

<b>Who Governs the City ? Readings in Urban Politics</b>	
<i>Intitulé du cours / Course title</i>	
<i>Discipline Academic field</i>	Urban Politics
<i>Enseignant Teacher</i>	Claire Bénit-Gbaffou
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<i>Niveau de formation Academic level</i>	4A
<i>Volume horaire Hours</i>	10*2 hours
<i>Langue Language</i>	English (100%)

*Description du cours / Course outline*

This seminar focuses on the question of who governs the city, and how. It organises readings and debates around a set of North American texts, forming what has been called the *Community Power Studies* that have structured the discipline of urban politics from the 1950s until today. Grounded in a North American context, and building from a diversity of urban monographs, this debate interrogates to what extent cities are dominated by oligarchies, and in what conditions their government may remain, or become, democratic and pluralist. It also questions why, in cities across the world, urban policies favoring growth and competition are dominant, rather than other types of urban policies (focused on quality of life, redistribution, the environment or else) - in ways that strongly resonate with contemporary challenges.

*Objectifs pédagogiques du cours / Course objectives*

The course objectives are three-fold :

- A thematic objective - develop theoretical, conceptual and methodological tools to analyse the interplay between agents and institutions, the issue of power, domination and contestation, the spatialisation of politics, through the object of the government of cities.
- A methodological objective - ensure that students are able to critically engage with academic readings, understand their stake, position their author, think comparatively and contextually, formulate the interplay between theory and case study.
- A language objective - accustom students to read, write and express themselves in academic/professional English, assisted by selected readings that mingle theoretical developments and empirical stories, thus allowing for different levels of understanding and engagement with the texts.

*Compétences acquises / Learning outcomes*

- 1) Thematic outcome: students will have an overview of the broad theories, concepts and methods to analyse the government of cities and more generally to study power, its agents and structures.
- 2) Methodological outcome: students will be able to critically engage with readings, identify and develop a position in academic controversies, and develop a culture of debate.
- 3) Language outcome: students will develop their reading, writing and verbal skills in English.

In order to develop these skills, the seminar will be organised as follows:

- For each session, students will be provided with two to three academic texts to read in English. Texts will be selected with a careful balance between theoretical developments and

empirical case studies, so as to allow for a diversity of levels of engagement depending on how familiar students are with the English language.

- Students will be requested to write a short essay in English analysing these texts, for at least 3 out of the 10 sessions (they may opt to submit their essay for each session if they need further training)
- Each session (two hours) will consist in oral debates around the readings and beyond, encouraging students to elaborate (in English) on the echoes that the theme, the questions and the methods presented by the selected texts may generate in their own experience and research.

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#### Plan de cours par séance / Course content for each session

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##### **Course outline (to be confirmed)**

**Séance 1** - Introduction to the seminar (course structure, assessment of students' interests and level in English, introduction to *Community Power Studies*)

**Séance 2** - Are cities governed by an elite? Around the work of Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure*.

**Séance 3** - Democracy and the government of cities. Around Robert Dahl's *Who Governs ?*

**Séance 4** - Dahl versus Hunter: from the birth of a controversy to its contemporary avatars

**Séance 5** - Are Cities free to conduct whatever policy they wish? Paul Peterson's *City Limits*

**Séance 6** - The City as Growth Machine. Around John Logan et Harvey Molotch's *Urban Fortunes*

**Séance 7** - City politics from within. Around Needleman&Needleman's *Guerillas in the bureaucracy*

**Séance 8** - Beyond the elitist-pluralist debate ? Around Clarence Stone's *Regime politics*

**Séance 9** - How are progressive policies possible? Around Norman Krumholz, Pierre Clavel and John Forester's work

**Séance 10** - From Urban Regimes to Urban Orders in uncertain times. The contemporary relevance of the work of Clarence Stone.

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#### Références bibliographiques / Bibliography

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NB: Selected extracts will be provided to students for the whole course.

Bachrach Peter & Baratz Morton, 1962, "Two faces of power", *The American Political Science Review*, 1962, 56(4), 947-952.

Clavel Pierre, 2010. *Activists in City Hall. The progressive response to the Reagan era in Boston and Chicago*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Dahl Robert, 1961, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven : Yale University Press, second edition (1989).

Domhoff, William, 2005, "Who Really Ruled in Dahl's New Haven?", unpublished paper, 25 p, URL [http://whorulesamerica.net/local/new\\_haven.html](http://whorulesamerica.net/local/new_haven.html)

Hunter, Floyd, 1953. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. University of North Carolina Press.

Krumholz Norman, Forester John, 1990, *Making Equity Planning work. Leadership in the Public Sector*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Logan John, Molotch Harvey, 1987, *Urban Fortunes, The political economy of place*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lynd, Robert et Helen, 1929, *Middletown. A study of Modern American Culture*, New York, Constable and Co Ltd.

Needleman M, Needleman C, 1974, *Guerrillas in the bureaucracy. The community planning experiment in the United States*. New York: Wiley.

Peterson, Paul, 1981, *City Limits*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press

Stone C, 1989, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta (1946-1988)*.

Stone C, 1993, "Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: a political economy approach", *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15(1), pp. 1-28.

Stone Clarence, 2006, "Power, Reform, and Urban Regime Analysis", *City & Community* 5:1, p 23-38.

Stone Clarence, Stoker Robert, 2015. *Urban Neighborhoods in a New Era. Revitalization Politics in the Postindustrial City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Yates Douglas, 1991, *The ungovernable City. The politics of urban problems and policy making*. MIT University Press.

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Mini CV de l'enseignant / *Mini CV of the teacher*

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**Claire Bénit-Gbaffou** is an Associate Professor in Planning, in the Department of Geography, Planning and the Environment at Aix Marseille University. For a decade, she has taught (in English) at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa), in the School of Architecture and Planning and occasionally in the Department of Politics. Her research focuses on how cities are governed, in Johannesburg and Marseille, and she has published in numerous international, English-speaking journals. A member of MESOPOLHIS (CNRS-AMU-Sciences Po Aix), she has organised, with her colleague Cesare Mattina, a monthly reading group around *Community Power Studies* (2021-22).