This course examines the intersection of ideas, politics, and action. We study best practices from around the country (and the world), evaluate their effectiveness, and determine whether and how successful programs can be replicated. This course asks students to not only think critically about issues of public policy, but also to think anew about the role you play in shaping it.

Cities, states and municipalities serve as what Justice Brandeis called “little laboratories for democracy”—where ideas flourish and problems get solved. From fighting crime in the streets of New York City, to banning smoking in bars and restaurants, to making the power grid more efficient, to encouraging the arts and culture in urban environments, innovations in American cities have spread across the globe.

Topics for student projects are drawn from current issues and problems facing decision-makers and elected officials in America today. We will also discuss politics, elections, and their interplay with public policy. In particular we will discuss the 2018 US Congressional midterm election and the policy ideas presented by the candidates.

Grading Criteria:
- 10% Participation
- 15% Oral Final Presentations
- 25% Midterm Exam and Essay (Take home exam, essay approx 5 pages.)
- 25% Final Exam and Essay (Take home exam, essay approx 5 pages.)
- 25% Final Paper

Students are expected to attend all classes and to finish the assigned reading prior to class. You should be prepared to discuss each week’s reading in class. Because this is a small, discussion-based course, your attendance and participation are essential. Please inform me by email if you are forced to miss a class. Required readings will come from the assigned books or by following the links in this syllabus.

Final Project
Identify a problem in an American city, state or municipality and propose an implementable policy solution to address it. It is preferable but not required that this idea have been modeled or tested previously in an alternate setting or location. The paper should outline the problem (it may be helpful to use Osbourne and Hutchinson’s 5 critical decisions) and articulate why the solution is appropriate. It should describe barriers to implementation and recommendations to overcome those barriers.
A one-page analysis of a public policy challenge you have identified is due the first class in October, the format should follow the Facts, Issue, Answer, Reasoning method we will discuss in class. A one-page proposal outlining your final project is due our last class in October. The final paper/presentation, of about 1,200-1,500 words and 5-10 slides, is due for all students on the last class. Each student will prepare a 10-minute presentation to be presented in class, followed by 5-10 minute Q&A and discussion with fellow students. We will discuss expectations for the paper and presentations in greater detail in class.

As with any class at NYU, you will be held to the highest standards of academic integrity, and all work submitted should be your own. When referencing other people’s work, proper citation is required, whether you are quoting exact lines or summarizing ideas or concepts. Information on citation styles can be found on the NYU library website: http://nyu.libguides.com/content.php?pid=27555.

Learning Objectives:

In this seminar, students will:

Use primary sources, both qualitative and quantitative, especially in their research projects, to understand community institutions, the local economy, and the role of government.

Develop an understanding of how power differentially affects New York City’s people. Its built environment, and its institutions through site visits, case studies and research projects.

Develop the ability to engage in key contemporary debates that shape the future of the city through in-class discussions, presentations, and colloquia.

Develop an understanding of the formal and informal institutions underlying decision making in the city by analyzing historical and contemporary planning and policy issues.

Required Books:

- Osborne, David and Peter Hutchinson. The Price of Government: Getting the Results We Need in an Age of Permanent Fiscal Crisis. 2006
- Caro, Robert. The Power Broker, Robert Moses and the Fall of New York.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Building Giants

Session 1 – Introduction

Session 2 - Understanding the Landscape

Reading:

- Price of Government, p. 1-20
- Triumph of the City, p. 1-34
- Creative Class, p. 1-35

Shaping the Future of New York, Prof. Gioia, 2
Session 3 - Determining Priorities
Reading:
- Price of Government, ch. 1-3
- David and Goliath, Introduction and ch. 1
- NY Times: Cities See The Other Side of the Tracks.
- NY Times: Bringing the High Line Back to Earth.
- Higgins, Washington Post: Why the Highline is so Popular
- View TED talk by Robert Hammond
- NY Times: In Queens, Taking the High Line as a Model

Session 4 - Barriers and How to Overcome Them
Reading:
- Price of Government, ch. 14-15
- Schaller, Bruce. “New York City’s Congestion Pricing Experience and Implications for Road Pricing Acceptance in the United States.”

Session 5 - Managing toward Common Goals
Reading:
- Nudge, Introduction and ch. 1-5
- Power Broker ch. 34
- NY Times: We Need a Little Fear
- NY Times: Taxing Sugar to Fund a City
- City Limits: Amazon Article
- NY Times: A California Dream for Paid Leave Has an Old Problem: How to Pay for It
- Vox: Gavin Newsom’s ambitious plan to cut poverty in California
- NY Times: Lottery-Like Prizes Coax Savings. What’s the Risk in Expanding Them?

Session 6 - Laboratories of Democracy – Ideas, Issues, Challenges from Around the Country
Reading:
- Nudge, ch. 16
- NY Times: How to Build Affordable Housing in New York City
- NY Times: A Simple Way to Send Poor Kids to Top Colleges
- The Atlantic: The Global Cities Where Tech Venture Capital Is Concentrated
- NY Times: Think Positive, Climb Out of Poverty? It Just Might Work
- NY Times: A Billionaire and a Nurse Shouldn’t Pay the Same Fine for Speeding
- NY Times: Idled City Airports Are Finding a Second Life as Housing
- NY Times: Some Workers Need Jobs as Much as Builders Need Workers. Cities Connect Them.
- NY Times: Why Democrats Still Have to Appeal to the Center, but Republicans Don’t
- NY Times: How Did Americans Lose Faith in Everything?
Session 7 - Case Study - Education
Reading:
- NY Times: The Opportunity Gap
- Case Study: Are High-Quality Schools Enough to Close the Achievement Gap? Evidence from a Bold Social Experiment in Harlem.
- NY Times: Technology Changing How Students Learn, Teachers Say
- The New Yorker: Schooled
- NY Times: How to Fix the Country’s Failing Schools. And How Not To
- NYTimes: Why American Schools Are Even More Unequal Than We Thought
- NY Times: Innovative Way to Pay for College
- NY Times: No Tuition, but You Pay a Percentage of Your Income (if You Find a Job)
- NY Times: Why Shouldn’t New York’s Wealthiest P.T.A.s Share With Its Neediest Schools?

Session 8 - Case Study - Crime
Reading:
- WSJ: Hard Times, Fewer Crimes
- Price of Government, ch. 8
- Making Cities Work, ch. 10
- City Journal: Why we need Broken Windows
- The Atlantic: Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety
- The New Yorker: Fixing Broken Windows
- NYTimes: How Community Policing Can Work
- National Review: We were wrong
- NY Times: Confronting Implicit Bias in the New York Police Department
- New York Magazine: The Controversial Crime-Fighting Program That Changed Big-City Policing Forever
- NY Times: Why the Eric Garner Case Is a Critical Test for the N.Y.P.D. Commissioner

Session 9 – Case Study – Technology, Environment and the Future of Cities
Reading:
- Nudge, ch. 12
- WSJ: The More You Know…
- Time: For Electricity 2.0, a Short Circuit in Boulder
- The Atlantic: Say Hello to Full Employment
- Politico Magazine: Google Is Building a City of the Future in Toronto. Would Anyone Want to Live There?
- Wall Street Journal: The Surprising Academic Impact of Reducing School-Bus Emissions
- NY Times: Silicon Valley’s Newest Rival: The Banks of the Hudson
- NY Times: The $119 Billion Sea Wall That Could Defend New York … or Not

Session 10 - Case Study – Race and Poverty
Reading:
- Creative Class, p. 353-383
- NY Times: Invisible Child
- NYTimes: A Housing Solution Gone Awry
- NY Times: A Payoff Out of Poverty?
- NY Times: City Will Stop Paying the Poor for Good Behavior
- New Yorker: Swamp Nurse: What’s the Best Hope for the First Child of a Poor Mother?
- NY Times: How the Coastline Became a Place to Put the Poor
- Evidence-Based Partnership Initiative: The Nurse-Family Partnership Program
- NY Times: The Myth of Welfare’s Corrupting Influence on the Poor
- NY Times: A Universal Basic Income Is a Poor Tool to Fight Poverty
- NY Times: The Outsize Hold of the Word ‘Welfare’ on the Public Imagination
- Atlantic Monthly - CITYLAB: Can Baby Bonds Help Shrink the Wealth Gap?
- New Yorker: Who Really Stands to Win from Universal Basic Income?
- NY Times: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Tax Hike Idea Is Not About Soaking the Rich
- NY Times: Americans want to believe jobs are a Solution to Poverty.

Session 11 - Why Do Cities Fail?
Reading:
- Triumph of the City, ch. 2
- Creative Class, p. 35-65
- NYTimes: Dasani article
- NYTimes: Chicago Finds a Way to Improve Public Housing: Libraries
- The New Yorker: What America Can Learn From Detroit
- NY Times: Fresh Proof That Strong Unions Help Reduce Income Inequality
- Wall Street Journal: World Governments Test Minimum-Wage Raises
- NY Times: Is American Becoming an Oligarchy?
- NY Times: The Tragedy of Baltimore
- CityLab: What Happened to Baltimore’s Harborplace?

Session 12 – Why Do Cities Succeed?
Reading:
- Triumph of the City, ch. 9 and conclusion
- Creative Class, p. 228-280
Class Visit Eric Koch, former Communications Director for the New York City Council

Session 13: Class Conclusion and Review