

IAPA 1701F  
Wed. 3-6:30, Sayles Hall 306  
Fall 2021

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Office Hours Monday 2-4  
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## **Wealth and Poverty in the New American Metropolis**

Metropolitan areas contain extremes of wealth and poverty, which take expression in spatial inequalities. In American metros, spatial inequalities mark lines of racial and ethnic divisions. This course will examine how economic shifts combine with national and local governance choices to exacerbate metropolitan inequalities. We will examine how recent economic shifts in technology combine with our long history of racial segregation to create protected spaces of wealth as well as disinvested communities of poverty. We pay special attention to the way housing policies, climate change mitigation strategies, and infrastructure investments have reinforced inequalities in the recent past. The course concludes by considering new strategies for building wealth in disinvested communities and analyzing new patterns of mobilization that seek to provide local communities with the tools to build wealth and opportunity.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Describe why the United States is especially vulnerable to sharp spatial inequalities
- Describe how changes in the economy have created inequalities across and within cities
- Analyze how local policies such as zoning contribute to racial and economic inequalities
- Identify recent trends in policies that govern housing, climate change, and infrastructure
- Assess how great wealth has served to exacerbate inequality
- Evaluate the political possibilities for creating more equitable metropolitan areas
- Use data sources to describe the demographic and economic profiles of different metropolitan areas

**COURSE TIME ALLOCATION:** Over 13 weeks, students will spend 3 hours per week in class (39 hours total). Required reading approximately 8 hours per week (104 hours). In addition, preparing for two exams and writing and researching the policy memo are estimated at total of approximately 37 hours over the course of the term.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- **Participation**
  - Participation will be assessed on the basis of oral and written interventions that display knowledge of the course material and active engagement with it. Informed participation in weekly discussions, including short memos (300 words) on the weekly readings (30% of grade). Everyone must write at least 6 response memos, two for each of the three main course sections. These memos must be completed and posted on Canvas no later than Monday 12 p.m. The memos may take one of several different forms: 1) a critique of one or more of the readings, 2) a comparison or contrast of two or more authors, 3) questions about the readings, 4) a proposal of a topic for class discussion. Late memos will not be accepted.
  - In addition, *each week* you will write a short (100 word or less) comment on one of your classmate's response memos.
  - I will grade the memos as completed or not completed based on whether they have been turned in on time or not. By week 6 I will provide you with written feedback about your participation (response papers and classroom discussion) along with a tentative grade.
  - Each week two students will team up to provide a short (10 minute) introduction to the readings for the week, identifying the main questions, arguments, and areas of agreement and disagreement in the readings.
  - Active participation in class – students are encouraged to bring what they already know about cities and inequality into the class discussion.
- One seven-page paper due **October 7 at 5 p.m.** (30% of the grade)
  - For the first paper, you should pick two cities with different economic and /or demographic characteristics. Drawing on the course readings, analyze the different challenges that each city faces and discuss how existing policies make it more difficult to create a prosperous city for all residents. To develop your statistical portrait of the two cities use the National Equity Atlas, available at <https://nationalequityatlas.org>. This paper is due in Canvas.
- Outline for the final paper is due **November 25 at 5 pm** (10 %)
  - The outline should define your question, identify which metro area you will study and what policies you will examine. It should break the paper into the analytic sections you will use to develop your argument. It should also include a short bibliography of the sources you plan to use – this

means written sources you will consult, data sources, interviews.

- One 18 page paper (30% of grade) **Due December 15 at 5 pm.**
  - This paper will give you the opportunity to delve more deeply into the politics of a specific metropolitan area to understand what creates and perpetuates racial and economic inequality and what strategies can limit the influence of the very wealthy and promote the wellbeing of low income communities.
  - Examine two policies in your metro area from the policies we have studied and present an argument for why changes in these policies are needed, discuss how you will change the current approach, and what your political strategy will be. What are the organizations active on these issues in the metro area you have selected? Who will be your allies, in what political arenas will you need to exercise influence? What opposition to do expect to encounter?

You will pick the metro region and two policies that you wish to study **by Week 5** so that we can have time for students working on similar policies to meet in class breakout session several times before the papers are due.

**Accommodations:** Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have any conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or SAS@brown.edu. Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the Deans in the Office of the Dean of the College.

#### **READINGS:**

The required articles and chapters are available on Canvas or on course reserves.

#### **Additional Resources on U.S. Metropolitan Areas:**

Metropolitan Policy Program Brookings Institution  
<http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro>

City Observatory <http://cityobservatory.org>

Streets Blog <http://www.streetsblog.org>

National League of Cities <http://www.nlc.org>

Next City <http://nextcity.org>

Bloomberg Citylab <https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab>

Governing Magazine -- <http://www.governing.com>

Policylink <https://www.policylink.org>

Urban Institute <https://www.urban.org>

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

### **Week 1 (Sept 8) Introduction to the Course**

American metropolitan areas are characterized by sharp spatial inequalities that define racial boundaries. How did American metropolitan areas take this form and what does it mean for opportunity?

Margaret Weir and Desmond King, “Redistribution and the Politics of Spatial Inequality in America,” in *Who Gets What? The New Politics of Insecurity* (ed.) Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Margaret Weir (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

### **PART I: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CONFRONTING ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS**

### **Week 2 (Sept 15) Winners and Losers in the Global Economy**

During the last thirty years it has become apparent that some places are winners and others are losers in the global economy. Explanations for this pattern highlight different features of the economy. Some scholars argue that the rise of inequality has taken a spatial form. Others point to distinctive forms of agglomeration economies in the tech sector. Still others stress the significance of decisions made by behemoth companies such as Amazon. What kinds of evidence does each type of explanation provide for its perspective?

Manduca, Robert A. “The Contribution of National Income Inequality to Regional Economic Divergence.” *Social Forces* 98, no. 2 (2019): 622–48.

Enrico Moretti, *The New Geography of Jobs* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2012), pp. 72-120.

Alec MacGillis, *Fulfillment: Winning and Losing in One-Click America* (Ferrar, Straus and Giroux. 2021, pp.189-199; pp. 243-326.

### **Week 3 (Sept 22) How Does Politics And Policy Create Racial And Economic Spatial Inequalities In American Metro Areas?**

Features of federal policy combine with decisions made at the local level to create spatial

divisions that separate populations along racial and economic lines. How does American federal policy set the stage for greater local inequalities? Why and how do local political leaders act to promote racial and economic segregation. In the past the racial and ethnic dividing line marked the difference between cities and suburbs. Today, suburbs have become more diverse racially and economically. Does the new suburban diversity present opportunities for breaking down some of these spatial divisions?

Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp.22-38.

Jessica Trounstein, *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp.23-41.

Yonah Freemark Justin Steil, and Kathleen Thelen. “Varieties of Urbanism: A Comparative View of Inequality and the Dual Dimensions of Metropolitan Fragmentation.” *Politics & Society* 48, no. 2 (2020): 235–74.

Myron Orfield and Thomas F. Luce. “America’s Racially Diverse Suburbs: Opportunities and Challenges.” *Housing Policy Debate* 23, no. 2 (2013): 395–430

#### **Week 4 (Sept 29) The Politics of Immigration in Metropolitan America**

Over the past three decades, immigration has transformed metropolitan areas across the country. Immigrants have contributed to the booming growth in many metro areas and staved off population decline in others. Immigrants have also altered the racial and ethnic composition of cities and suburbs, creating new dimensions of diversity. How has “the warmth of the welcome” for these newcomers differed in metropolitan areas? How have established patterns of civic leadership and newer social movements affected the politics of immigrant integration?

John Mollenkopf and Manuel Pastor, Eds. *Unsettled Americans: Metropolitan Context and Civic Leadership for Immigrant Integration*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2016.

## **PART II POLITICS AND POLICY IN THE NEW METROPOLIS**

#### **Week 5 (Oct 6) Contemporary Developments in Housing Policy that Reinforce Spatial inequality and Make Affordable Housing so Hard to Find**

Affordable housing has become increasingly hard to find for many Americans, and not just in hot coastal cities. How do restrictive land use policies and income inequality work to make affordable housing scarce? What has been the impact as corporate firms and private equity have entered the housing market?

Katherine Levine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 1 (2019): 28–46.

Thomas H. Byrne, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Anthony W. Orlando. "A Rising Tide Drowns Unstable Boats: How Inequality Creates Homelessness." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 693, no. 1 (2021): 28–45.

Sheelah Kolhatkar, "What Happens When Investment Firms Acquire Trailer Parks," *The New Yorker*, March 8, 2021

Francesca Mari, "A \$60 Billion Housing Grab by Wall Street," *New York Times Magazine*, March 4, 2020.

James Braseull "When Wall Street Controls the Housing Market," Planetzien April 7, 2021

## **Week 6 (Oct 13) Race, Place, and Housing Inequalities**

Premised on homeownership, American housing policy has historically offered meager assistance for renters. Support for public housing (or "social housing") is much weaker in the United States than in other countries. Policies to assist lower income renters have veered from public housing to home ownership strategies to vouchers. Each has brought its own set of challenges. Why has the United States so failed to assist lower income residents? How has racism affected the effort to devise successful affordable housing policies?

Lawrence Vale, *Purging the Poorest: Public Housing and the Design Politics of Twice-Cleared Communities*," University of Chicago Press, 2013, chapter 1.

Keeanga Yamahatta-Taylor. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. UNC Press Books, 2019, chapter 1

Eva Rosen, *The Voucher Promise: "Section 8" and the Fate of an American Neighborhood*, Princeton University Press, 2020, pp. 1-22.

Philip Tegler, "Housing Choice Voucher Reform: A Primer for 2021 and Beyond, Poverty and Race Research Action Council, August 2020.

PBS Frontline, [Poverty, Politics, and Profit](#), May 9, 2017 (This is a 50 minute report on housing policies that vividly documents why our current policies are not successful.)

## **Week 7 (Oct 20) Winners and Losers in Climate Change**

As cities across the county grapple with climate change, it has become clear that lower income communities and communities of color disproportionately suffer the consequences of climate change. Why are these communities especially vulnerable? How do normal procedures for analyzing costs and benefits help produce more inequality? What kinds of political strategies and policy tools can help ensure that the those with the fewest resources do not bear the brunt of climate change?

S. Nasrul Islam and John Winkel, “Climate Change and Social Inequality,” Department of Social and Economic Affairs, DESA Working Paper, No. 152. United Nations, 2017.

Sara Hughes, *Repowering Cities: Governing Climate Change Mitigation in New York City, Los Angeles, and Toronto*. Cornell University Press, 2019, chapters, 1, 4.

Tiffinay Ganthier, “How Cities Can Fight Inequality and Climate Change at Once.” US News and World Report, Aug. 25, 2020

Christopher Flavelle, “A Climate Plan in Texas Focuses on Minorities, Not Everyone Likes It, *New York Times*, July 24, 2020.

Caroline Keicher and Minna Toloui, “How Cities Are Centering Equity In Energy Benchmarking Policies To Address Climate Change,” May 10, 2021, Kresge Foundation,  
<https://kresge.org/news-views/how-cities-are-centering-equity-in-energy-benchmarking-policies-to-address-climate-change/>

## **Week 8 (Oct. 27) Minimal Cities and Basic Infrastructure**

Since the recession that begin in 2008, many already distressed cities teetered on the edge of bankruptcy or actually went bankrupt. What happens to services in cities experiencing severe fiscal stress and bankruptcy and why? Are there principles that should guide cuts to services that residents rely on? The Flint water crisis represented a massive failure of governance but residents eventually made their voices heard. What does the Flint case tell us about government failures and about community mobilization?

Michelle Wilde Anderson, “The New Minimal Cities,” *The Yale Law Journal* 123: 2014 pp. 1120-1129; pp. 1201-1225.

Benjamin J. Pauli, *Flint Fights Back: Environmental Justice and Democracy in the Flint Water Crisis*. MIT Press, 2019.



<https://direct.mit.edu/books/book/4316/Flint-Fights-BackEnvironmental-Justice-and>

### III. Strategies for Change

#### Week 9 (Nov 3) New Forms of Networked Activism

As the federal government moved away from directly assisting low income communities of color, organizations have emerged to develop strategies that can be pursued in states and localities. They provide data tools to adapt strategies to local and organize convenings that bring together local officials and advocates. How promising are these strategies? Are they more likely to be useful in some contexts rather than others?

Policylink website, including “About” and “Tools” and the Racial Equity Datalab  
<https://www.policylink.org>

Economic Inclusion for Southern Cities;  
<https://www.policylink.org/blog/southern-cities-biannual-convening>

Alex Karner and Richard Duckworth. “‘Pray for Transit’: Seeking Transportation Justice in Metropolitan Atlanta.” *Urban Studies* 56, no. 9 (2019): 1882–1900.

#### Week 10 (Nov 10) Building Community Wealth

The idea of community wealth seeks to build the economic base of low-income neighborhoods by strengthening existing businesses through contracting practices as well as creating new forms of economic activity, including cooperatives. Community benefits agreements and land trusts have also emerged as ways for low-income communities to ensure that they can benefit as development occurs around them. What does it take for these initiatives to become successful? Do they provide realistic paths for improving life in low income communities?

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, “Municipal Policies for Community Wealth Building,” 2020.

Gar Alperovitz, Thad Williamson, and Ted Howard. “The Cleveland Model.” *The Nation* 1 (2010): 21–24.

Examine Website of Evergreen Cooperatives of Cleveland <http://www.evgo.com>

Examine the website of CASE (Chicago Anchors for a Strong Economy)  
<http://www.worldbusinesschicago.com/case/>

Lisa Berglund. "Early Lessons From Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 2020, 1–12.

James DeFilippis, Olivia R. Williams, Joseph Pierce, Deborah G. Martin, Rich Kruger, and Azadeh Hadizadeh Esfahani. "On the Transformative Potential of Community Land Trusts in the United States." *Antipode* 51, no. 3 (2019): 795–817.

### **Week 11 (Nov. 17) Reviving Federal Urban Policy**

After the 1970s, the federal government began first to devolve responsibility to lower levels of government, and then to cut aid that once flowed to low and moderate income communities. And as it withdrew from promoting affordable housing in areas of opportunity, the focus turned to community development. How promising were the Obama administration's efforts to revive fair housing? Do they undermine community development? How is the Biden administration defining its urban policy?

Justin P Steil et. al, "Promises, Protests, and Prospects for Racial Equity n Housing," In *Furthering Fair Housing: Prospects for Racial Justice in America's Neighborhoods*, Temple University Press, 2021.

Edward Goetz "The Fair Housing Challenge to Community Development," In *Furthering Fair Housing*, pp. 145-167.

Yonah Freemark, "Throughout History, the US Failed to Integrate Transportation and Land Use. It's Still Hindering Policymaking Today. Urban Institute, May 17, 2021,  
<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/throughout-history-us-failed-integrate-transportation-and-land-use-its-still-hindering-policymaking-today>

Marjorie Austin Turner et. al, *Federal tools to Create Places of Opportunity for All*  
[https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103076/federal-tools-to-creat-e-places-of-opportunity-for-all\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103076/federal-tools-to-creat-e-places-of-opportunity-for-all_1.pdf)

### **Week 12 (Dec 1) Peer Review of Final Paper Outlines and Policy Group Meetings**

### **Week 13 (Dec 8) Course Wrap up**

