Wagner Logo

**UPADM-GP 215.001**

**The Politics of New York**

**Spring 2025**

**Instructor Information**

• Professor Mitchell L. Moss

o Email: moss.mitchell@gmail.com

• Teaching Assistant: Daniel Zaydman

o Email: [dez226@nyu.edu](mailto:dez226@nyu.edu)

o Office Hours:

* Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00pm
* NYU Wagner, 105 E 17th Street, New York, NY
* Located in cubicle on 3rd floor
* Email to confirm

**Course Information**

● Class Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

● Class Location: 238 Thompson St (GCASL) Room 279

**Course Description**

New York City is the nation's largest city, with a municipal budget of more than $100 billion and 8.3 million people, including more than one-third who are foreign born. The course will initially focus on what makes New York City different from other large cities. Class lectures will analyze the sources of power in New York City, the demographic, civic and economic forces that influence political life, and the role of the mayor, other elected officials, and state and regional agencies. The second part of the course explores public policies in key areas: public safety, economic development, education, transportation, and immigration.

The course readings are accessible online and students will be expected to do the required readings prior to the assigned class session. The course requirements will include weekly reading responses, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a group policy memo that focuses on a current public policy or project in New York City.

**Course and Learning Objectives:**

1. analyze the economic, political, technological and demographic forces that shape New York City’s growth and development;

2. identify the key actors, organizations, and political processes that influence government and policies;

3. understand how the media can drive city policies;

4. think critically about specific public policy debates (e.g., race relations, criminal justice, mass transit) and generate your own evaluations of policies

5. demonstrate command of lecture concepts through contributions to class discussions and written assignments.

**Learning Assessment Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Graded Assignment** | **Course Objective Covered** |
| Public Hearing Report | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| Midterm Exam | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| Policy Memo | #1, 2, 4, and 5 |
| Final Exam | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |

**Required Readings**

Students will be expected to have read the required readings assigned for a given week prior to lecture. While all other required readings will be accessible online via Brightspace, students must rent or purchase the following text at the NYU Bookstore or elsewhere:

● Caro, R. (1974). The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York. Vintage.

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. In order to keep readings relevant to current events, readings will be updated a week prior to each class. Readings can be found in the Lessons tab on Brightspace for that corresponding week.

**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**

● amNY: amny.com

● Bklyner.: bklyner.com

● Chalkbeat | New York: chalkbeat.org/ny

● THE CITY: city.nyc

● City & State New York: cityandstateny.com

● City Journal: city-journal.org

● City Lab | New York: citylab.com/locations/cities/new-york/

● City Limits: citylimits.org

● Crain’s Business New York: crainsnewyork.com

● Curbed New York: ny.curbed.com

● Daily Intelligencer, New York Magazine: nymag.com/daily/intelligencer

● Daily Politics (NY Daily News blog): nydailynews.com/news/politics/

● Gothamist: gothamist.com

● New York Post: nypost.com

● The New York Times | N.Y.: nytimes.com/section/nyregion

● Next City: nextcity.org

● Observer | Politics: observer.com/politics

● Politico | New York: politico.com/states/new-york

● Streetsblog | NYC: nyc.streetsblog.org

● Times Union | Capitol Confidential: blog.timesunion.com/capitol

● The Village Voice: villagevoice.com

● Wall Street Journal: wsj.com

● Epicenter NYC: epicenter-nyc.com/

● New York Focus: nysfocus.com

**Academic Resources**

● Center for an Urban Future: nycfuture.org

● Center for New York City Affairs at The New School: centernyc.org

● Citizens Budget Commission: cbcny.org

● Empire Center for Public Policy: empirecenter.org

● Fiscal Policy Institute: fiscalpolicy.org

● Manhattan Institute for Policy Research: manhattan-institute.org

● Museum of the City of New York | The Greatest Grid: thegreatestgrid.mcny.org

● NYU Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy: furmancenter.org

● NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management: wagner.nyu.edu/rudincenter

**Government Agencies**

● Department of City Planning: nyc.gov/planning

● Independent Budget Office of the City of New York: ibo.nyc.ny.us

● Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget: www1.nyc.gov/site/omb/index.page

● NYC OpenData: opendata.cityofnewyork.us

● Office of the New York State Comptroller: osc.state.ny.us

● [Office of the New York City Comptroller](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/): comptroller.nyc.gov

**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

● The City Concealed | THIRTEEN

● FAQ NYC

● Flatbush + Main: A Podcast from the Brooklyn Historical Society

● Firewall

● 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

**Brightspace**

Students will use Brightspace 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 and suggested readings (Lessons tab), and

● 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.

**Generative AI Policy**

Generative AI tools may be utilized in this course, provided that all instances of AI assistance are clearly cited along with the corresponding prompts.

**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 mosescsd@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**

Assignments must be submitted as a Word Document to Brightspace by the due date and time denoted on the syllabus. It is your responsibility to check that the uploaded assignment is in the correct file format and accessible, or the assignment will be penalized for lateness. All submitted assignments will be run through Brightspace’s built-in TurnItIn application. Your final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

**Class Participation (5%)**

During many classes, there will be allocated time for students to discuss their opinions on that week’s assigned readings. Students are expected to come to class prepared to share their perspectives on course material.

**Public Hearing Report (15%)**

In the first seven weeks of the course, students are expected to attend a meeting of either a city council committee, community board, or charter revision commission. Students will write a brief report of 750 words on one policy topic discussed in the hearing, including key issues, relevant actors, and decisions made (if any).

**Take-Home Midterm Exam (25%)**

The midterm exam will be a take-home assignment in which you will compose short answer responses to a set of ID prompts relating to the course topics covered during the first half of the semester. I will post more detailed instructions in regard to content, format, and submission further into the semester.

**Policy Memo (25%)**

Students will craft a 1250-1500 word memo on a policy and issue area of their choice that impacts New York City. More detailed assignment instructions will be posted on Brightspace later in the semester.

**Take-Home Final Exam (30%)**

Students will be asked to write four short essays on topics discussed during the semester. Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on Brightspace later in the semester.

**Late Policy**

Assignment deadline extensions will be granted in cases of emergencies. Assignments submitted late without extensions will be penalized.

**Overview of the Semester**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Lecture Topic and Deliverables** |
| 1 | 01/22/2025 | New York’s Development and Growth |
| 2 | 01/27/2025 | How New York City Is Different from Other Cities |
| 2 | 01/29/2025 | New York City’s Changing Population |
| 3 | 02/03/2025 | The Structure of Power in NYC - City Charter & Role of Elected Officials |
| 3 | 02/05/2025 | The Structure of Power in NYC - State and Federal Government |
| 4 | 02/10/2025 | How a Mayor Shapes Policy, Pt. I - La Guardia, Wagner, Lindsey, Beam, Koch, Dinkins |
| 4 | 02/12/2025 | How a Mayor Shapes Policy, Pt. II - Giuliani, Bloomberg, De Blasio, Adams |
| 5 | 02/18/2025 | **Legislative Monday:** How NYC Raises and Spends Money |
| 5 | 02/19/2025 | Economic Development and Inequality |
| 6 | 02/24/2025 | New York City’s Mayoral and Political Crisis |
| 6 | 02/26/2025 | New York City School Governance |
| 7 | 03/03/2025 | The Politics of Transportation, Pt. I  **Public Hearing Report due at 11am on NYU Brightspace.**  **Instructions for Policy Memo posted on NYU Brightspace.** |
| 7 | 03/05/2025 | The Politics of Transportation, Pt. II |
| 8 | 03/10/2025 | Robert Moses and *The Power Broker*  **Instructions for Midterm Exam posted on NYU Brightspace.** |
| 8 | 03/12/2025 | Guest Speaker: Todd Rufo (Bloomberg Associates) |
| 9 | 03/17/2025 | How Disasters Shape NYC Policies  **Midterm Exam due at 11am on NYU Brightspace.** |
| 9 | 03/19/2025 | June 2025 NYC Mayoral Primary Candidates |
| 10 | 03/24/2025 | **NO CLASS: Spring break** |
| 10 | 03/26/2025 | **NO CLASS: Spring break** |
| 11 | 03/31/2025 | The Politics of Public Safety |
| 11 | 04/02/2025 | Policies for Public Safety |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12 | 04/07/2025 | Parks, Open Spaces, and Waterfront Renewal |
| 12 | 04/09/2025 | Guest Speaker: Central Park and Planning for Mobility |
| 13 | 04/14/2025 | NYC Housing Policies |
| 13 | 04/16/2025 | Guest Speaker: Immigrants in NYC  **Policy Memos due at 11am on NYU Brightspace.** |
| 14 | 04/21/2025 | Guest Speaker |
| 14 | 04/23/2025 | Guest Speaker: Climate Change |
| 15 | 04/28/2025 | The Mayoral Election, Pt. I |
| 15 | 04/30/2025 | The Mayoral Election, Pt. II |
| 16 | 05/05/2024 | The Future of New York  **Final Exam instructions posted on NYU Brightspace.** |