“Politics in the City” is a sophomore seminar that offers an overview of contemporary urban life. In a course of just 14 weeks we cannot cover city politics in a comprehensive manner but problems of central importance to cities we focus on include race, poverty, demographic trends, economic development, and sustainability. In this context, we’ll discuss such issues as immigration, political leadership, smart growth, business and government, and neighborhood revitalization.

The following books are required reading for the course:


For those enrolled in the class who are majors or prospective majors in Political Science, please know that “Politics in the City” fulfills the departmental requirement for a methods focused course. Also, this course counts toward the African/African American culture option. Please also note that because this is a sophomore seminar, it does not fulfill the requirement for an advanced seminar for political science majors. Still, this course is a seminar and all students are expected to actively participate in discussions.

Handouts from a book by W. Phillips Shively will be used to guide some of our discussions concerning how social scientists do research. In addition, part of our analysis of each of the other course readings will focus on questions of research design. The primary course requirements are as follows: two take-home essays (30 percent each); a research paper (30 percent) and class participation (10 percent). The research paper will be described in a separate document.

This is a small class and I hope to get to know each one of you well. I encourage you to make use of my office hours, Mondays from 3:00 to 4:30 and Wednesdays from 11:00-12:00. If these hours are not good for you, just let me know and we’ll arrange to meet at another time. Please feel free to come see me about the class, majoring in political science, pre-law at Tufts, Tufts-in-Washington, or about anything else I might be of assistance on. My phone number and e-mail addresses are ext. 7-3465 and jeffrey.berry@tufts.edu.
September 14: Introduction to the course


September 28: Putnam, Chap. 6
Raj Chetty et al., “Is the United States Still a Land of Opportunity?” (Trunk)
John Eligon, “A Year After Ferguson, Housing Segregation Defies Tools to Erase It” (Trunk)

October 5: Shively, chap. 6 from The Craft of Political Research, handout
Benjamin Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, Chap. 1, “If Mayors Ruled the World: Why They Should and How They Already Do” (on reserve)

October 12: O’Connor, Building a New Boston
[Reports on Boston neighborhoods]

October 19: Glaeser, Triumph of the City, Chaps. 1-8
Casey Ross, “Transit-Oriented Development Provides Spark to Transform Dorchester” (Trunk)

[First essay question handed out]

October 26: Glaeser, Triumph of the City, Chap. 9 and Conclusion
Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley, The Metropolitan Revolution, Chapter 6, “The Rise of Innovation Districts” (on reserve)
[Essay due at beginning class]

November 2: Census Bureau, City of Somerville (Trunk)
Official Biography, Mayor Joseph Curatone (Trunk)
“Somerville Ends Participation in Secure Communities” (Trunk)
“Green Line Extension Project” [click on all 8 slides] (Trunk)
“Green Line Extension Supporters Urge State Not to Drop Project” (Trunk)
[Reports on 2016 presidential candidates’ urban policies]

November 9: Shively, chaps. 2 and 4 from The Craft of Political Research, handout
Katz and Bradley, The Metropolitan Revolution, Chap. 7, “Toward a Global Network of Trading Cities” (on reserve)
Barber, If Mayors Ruled the World, Chap. 9, “Linking Cities with Digital Technology” (on reserve)

November 16: Ehrenhalt, The Great Inversion
[Second essay handed out]

November 23:
David Graham, “The Mysterious Death of Freddie Gray” (Trunk)
Scott Shane et al, “Hard but Hopeful Home to ‘Lot of Freddies.’” This article has a second one nested within it (mostly a map and visuals). Make sure to click on “Open Graphic” midway down and read the second article as well. (Trunk)
Michael Rosenwald and Michael Fletcher, “Why Couldn’t $130 Million Transform One of Baltimore’s Poorest Places?” (Trunk)

[Essay due at beginning class]

**November 30:** Fitzgerald, *Emerald Cities*
Reports from students on research papers

**December 7:** Reports from students on research papers