack [at the link below](#) and check it regularly. Please feel free to ask any questions you have about the course, your assignments, course material, etc. here. In general, most questions can be posted as public questions that everyone in the course can see, but you should also feel more than welcome to message me directly as well. The purpose of the Slack is to have a single, transparent, place where all course information is available and you can easily have conversations with me and other students outside of our regular class meetings:

https://join.slack.com/t/slack-rod2857/shared_invite/zt-1153662lx-PVQFJzb4SOtMij24ZN2Z1w

Written Assignments: Research, like learning a language or playing the saxophone, is a skill. This class will give you an opportunity to practice conducting your own research in multiple ways. We will combine frequent, low-stakes practice with a longer, cumulative assignment that results in your own research paper.

1. **Research Building Blocks (10%):** Throughout the semester, we will frequently practice the steps involved in creating our own original research. Research is a cumulative process, and so these assignments will involve breaking down the work of conducting research into individual steps. Starting during Week 2, we will have brief research building block assignments where you will practice these skills. **Specific assignments are listed in the weekly calendar below above each week's readings.** For example, the first of these will ask you to create an original research question you could explore.

You will submit these short research assignments in the course Slack #research-proposals channel by **9pm** (Cambridge time) the night before your class meeting. The goal of this assignment is to give you frequent, recurring, low-stakes practice for fundamental research planning skills as a social scientist. You will not actually need to conduct any of this research (although you will have the opportunity to do so if you wish as part of the final project), but these assignments offer you low-stakes opportunities to practice fundamental skills multiple times.

You should draw upon course material on both content and research skills in creating these posts. For each assignment, you are also expected to **respond to a classmate's proposal** in the Slack in some way. There are no strict requirements on content and these responses will only be loosely evaluated for a grade, but you should give a good faith effort to respond to their proposal in some

way (something that struck you about the post, an idea / critique / suggestion, something it reminds you of, etc.).

2. **Short Local Meeting Report (5%):** Over the course of the semester, we will explore how local government meetings are a fundamental part of the American policy making process. In communities across the country, government bodies like city councils, school boards, and zoning commissions have public meetings where public policies are proposed, discussed, and enacted into law. As part of this course, you will be asked to attend a live meeting of your choice for any local governing body (in person or virtually) and post a brief response about your experience and how it relates to course material. This 1-2 page report should not merely summarize the meeting events, but also connect events with your analysis of the events in light of course material. More information will be provided on this assignment throughout the semester. This assignment will be due **on April 7th**.
3. **Research Paper (70%):** Over the course of the semester, you will work on cumulative assignments that build towards a single research paper. The goal of this assignment is to make you a skilled consumer of social science evidence and to give you the skills to undertake your own independent social science research. As new members of the Department of Government, you will learn to read, analyze, and create your own social science research. Writing these papers is an interactive endeavor and we will meet several times during the process.

For the research paper, you will compose a **research question** that speaks to a topic covered in the course. You will then draw on literature from the course, in addition to literature from outside the course, to consider possible answers to your question. You will use data sources provided by the course staff to answer your question. The data analysis you undertake will match your skill level - there are no prerequisites and the minimum special skills required for this assignment will be taught in class. The data analysis in your research paper can be primarily qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both.

Research is a cumulative process. It does not happen overnight. To help you accomplish these tasks, we have multiple writing assignments that help build toward the final paper.

- a. Pre-Prospectus: The pre-prospectus paper will propose a research question and review the literature related to that question. It will allow you to make a first attempt at writing a compelling introduction and will provide practice with tying a specific research question to a broader theory in the surrounding social science literature. In the pre-prospectus, you will also build from the literature to articulate preliminary hypotheses about the answer to your research question. The pre-prospectus will be 4 to 5 pages in length. We will meet individually before the pre-prospectus is due to discuss it. You will upload the completed assignment on **March 3rd**.
- b. Analysis Reflection Paper: Once you have a research question, there are always multiple ways you could study it. The analysis reflection paper will allow you to explore the strengths and drawbacks of various methodological approaches to answering your proposed research question. In the reflection paper, you will propose

two potential methodological approaches to answering your research question. You will identify potential data sources and describe preliminary plans for using them to generate evidence for your hypotheses. You will then discuss the limitations of each approach. This assignment will be 3 to 4 pages in length. You will upload the completed assignment on **March 31st**.

- c. Prospectus: The prospectus will be 6 to 7 pages, and will lay out your research question, review the relevant literature, describe your planned methodology to answer the question, and address any limitations with this methodology. You will essentially combine an edited version of the pre-prospectus and a portion of the analysis reflection paper to generate the prospectus. The prospectus will allow you to refine your presentation of the research question and literature review based on your TF's feedback and your growing knowledge of the topic. You will also propose a refined version of *one* of the methodological approaches described in your analysis reflection paper and broaden your discussion of the limitations of your chosen methodology. We will meet at some point in this process, before the due date of the prospectus. You will upload the completed assignment on **April 21st**.
- d. Final Research Paper: The final research paper will essentially be an improved version of the prospectus plus the results of your research and a conclusion. It should be 10 to 12 pages. It is due **May 10th**.

Grading

These assignments are to be submitted via Canvas at the times noted. *To reduce potential bias, assignments are graded using a standardized rubric across all sections of Gov 97.*

Assignment Due Dates and Contribution to Final Grade:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
1. Class Participation	30%	
1.1 Discussion Section Participation	10%	
1.2 Reading Discussion Posts	10%	
1.3 Skill-Building Activities	5%	
1.4 Short Meeting Response	5%	April 7th
2. Research Paper	70%	
2.1 Pre-Prospectus	10%	March 3rd
2.2 Analysis Reflection Paper	10%	March 31st
2.3 Prospectus	20%	April 21st
2.4 Final Paper	30%	May 10th

OTHER POLICIES

Classroom Norms and Expectations: Fundamentally, this course is about learning how to investigate the social world around us. We will approach this goal collaboratively, as political science and academic research more broadly are collaborative endeavors. One of the great strengths of a broad concentration like Government is that our community, and this class, includes students with many different backgrounds, characteristics, experiences, interests, and goals. The most effective learning environment is one that is open to and inclusive of everyone while still maintaining universal rules of respect and collaboration. I will do everything I can to ensure that all students are able to participate in this class and have positive experiences doing so, and I ask that you all do the same. This means that it will be particularly crucial for us to treat all members of the course with respect. We will create discussion norms in the first week of class. These norms will be based on our active participation, careful listening to each other, and responding supportively whether you agree or disagree with what others are saying. This does not mean that universal agreement is expected (or even possible!), but it does mean that any behavior that is disrespectful of others in the course – that is, anything that undermines or casts doubt on another person's fitness to participate in any way – is unacceptable.

This class will intentionally deal with issues that shape our everyday lives and the lives of those around us. The story of American local politics is often a story of topics like exclusion and racism. Material in this course will elicit strong responses from all of us, but any serious course on policy-making must address the realities of our society if we seek to improve it. I expect us all to be sensitive to the associations that these topics may have for others in the class and to be charitable in construing others' words. If you have any concerns relating to classroom climate and/or issues of inclusion and equity, I encourage you to reach out to me at any time.

Finally, one of political science's most important contributions consists of arriving at a better understanding of the political world by analyzing it systematically and objectively. Learning how to engage in this approach is a key component of the class. At the same time, you should not be afraid to acknowledge when the scholarly perspectives we encounter strike you as fallible or biased. Not only does the discipline often fall short of its own standards, but the values and priorities of political science for many years were set by a very unrepresentative group of scholars, leaving a legacy political scientists still grapple with today. In order to do political science well, it is vital to acknowledge its limitations along with its power.

Laptop policy: Laptops are allowed for taking notes.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend all classes. Of course, appropriate excuses for missing class (e.g., health or family emergencies) will be permitted with documentation from HUHS or your Dean.

Late Assignments: I am generally flexible with extensions if you need them and ask well in advance. The deadlines in the course are (#1) our class meetings, (#2) the research building block assignments, and (#3) the various written assignments throughout the semester.

- While deadlines for (#1) cannot be moved, extensions are sometimes possible for (#2) and (#3). Since the primary goal of (#2) assignments is to give you time to absorb feedback and grow over time, these are due a few times throughout the semester at **9pm** the day before your class meeting.

If unforeseen circumstances prevent you from doing this on time, let me know and we can find a solution as they appear. If we don't discuss it in advance, the assignment will be marked late and receive no credit.

- There are only five deadlines all semester for our (#3) written assignments, and I strongly encourage you to meet them whenever possible. This is primarily for your own benefit, as the written assignments are cumulative. Good research takes time, so you will want enough space to internalize feedback and improve your plan as the assignments continue. Of course, if you find yourself needing an extra day here or there, just let me know and we will discuss it. Again, if we don't discuss an extension in advance, the assignment will be marked late and receive no credit.

Slides: I will frequently use slides in the course. I will post slides to our class site after each meeting. Why not before? It turns out, there is good social science evidence that students take better, more creative notes if you do not have access to slides during class.³ Much of this course is about learning about how to *think* like a social scientist. A core part of that is channeling your own independent creativity - where do you see connections in the readings? How do you think they could be applied to questions that you are passionate about? In class, focus on what is interesting and important to you and channel your notes that way. I will be sure to highlight anything required that you need to know during class discussions and when posting the slides after class.

Collaboration Policy: The exchange of ideas is essential to strong academic research. You may find it useful to share sources or discuss your thinking for any of these papers with peers, particularly if you are working on similar topics. You may even read each other's drafts and provide feedback. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own thinking and approach to the topic. You must be sure to cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that you draw on. I have no preferences on citation style or format, as you can likely tell by the inconsistencies in my own citations below when listing the readings. Furthermore, while you may seek the advice or help of your peers, your data analysis must be performed on your own and you should consult with me to make sure you are not duplicating the analysis of any other student in your section.

Accessibility: Please let me know as soon as possible if you have any individual needs or think that it would be useful for me to know anything about you or how you think you learn best. I will do whatever I can to make this class as positive of an experience as possible for you. If you are registered with the Accessible Education Office, please also let me know so we can work together to make any and all alterations necessary.

Anything else: Above all, I am invested in your success in this course and through your wise choice to become a Government concentrator. If there is anything you would like to talk about or think that I should know, I encourage you to reach out to me at any time via Slack or email.

³ Example of good social science evidence on this question: Kim, Hyeyoun. "Impact of slide-based lectures on undergraduate students' learning: Mixed effects of accessibility to slides, differences in note-taking, and memory term." *Computers & Education* 123 (2018): 13-25.

SECTION 1: THE STATE OF LOCAL POLITICS

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 24TH - JANUARY 30TH): WHO HAS POWER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

We will start by discussing power. What do we mean by “power” as political scientists, and who (or what) has power in local government? We will learn that power is distributed both among various actors within local politics and between the federal, state, and local levels of America’s federalist government. These ideas will serve as frameworks for our semester.

Don’t forget to [join the course Slack](#) and complete the readings below before our first meeting.

Note on readings: All materials for this course are free and publicly available, so you do not need to purchase or find any readings. PDFs for books and journal articles are available on Canvas, and links to public sources are listed below.

1. This Syllabus. Gov97. (2022). Really, please read the entire thing! Read **Course Components** and **Other Policies** closely, and skim the list of readings for the semester.
2. Hersh, Eitan (2020). *Politics Is for Power: How to Move Beyond Political Hobbyism, Take Action, and Make Real Change*. Scribner. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 21.
3. Hajnal, Zoltan L., and Jessica Trounstein (2010). "Who or what governs?: The effects of economics, politics, institutions, and needs on local spending. *American Politics Research* 38, no. 6. 1130-1163.
4. Kimmelman, Michael. (2021), “What Does It Mean to Save a Neighborhood?” *The New York Times* (you are encouraged to read online at the link below for formatting, but if you have trouble accessing, it is also saved on Canvas as **kimmelman2021**):
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/02/us/hurricane-sandy-lower-manhattan-nyc.html>
5. Domhoff, G. William: *The Shortcomings of Rival Urban Theories*.
https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/power/rival_urban_theories.html

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 31ST - FEBRUARY 6TH): PUBLIC SERVICES AND INEQUALITY

Political scientist Harold Lasswell defined politics as “who gets what, when, and how.”⁴ One of the fundamental roles of government is the distribution of resources, and local governments are the primary providers of public services in the United States. This means that the vast majority of decisions over services like public education,

⁴<https://archive.org/details/politicswhogetsw00lass/page/n3/mode/2up>

policing, land use, utilities, and transportation are taken by local officials. There is also a great deal of inequality found in public services between places in the United States.

Last week, we discussed how power is distributed both within local governments and also between the three levels of America's federalist government. Our various theories of power have considered local government independence in different ways – some have focused on opportunities for choice, while others have emphasized exclusion. This week, we study how power and federalism are related to the local inequalities we see in America today.

1. Trounstein, Jessica. (2018). *Segregation by design: Local politics and inequality in American cities*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 4.
 2. Michener, Jamila (2018). *Fragmented democracy: Medicaid, federalism, and unequal politics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.
 3. Urban Institute. (2017). *School Funding: Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share?*
<https://apps.urban.org/features/school-funding-do-poor-kids-get-fair-share/>
 4. Dillon, Liam and Poston, Ben. (2021). "Freeways force out residents in communities of color – again." *The Los Angeles Times*.
<https://www.latimes.com/projects/us-freeway-highway-expansion-black-latino-communities/>
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WEEK 3 (FEBRUARY 7TH - 13TH): SELF-INTEREST AND LOCAL POLITICS

In previous weeks, we have discussed a political system in which (1) power is widely dispersed between governments, groups, and individuals and (2) we see great inequalities across localities. Last week, we emphasized institutional sources of the inequalities we see by exploring some of the laws and formal procedures that distribute resources between places. What role do individuals play in sustaining, enforcing, or eliminating inequality? We are used to thinking of policy opinion in terms of partisanship and ideology alone, but many local policies immediately and directly influence our daily lives more than federal ones. These readings explore how self-interest and its various manifestations (e.g. "preserving housing values") shape local policy opinion and politics.

Research building block #1 – Research questions: our first research post asks you to create an original research question related to course material so far. In class on week 2, we discussed how to craft research questions to answer social science research questions. **By 9pm the day before your course meeting** (Monday night if you have class on Tuesday, and Tuesday night if you have class on Wednesday), post an original research question to the #research-proposals channel on the course Slack and briefly explain how it builds off of some of the course material we have covered so far. This need only be 1-2 paragraphs. **You must also respond to at least** one post by a classmate, and offer your reaction to their research question and offer ideas and suggestions. These will not be strictly graded (not "right" and "wrong" answers), but are intended to start you thinking about conducting your own independent research. We will practice this set of research skills many times throughout the semester.

1. Einstein, Katherine, Glick, David, & Palmer, Maxwell. (2019). *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis*. Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1 and 2.
 2. De Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, & Hankinson, Michael. (2019). Concentrated Burdens: How Self-Interest and Partisanship Shape Opinion on Opioid Treatment Policy. *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), 1078-1084.
 3. Nuamah, Sally A., and Thomas Ogorzalek (2021). "Close to Home: Place-Based Mobilization in Racialized Contexts." *American Political Science Review*: 1-18.
 4. Pulley, Brett and Brentin Mock. (2021). "Atlanta's Wealthiest and Whitest District Wants to Secede." *CityLab*. (link below, but saved as **pulleyMock2021** on Canvas if you have any trouble accessing):
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-10-01/buckhead-cityhood-vote-district-wants-to-secede-from-atlanta>
 5. Delmont, Matthew. (2016). "The Lasting Legacy of the Busing Crisis." *The Atlantic*:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/the-boston-busing-crisis-was-never-intended-to-work/474264/>
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WEEK 4 (FEBRUARY 14TH - 20TH): LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Previous weeks have identified economic development as both a cause and an effect of many decisions that local communities face. Economic development efforts routinely see high levels of collaboration between the public and private sectors. What are power dynamics like in decisions around economic development? What roles do local communities play in such decisions? We will discuss the importance of local economies, commonly used tools to promote local economic growth, and contemporary debates around them.

1. Goodman, J. David and Weise, Karen. (2019). "Why the Amazon Deal Collapsed: A Tech Giant Stumbles in N.Y.'s Raucous Political Arena." *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/15/nyregion/amazon-hq2-nyc.html>
2. Horowitz, Andy. (2020). *Katrina: A History, 1915-2015*. Harvard University Press. Introduction and Chapter 3.
3. Elder, Elizabeth M. (2021). *Company Towns: Local Governments under Industry Dominance and Decline*. Working Paper.
4. Gimlet Media. *Negative Mount Pleasant* - a small Wisconsin town negotiates a deal with Foxconn.
<https://gimletmedia.com/shows/reply-all/wbhjwd>

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 21ST - 27TH): THE PEOPLE AND THE MACHINE: THE BUREAUCRACY

State and local governments employ more than 15 million people to provide the public services we have described above.⁵ Naturally, local employees have a great deal of discretion as government actors over local policies and how they are implemented. Interactions with these bureaucracies are the most common way that Americans encounter the government, and are so routine that it can easily be forgotten that entities like public schools and police departments are part of the web of local government – that is, they are political. Who has power in these bureaucracies, and how do they influence public policies?

Research building block #2 – Connecting your research with literature: this assignment gives you an opportunity to practice connecting a research question to academic literature, as you will do on your Pre-Prospectus assignment due in two weeks. **By 9pm the day before your class meeting**, post a new (different from the last assignment) original research question to the #research-proposals channel on Slack. This time, you should also accompany it with **at least 2 outside academic sources, at least one** of which must not be on this course syllabus. You should provide a link or cite these academic sources in your post. Then, briefly (1-2 sentences) outline and arguments and findings in each of your sources, and in a separate 1-2 sentences, explain how your research question could build off of this existing work. It is totally fine to use the same or similar question to the one you will use on your Pre-Prospectus.

As before, you must also respond to at least one post by a classmate, and offer your reaction to their research question and offer any ideas and suggestions you have.

1. Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public service*. Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 1 and 2.
2. Powers, Ashley. (2018). "The Renegade Sheriffs." *The New Yorker*.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/30/the-renegade-sheriffs>.
3. Austen, Ben. (2018). "The Towers Came Down, and With Them the Promise of Public Housing." *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/06/magazine/the-towers-came-down-and-with-them-the-promise-of-public-housing.html>
4. Goldstein, Rebecca, Michael W. Sances, and Hye Young You. (2020). "Exploitative revenues, law enforcement, and the quality of government service." *Urban Affairs Review* 56, no. 1: pgs. 5-31.
5. Goldman, Samuel. (2021). "Robert Moses helped ruin Penn Station. He'd have made it easier to fix, too." *The Week*.

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/governments/cb12-156.html>

<https://theweek.com/life/1007907/robert-moses-helped-ruin-penn-station-hed-have-made-it-easier-to-fix-too>

SECTION 2: THE POLITICS OF PLACES

WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 28TH - MARCH 6TH): URBAN POLITICS

So far, we have discussed the various sources of differences in politics and public goods between localities. But there is no singular American local politics. Instead, local politics are developed by communities that vary widely in size, demographic composition, and fiscal capacity. For the next two weeks, we will start to further structure these differences by focusing on politics in urban, suburban, and rural places.

Traditionally, most work on local politics has been called “urban politics” and focused on the dynamics of large cities, including some we have seen before (e.g. Dahl’s New Haven, Hunter’s Atlanta, etc.). These readings emphasize that a few atypical characteristics of large cities make local politics in urban areas different in many ways from their suburban and rural counterparts: size, diversity, and policy scope.

Don’t forget, your Pre-Prospectus assignment (full details above) is due on 3/3/2022 at 9pm.

1. Rae, Douglas W. (2008). *City: Urbanism and its end*. Yale University Press. Chapters. 1 and 11.
 2. Hajnal, Z., & Trounstein, J. (2014). “What underlies urban politics? Race, class, ideology, partisanship, and the urban vote.” *Urban Affairs Review*, 50(1), 63-99.
 3. Morel, Domingo. (2018). *Takeover: Race, education, and American democracy*. Oxford University Press, 2018. Chapters 1 and 5.
 4. Bellafante, Ginia. (2021). “Have Urban Universities Done Enough for the Neighborhoods Around Them?” *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/10/nyregion/urban-universities-neighborhoods.html>
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WEEK 7 (MARCH 7TH - 13TH): SUBURBAN & RURAL POLITICS

Most Americans live in the suburbs.⁶ These local communities are, to a large extent, creations of federal government policies like the construction of federal highways and subsidized mortgages. While suburbs continue to grow and diversify following histories of exclusion and segregation, rural communities are generally struggling and declining across many socioeconomic characteristics. Recent decades have also seen an intensification in a political “urban-rural divide.” How are these changes influencing politics in communities around the country?

Research building block #3 – Comparing Research Methods: last week in class, we discussed how we can use different types of qualitative and quantitative data to support our research. This week, the research building block assignment gives you an opportunity to practice the skills you will use for your Analysis Reflection paper due on March 31st.

By 9pm the day before your class, generate a new research question (one not used before for class assignments – that is, not the question being used for your research paper) extending course material on a topic of your interest. Then, in a substantial paragraph (at least 5 sentences), describe a potential methodological approach you could take and the kinds of data that could be appropriate to use for your question. What kinds of qualitative or quantitative data (or both) could help you answer this question? Are there any particular strengths or weaknesses in the types of evidence that you describe? **As always,** don’t forget to respond to at least one of your classmates.

Finally, also post in Slack (in the same post is fine) which local government meeting you plan on attending for the meeting response assignment. You should also post a link to some indication of the meeting time (like a calendar on the group’s website). It is fine if this changes, but the purpose of this requirement is for you to plan ahead.

1. Brown, Trevor, Suzanne Mettler, and Samantha Puzzi. "When Rural and Urban Become “Us” versus “Them”: How a Growing Divide is Reshaping American Politics." In *The Forum*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 365-393. De Gruyter, 2021.
2. Jackson, Kenneth T. (1987). *Crabgrass frontier: The suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford University Press. Introduction, Chapters 7 and 11.
3. Cramer, Katherine J. (2016). *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3.

⁶<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/demographic-and-economic-trends-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/>

4. Oliver, J. Eric, and Shang E. Ha. "Vote choice in suburban elections." *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 393-408.

SECTION 3: POLICY CHANGE AND ACTION

WEEK 8 (MARCH 21ST - 27TH): PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL POLICYMAKING

So far, we have discussed local policymaking – the process of creating new laws – in terms of individual actors (e.g. the public, local officials, interest groups, etc.) and in terms of its outputs (e.g. zoning, school spending, policing, etc.). This week, we will learn about the policymaking process in local governments. Once someone decides to pursue a local policy, how are decisions actually made? Who are the actors involved? What are the common stumbling blocks? These readings provide an overview of the realities of local policymaking with a particular focus on local public meetings, where local officials like city councils, school boards, and zoning boards make many of their most important decisions.

1. Einstein, Katherine. L., Glick, David M., & Palmer, Maxwell. (2019). *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis*. Cambridge University Press. Chs. 4, 5, and 6.
2. Collins, Jonathan E. "Does the Meeting Style Matter? The Effects of Exposure to Participatory and Deliberative School Board Meetings." *American Political Science Review* (2021): 1-15.
3. Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Celia Viramontes. "Civic spaces: Mexican hometown associations and immigrant participation." *Journal of Social Issues* 66, no. 1 (2010): 155-173.
4. Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. "Coronavirus policies spread quickly across the US are cities and states learning – or just copying." *The Washington Post* 16 (2020).
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/16/coronavirus-policies-spread-quickly-across-us-are-cities-states-learning-or-just-copying/> (saved as **shipanVolden2020** if you have trouble accessing).

WEEK 9 (MARCH 28TH - APRIL 3RD): POLICY CHANGE, ACTION, AND PERSUASION

Last week, we discussed “typical” avenues for local political change like public meetings and policy diffusion between governments. Often, political change comes from elsewhere. How can change be initiated beyond the walls

of City Hall? This week, we'll cover the local politics of actions like protests, grassroots mobilization, and persuasion.

Reminder: your Analysis Reflection assignment (details above) is due on 3/31/2022 at 9pm.

1. Reny, Tyler T. and Benjamin J. Newman. (2021). "The Opinion-Mobilizing Effect of Social Protest against Police Violence: Evidence from the 2020 George Floyd Protests." *American Political Science Review*: 1-9.
 2. Nickels, Ashley E. (2019). *Power, participation, and protest in Flint, Michigan: Unpacking the policy paradox of municipal takeovers*. Temple University Press. Chapters 7 and 8.
 3. Michener, Jamila. (2020). "Power from the Margins: Grassroots Mobilization and Urban Expansions of Civil Legal Rights." *Urban Affairs Review* 56, no. 5: 1390-1422.
 4. Lempenin, Edward (2020), reporting on research by David Broockman and Joshua Kalla. "Want to persuade an opponent? Try listening, Berkeley scholar says." *Berkeley News*.
<https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/06/26/want-to-persuade-an-opponent-try-listening-berkeley-scholar-says/>
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SECTION 4: ELECTIONS, REPRESENTATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WEEK 10 (APRIL 4TH - 10TH): LOCAL ELECTIONS: INSTITUTIONS

Local elections take place in unusual institutional contexts. Local electoral policies vary drastically by state, municipality, and office, but some general themes set them apart from elections for "higher" offices: (1) they are normally nonpartisan, (2) elections are often held "off-cycle" (i.e. not in November and / or in odd-numbered years), and (3) there is more institutional variation than at any other level of the American political system. How do these institutions shape who has power in local government?

Reminder: Your local meeting response is due by 9pm on April 7th.

1. Abbott, Carolyn, and Asya Magazinnik. "At-Large Elections and Minority Representation in Local Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 64, no. 3 (2020): 717-733.
2. Schaffner, B. F., Streb, M., & Wright, G. (2001). "Tearns without uniforms: the nonpartisan ballot in state and local elections." *Political research quarterly*, 54(1), 7-30.

3. Ottolini, Meghan. (2021). *Parents, teachers push for prompt transition to elected Boston school committee*. Boston Herald.
<https://www.bostonherald.com/2021/12/06/parents-teachers-push-for-prompt-transition-to-elected-boston-school-committee/>
4. Rodriguez, Barbara. (2021). "Most state lawmakers earn low salaries. It impacts who can afford to be one." *The 19th*. <https://19thnews.org/2021/11/state-lawmakers-salaries-affordability/>

WEEK 11 (APRIL 11TH - 17TH): LOCAL ELECTIONS: VOTERS

The most straightforward (but not necessarily the easiest) route to local power is to win an election. The vast majority of America's ~500,000 local government officials are elected, typically in low-salience, low-turnout races.⁷ For example, the Board of Education for Newark (NJ) public schools, a 9 member board that oversees ~35,000 students and a budget of over \$1 billion, routinely elects members in elections of 4-5% turnout.⁸ As a result, small groups of voters often have a great amount of power in shaping who governs their local communities. Who votes in local elections, who are they voting for, and what are they voting about? These readings focus on the people in the local electoral process.

1. Kogan, Vladimir, Stéphane Lavertu, and Zachary Peskowitz. (2021). "The Democratic Deficit in US Education Governance." *American Political Science Review*, pgs. 1-8.
2. Hess, Frederick & David Leal. (2005). "School house politics" in Howell, W. G. (Ed.). (2005). *Besieged: School boards and the future of education politics*. Brookings Institution Press. Pgs. 228-253.
3. Kaufmann, Karen M. "Racial conflict and political choice: A study of mayoral voting behavior in Los Angeles and New York." *Urban Affairs Review* 33, no. 5 (1998): 655-685.
4. Chen, Elaine. (2021). "New York City Expands Voting Rights to Noncitizens." *CityLab*.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-09/nyc-moves-to-allow-noncitizens-green-card-holders-to-vote>
5. Saul, Stephanie. (2021). "Energizing Conservative Voters, One School Board Election at a Time." *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/us/republicans-schools-critical-race-theory.html>

WEEK 12 (APRIL 18TH - 24TH): LOCAL OFFICIALS, REPRESENTATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

⁷ https://www.census.gov/prod/2/gov/gc/gc92_1_2.pdf (Table 2).

⁸ <https://www.nps.k12.nj.us/departments/data-research/>;
<https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/NJ/Essex/74651/Web02.194526/#/>

Once a local official is in power, how do they serve their constituents? Do local politicians represent the views of their constituents? How can local communities hold their officials accountable, and do their efforts succeed?

Reminder: your Prospectus assignment (details above) is due on 4/21/2022 at 9pm.

1. *The Economist*. (2014), reporting on research by Chris Tausanovitch and Christopher Warshaw. "Urbane Development"
<https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2014/08/01/urbane-development> (also saved on course site as **tausanovitch Warshaw2014** if you have trouble accessing the link).
 2. Holman, Mirya R. (2014). *Women in politics in the American city*. Temple University Press. Ch. 5.
 3. de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin. (2018). "How attribution inhibits accountability: evidence from train delays." *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 4: 1417-1422.
 4. Thompson, D. M. (2020). "How partisan is local law enforcement? Evidence from sheriff cooperation with immigration authorities." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 1: 222-236.
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WEEK 13 (APRIL 25TH - APRIL 27TH): NATIONALIZATION & MOVING FORWARD

Recent research has emphasized the "nationalization" of American politics as a fundamental shift in voter attention away from state and local politics and towards the federal government. If so, there could be troubling implications in our federalist governing system that places a great deal of power in all three levels of government. For example, voters may begin to see their own local politics through the lens of national politics and dismiss the relevance of local contexts. Is such a shift happening? What are its implications for local and national politics alike? More generally, how do local and national contexts influence political beliefs?

Reminder: your Final Research Paper (details above) is due on 5/10/2022 (not this week, but after classes end) at 9pm.

1. Drutman, Lee. (2018), reporting on research by Daniel Hopkins. "America has local political institutions but nationalized politics. This is a problem." Vox.
<https://www.vox.com/polyarchy/2018/5/31/17406590/local-national-political-institutions-politization-federalism>
2. Martin, Gregory. J., & McCrain, Joshua. (2019). "Local news and national politics." *American Political Science Review*, 113 (2), 372-384.
3. Hopkins, Daniel J. (2010). "Politicized places: Explaining where and when immigrants provoke local opposition." *American Political Science Review*, 104, no. 1: 40-60.

4. Saul, Stephanie. (2021). "How a School District Got Caught in Virginia's Political Maelstrom." *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/14/us/loudoun-county-school-board-va.html>
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