

**POST 182: Local Democracy in Comparative Perspective**  
Spring 2018

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Wednesdays: 2:45-5:30pm

Office Hours: T TH 4-5:30 (or by appointment)

Although the media focuses on national politics, local government, policy, and electoral politics are critically important around the world. Local governments in the U.S., for example, manage the police, determine housing policies, and provide basic public services from garbage collection to water and sanitation. Local governments in developing countries like India also have substantial powers including the implementation of large programs for the poor, deciding where a road will be built, and helping citizens access a distant and often unresponsive state. In this class, we will examine local democracies, or elected local governments, in a diverse array of contexts in developed and developing democracies. We will focus on answering four fundamental questions with applications to the U.S., India, Brazil, and other settings. First, what do local governments do and how does this vary across different local political systems and across developed and developing countries? Second, “who governs” at the local level—that is, what types of people run for and hold office, and what types of individuals, social groups, or institutions influence local politics? Third, when is local democracy most responsive to poor and marginalized groups? Specifically, in what types of social and political contexts does local democracy work best for the poor? Finally, we will explore the implications of the above discussions for local policy and service delivery in developed and developing countries with attention to public goods provision, antipoverty policies, policing, and other issues.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

**(1) Attendance and Participation (15%)**

You are expected to attend all classes and to read the required readings in advance of each class session. To do well in this course, you must attend and actively participate in class both during regular class meetings and during Q & A sessions when we have guest lectures and roundtable discussions. You must also fully participate in all class activities such as group presentations and occasional online activities. You will not be penalized for 1 absence but will lose points after that.

**(2) In-class Take-Home Midterm Exam (25%)**

The Midterm will include a combination of identification questions and an essay question (broken into several component parts). It will include material presented both in required readings and class lectures/discussion. You will have 10 days to complete the exam.

### **(3) Case Study Presentations (15%)**

Students will complete a presentation that applies a class session theme to a research question that explains a real-world case. You will pick an argument or conceptual framework from the course and explore whether that argument explains your specific case through a careful application of the argument to evidence from your case. You are welcome to either explore one local government case or system in more depth or to explore a comparison between two cases that vary on some important dimension. The presentation should last about 10 minutes. Presentations will take place from weeks 5 to 12 in the second half of class. You will be required to meet the professor to discuss your presentation (after conducting preliminary research) no less than one week before the date of your presentation.

### **(4) Local Democracy Field Assignment—Partner Project (10%)**

For this assignment, I ask you to pick an institution of local government that you will spend some time getting to know through interviews and some visits. The Center for Community Engagement will compile a list of organizations, and it may be possible to make arrangements with others organizations/offices/candidates. It is also acceptable to attend several local government events such as town hall meetings, volunteer with a local campaign, or to spend time shadowing local officials. We will have an in-class conference to present your observations to the class in week 13. I will provide a handout on this project and information on some options for organizations in LA and Pomona in week 2. Plan on spending at 8+ hours with your chosen organization/campaign over the course of the semester.

### **(5) Final Paper (35%)**

You will write a final paper (10-12 pages) that examines a research question on local government that interests you. The paper will address a research question on local government and can extend the topic of your presentation in more depth if you wish.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

To make sure that we have a hospitable learning environment, I ask students to follow three simple rules:

- 1) Turn your cell phones off and close your laptops when class begins (unless you are in paired discussion looking over readings).
- 2) Respect your classmates. Debate is encouraged but disagree respectfully by engaging in ideas and evidence rather than personal attacks.
- 3) Coffee/beverages are fine but food is not permitted in class since it can distract your classmates.

## A Note on Academic Integrity

As goes without saying, it will not be possible to pass this course if I find any evidence of plagiarism/cheating of any kind for any assignment. At minimum, this will result in a zero for that assignment and will be referred to the Dean without exceptions. If you do the work, and think a lot about the material, you'll be fine.

## Some Useful Links to Follow

UN Habitat: <https://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/>  
Centre for the Future State: <http://www2.ids.ac.uk/futurestate/>  
Eldis, "Decentralization and Local Governance": <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance/decentralisation-and-local-government#.VA3w-EiLGIQ>  
Deliberative Democracy: <http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/>  
The Ash Center (Harvard): <http://www.ash.harvard.edu/>  
Ashoka, profiles of Fellows: <https://www.ashoka.org/fellows>  
LA Forwards and Backwards: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/la-forwards-backwards/id1281847259?mt=2>  
Not Safe for Government: <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/govtech-social>

## Required Books

Available at the bookstore and on course reserve:

Dahl, Robert. 1963. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in the American City*. Yale University Press.

Oliver, J. Eric, Shang E. Ha, and Zachary Callen. 2012. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy*. Princeton University Press.

Tsai, Lily L. 2007. *Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary groups and public goods provision in rural China*. Cambridge University Press.

**\* NOTE: READINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.** Changes will be announced in advance in class, and a revised syllabus will be posted on Sakai in an announcement. It is your responsibility to make sure you refer to the current version of the syllabus.

## SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### **PART 1: THE POWER AND INSTITUTIONS OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

#### **Week 1: Introduction: Why Does Local Democracy Matter? (1/17)**

*Question: Why is local democracy and participation in local government valuable in principle, and why is it difficult to ensure this goal is achieved in unequal societies?*

De Tocqueville, Alex. *Democracy in America* (on administrative decentralization) Chapter 5.

Dahl, *Who Governs*, Chapter 1 (pp 1-10).

#### **Week 2: Decentralization (1/24)**

*Question: What is political decentralization (e.g., local democracy) and why does local politics look different where decentralization is less extensive?*

*Part 1: What is Local Democracy?*

Grindle, Merilee Serrill. 2017. *Going Local: Decentralization, democratization, and the promise of good governance*. Princeton University Press. Introduction.

Eaton, Kent, Ed Connerly, and Paul Smoke (Eds). 2010. *Making Decentralization Work*. Chapter 1 ("Democracy, Development, and Security as Objectives of Decentralization", pp. 1-18).

*Part 2: Decentralization on the Ground*

Chauchard, Simon. 2017. *Why Representation Matters*. Cambridge Press, Chapter 3.

Heller, Patrick. 2001. "Moving the State: The politics of democratic decentralization in Kerala, South Africa, and Porto Alegre." *Politics & Society*, 29 (1) 131-163.

#### **Week 3: Who Has the Power? Elected and Unelected Authority (1/31)**

*Question: How do local government institutions vary in the extent to which local leaders have power over governance outcomes as compared to unelected bureaucrats?*

*Part 1: How Much Power Does the Mayor Have? Variation in the U.S.*

Oliver, J. Eric, Shang E. Ha, and Zachary Callen. 2012. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.

Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin. 2017. *Governing States & Localities, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. CQ Press, Chapter 11: 349-64.

*Part 2: The Local Bureaucracy and Administrative Decentralization*

*Skim:* Lipsky, M. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York. Chapter 1.

Kubo, Hideyuki. 2010. "Understanding Discretionary Decision Making of Frontline Bureaucrats in State Forestland Management: A case from java, Indonesia." *Society and Natural Resources*, 23 (3) 240-253.

*Recommended:* Wade, Robert. 1982. "The System of Administrative and Political Corruption: Canal irrigation in South India." *The Journal of Development Studies*, 18 (3) 287-328.

*Recommended:*

Grindle MS. 2012. *Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Selected Chapter.

Dasgupta, Aditya, and Devesh Kapur. 2017. "The Political Economy of Bureaucratic Effectiveness: Evidence from Local Rural Development Officials in India." Working Paper.

**Session 4: Informal Institutions: Social Context, Inequality, and Local Democracy (2/7)**

*Question: How do local social contexts and social relations shape local democratic representation and responsiveness (for better and worse)?*

*Part 1: Social Norms, Embeddedness, and Local Democracy*

Tsai, Lily L. 2007. *Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary groups and public goods provision in rural China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, 5.

Schneider, Mark. 2015. "[Do Local Leaders Prioritize the Poor?](#)" *Hindu Business Line*, (14 December 2015).

*Part 2: Ethnic Competition: Divisions, Diversity, and Social Inequality*

Mathew, George, and Ramesh C. Nayak. 1996. "Panchayats at Work: What it means for the oppressed." *Economic and Political Weekly*: 1765-1771.

Putnam, Robert. 2007. "*E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century*" (2006 Johann Skytte Prize Lecture) Available in *Scandinavian Political Studies*.

*Recommended:* Srinivas, Mysore Narasimhachar. 1959. "The Dominant Caste in Rampura." *American Anthropologist*, 61 (1): 1-16.

## PART 2: WHO GOVERNS? POWER, INFLUENCE, AND ELECTIONS

### **Week 5: Turnout in Local Elections: Who Votes? (2/14)**

*Question: What explains variation in local voter turnout?*

*Part 1: Voters Turnout in the U.S.*

Hajnal, Zoltan, and Jessica Trounstine. 2005. "Where Turnout Matters: The consequences of uneven turnout in city politics." *Journal of Politics*, 67 (2): 515-535.

Oliver, J. Eric, Shang E. Ha, and Zachary Callen. 2012. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

*Strongly Recommended:* Hajnal, Zoltan L., and Paul G. Lewis. 2003. "Municipal Institutions and Voter Turnout in Local Elections." *Urban Affairs Review*, 38 (5) 645-668.

*Part 2: Voter Turnout in Local Elections—Developing Countries*

Remmer, Karen L. 2010. "Political Scale and Electoral Turnout: Evidence from the less industrialized world." *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (3) 275-303.

### **Session 6: Who Governs I? Power, Influence, and Change (2/21)**

*Question: How has the nature and distribution of power (and influence) in local elections changed? What are the important centers of power in Los Angeles and how has this evolved over time?*

*Part 1: The Evolution of Local Power in the U.S.*

Dahl, Robert. 2005. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. Yale University Press. Chapters 1-5 (11-63).

*Watch at Home: "Street Fight" (Cory Booker's First Mayoral Campaign)*

*Part 2: Power and Influence in Los Angeles*

A Conversation with David Levitus, Founder of LA Forward, Host of the Podcast, *LA Forwards and Backwards*, and campaign organizer/manager.

**\*\*Post a question/comment on sakai forum for our guest speaker\*\***

## **Session 7: Who Governs II? Influence and Representation (2/28)**

*Question: What explains whether minorities and women run for office and what are consequences of representation of these groups for policy?*

### *Part 1: Political Finance in Local Elections*

Reckhow, Sarah, et al. 2017. "Outsiders with Deep Pockets": The nationalization of local school board elections." *Urban Affairs Review*, 53 (5) 783-811.

2013. "Koch Group Has Ambitions in Small Races." *New York Times*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/04/us/politics/koch-group-has-ambitions-in-small-races.html>

### *Part 2: Who Runs for Office? The Role of Gender and Race*

Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard L. Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why women don't run for office*. Cambridge University Press. Selection.

Holman, Mirya R. 2014. *Women in Politics in the American City*. Temple University Press. Introduction.

Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2006. *Changing White Attitudes Toward Black Political Leadership*. Cambridge University Press. Selection.

## **PART 3: LOCAL DEMOCRACY, REPRESENTATION, AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

## **Session 8: Direct Democracy (3/7)**

*Question: Are referendums and other forms of direct democracy likely to encourage representation of the preferences of the electorate at large or those of elites?*

### *Part 1: Does Direct Democracy Lead to Policies That Represent Voters' Preferences?*

Lupia, Arthur, and John G. Matsusaka. 2004. "Direct Democracy: New approaches to old questions." *Annual Review Political Science* 7: 463-482.

Gerber, Elisabeth R., et al. 2001. *Stealing the Initiative: How state government responds to direct democracy*. Prentice Hall. Selection.

### *Part 2: Deliberative Democracy*

Olken, Benjamin A. 2010. "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia." *American Political Science Review*, 104 (2) 243-267.

Parthasarathy, Ramya, Vijayendra Rao, and Nethra Palaniswamy. 2017. "Deliberative Inequality." Typescript.

NO CLASS 3/14. Spring Break

**Session 9: Civic Engagement and Service Delivery (3/21)**

*Question: How does civil society engage local governments and how does this relate to the quality of “local” democracy?*

Houtzager, Peter. and Arnab Acharya. 2010. “Associations, Active Citizenship, and the Quality of Democracy in Brazil and Mexico.” *Theory and Society*, 40(1) 1-36. [Selected Pages].

Review: Heller, Patrick. 2001. "Moving the State: The politics of democratic decentralization in Kerala, South Africa, and Porto Alegre." *Politics & Society*, 29 (1) 131-163.

*Part 2: Civic Engagement in Action*

Jha, Saumitra, Vijayendra Rao, and Michael Woolcock. 2007. "Governance in the Gullies: Democratic responsiveness and leadership in Delhi’s slums." *World development* 35.2 (2007): 230-246.

Björkman, Martina, and Jakob Svensson. 2009. "Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment on Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124 (2) 735-769.

**Session 10: Variation in Public Goods Provision (3/28)**

*What local factors explains variation in the provision of local public goods? How have reforms helped?*

*Part 1: Explaining Variation*

Putnam, Robert. 1993. “*Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. “Introduction” (pp. 3-7) and “Explaining Institutional Performance” (pp. 83-116).

Auerbach, Adam Michael. 2016. "Clients and Communities." *World Politics*, 68(1) 111-148.

*Recommended:* Ziblatt, D. 2008. “Why Some Cities Provide More Public Goods than Others: A Subnational Comparison of the Provision of Public Goods in German Cities in 1912.” *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)*, 43(3), 273-289.

*Part 2: Innovations in Local Governance*

Tendler, Judith and Sara Freedheim. 1994. “Trust in a Rent-Seeking World: Health and Government Transformed in Northeast Brazil.” *World Development*, 22 (12), 1771-1791.

Van Cott, Donna Lee. 2008. *Radical Democracy in the Andes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Selected chapter.

*Recommended:* Grindle, Merilee Serrill. 2017. *Going Local: Decentralization, democratization, and the promise of good governance*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 7.

### **Session 11: Policing and Race Relations in America (4/4)**

*What role do local governments play in policing and police-community relations? How do local factors shape whether cities protect immigrants through sanctuary city laws?*

*Part 1: Policing in Comparative Perspective*

Rothstein, R. 2014. "The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of its Troubles." *Economic Policy Institute* (pp. 1-2, "Executive Summary").

Venkatesh, S. 2012. "How the Federal Government is Killing Community Policing." *New Republic*.

Fung, A. 2003. "Deliberative Democracy, Chicago Style: Grassroots Governance in Policing and Public Education" in *Deepening Democracy*. Verso.

Gupte, et al. (2014). "Tackling Urban Violence in Mumbai and Cape Town through Citizen Engagement and Community Action." IDS Policy Briefing 71.

*Part 2: Sanctuary Cities Laws in Comparative Perspective*

*Guest Lecture: Prof. Loren Collingwood (UC Riverside)*

*Recommended:* Hopkins, Daniel 2010. "Politicized Places: Explaining Where and When Immigrants Provoke Local Opposition" *American Political Science Review*, 104 (1) 40-60.

### **Session 12: Housing and Urban Development (4/11)**

*Question: How do local political dynamics shape the survival and destruction of slum settlements (and access to clean water)?*

*Part 1: Housing and Urban Development in Indian Slums*

UN Habitat. 2003. *Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*.

Manikutty, S. 1998. "Community Participation: Lessons from experiences in five water and sanitation projects in India." *Development Policy Review* 16 (4) 373-404.

*Watch at Home: Tomorrow We Disappear*

*Part 2: Water and Environmental Justice*

*Guest Speaker: Justin Schott, Executive Direct, EcoWorks (Detroit)  
(Learn more here: <http://www.ecoworksdetroit.org/justin-schott>)*

Mullin, M, and Hughes, S. 2016. "[Local Water Politics.](#)" In *The Oxford Handbook of Water Politics and Policy*, edited by K Conca and E Weinthal.

*NOTE: The guest lecture will be scheduled at an alternative time on the Friday prior to the scheduled class session)*

**Session 13: Decentralization and Anti-Poverty Policies (4/18)**

*Question: Does decentralization make it more likely that poor citizens will receive entitlement benefits?*

Alatas, Vivi, et al. 2012. "Targeting the Poor: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia." *The American Economic Review*, 102 (4) 1206-1240.

Besley, Timothy, Rohini Pande, and Vijayendra Rao. 2005. "Participatory Democracy in Action: Survey evidence from South India." *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 3 (2-3) 648-657.

Szwarcberg, Mariela. 2015. *Mobilizing Poor Voters: Machine politics, clientelism, and social networks in Argentina*. Cambridge University Press.

**Session 14: Class Presentations and Course Conclusion (4/15)**

*Students will present their field component projects.*

**Goals/Objectives of the Course (intended outcomes):**

1. Students will come to understand major debates in local politics in developing and developed countries.
2. Students will learn about the local political systems of different countries across the globe and their consequences for governance generally and the poor specifically.
3. Students will engage in effective written expression.
4. Students will learn to analyze complex political phenomena through careful engagement with theory and evidence.
5. Students will gain direct exposure to local politics in the LA-area through guest speakers and class projects.

## Reading Skills:

As you manage the reading for this and other courses, you are likely to find, if you have not already, that there is no correlation between effort and outcome. It is entirely possible to spend several hours reading something without “getting it.” And it is equally possible to spend less than a half-hour reading something else and getting to the heart of the argument. You will have to devise for yourselves ways to read efficiently. These are some devices that may help:

1. Figure out what the heart of an argument is before you read deeply: skim, read the abstracts, the jacket blurbs, often short reviews published elsewhere. When you know where the center of gravity is, you read more efficiently.
2. Read actively: do not simply soak up the reading for what the author wants to tell you, but approach it with questions, and try to answer them for yourself as you make your way through.
3. Use other peoples’ skills: you do not have to do all the work yourself. It is not “cheating” if you talk through the argument with someone else before or after you delve in, or look at reviews for explication, or form reading groups where you can discuss the argument with each other.
4. Write in order to read. The response papers for this class and the (non-graded) worksheet attached should help.
5. Use diagrams if necessary: often, the structure of an argument can be most clearly expressed if you “draw” it, using arrows and lines, than by trying to understand it in words.
6. Organize your notes in a way that makes retention and information retrieval possible: you could use index cards, annotated bibliographies, database programs like Filemaker Pro etc. These rules may be obvious to some and not to others. Basically, do whatever works for you. But be self-conscious about the reading process as a skill that has to be learned and not necessarily as an ability that either comes naturally or does not.

## Reading Worksheet

*For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, you should fill out the following (non-graded) worksheet. Many of these points can be addressed in a sentence or two (e.g. Questions 1 and 2; in some cases, answers will not need even to be full sentences (e.g., Question); and in some cases, the answers may overlap. These worksheets should be retained: they will be useful for future reference.*

1. State the central question that the reading addresses.
2. State the central argument(s) defended in the paper in response to this question.
3. What type of reasoning or evidence is used to support these arguments? If it is an analytical paper, what is the logic that undergirds the argument? If an empirical paper, what type of data is employed? Are there other data sources that you think might be more appropriate?
4. Do you find the claims of the reading convincing? What do you see as the main gaps that need to be filled?
5. Why (if at all) is the reading interesting?
6. Do you agree with the main claims? What are your hesitations? (This may simply involve restatement of previous points.)
7. Identify one or two implicit premises or background assumptions in the paper that you think are especially controversial or objectionable.
8. Considering your answers to the previous questions, write an abstract for the article of no more than 100 words. (Feel free to repeat formulations given in response to earlier questions.)
9. When you have done this for individual readings, take some time to think about the various readings you have been assigned in relation to each other. See if you can write or imagine a summary table for all the readings taken together which compares and contrasts them.