

Local Democracy
Summer 2026, Session B
MW 5:30PM to 8:40PM
25-30 Minute break at the half-way point

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Office Hours: M, W 4-5PM or by Zoom 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, provide basic public services such as garbage collection and water and sanitation; and implement national policies from welfare programs to climate change. 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. Unlike a course that examines one city in-depth, this course will identify patterns in local representation and policy across contexts with different institutions, demographics, and levels of development (e.g., US vs India).

This six-week course is also unique in that it has a focus on New York City itself. We will have opportunities to have experiences in NYC related to local democracy. All students will attend a city council or neighborhood council meeting and take notes on what you see and hear. We will meet organizers of local campaigns and/or local activists participating in local issues specific to NYC. And we will have a field assignment where you explore an issue in NYC government. We will explore the following questions:

- (1) What do local governments do and how does this vary across contexts?
- (2) “Who governs” at the local level—that is, what types of people run for and hold office, and what types of individuals, social groups, institutions, or interest groups influence local government decisions?
- (3) 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?
- (4) What explains variation in policy outcomes (housing, policing, public services, climate efforts) across towns in the US and across contexts?

Goals/Objectives of the Course (intended outcomes):

1. Students will come to understand major debates in local politics.
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 participate in experiences in NYC and civic engagement activities.

This course meets the innovative and experiential criteria of the summer program by employing civic skill related activities including teaching students to teach their own civic education session among their peers or family, learning to write field notes from NYC experiences, and connecting what we learn in class with experiences they have in NYC. It also meets major requirements in political science as an elective political science course, and teaches comparative approaches to local democracy – meeting the Modes of Thinking criteria.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

Attendance and Participation in Class (10%) You are expected to attend all classes and to read the required readings in advance of each class session. This is a short course and it will be run as a seminar, which means that attendance is mandatory. You will not be penalized for 1 absence after the first week of class (while students may be choosing classes) but will lose 4 percentage points for each additional unexcused absence off the participation grade unless the professor agrees to alternative arrangements for extenuating circumstances.

Students are required to complete the readings and watch assigned movies before class, and to come to class ready to discuss the material of the day. After reading an article, you should be able to answer the following questions: What is the main argument? Does it make sense logically? What is the evidence for it? What are the strengths and the weaknesses?

Discussions on CourseWorks (5%) You are required to post a question, insight, or connection to NYC politics before each session based on the readings. (Note: Normally this would be weekly, but since each session in the summer is equivalent to a week we will do it 2x a week). This need not be longer than a paragraph, but should show you thought about course material. I will also sometimes ask you to watch a video or a debate and to comment on that with your reactions.

Follow the News on Local Government in NYC (8%) You will be asked to follow the news on local government in NYC throughout the term. Each student will pick a local government position or agency or issue to follow throughout the term and post a paragraph news summary each week starting in week 2. Posts will be due before class on Tuesdays. Also you will be asked to follow the social media accounts of the position or agency you choose. Positions and agencies may include any of following:

- Political positions: Mayor; city comptroller; council representative (any rep in NYC), speaker of the city council; NYC public advocate; Manhattan DA; Governor (specifically news on state government negotiations with NYC on funding, tax, and policy); governor-city relations

- (specifically role of state government in NYC funding and policy).
- Agencies: Police chief (NYPD); housing commissioner (department of housing); schools chancellor (department of education); civilian complaint review board; department of social services.
- Issue areas: Homelessness; housing; infrastructure; climate policies; crime (might require some looking to find news each week).

NYC Politics Field Assignment (12%). This course requires activities that expose students to local civic life in NYC. For the field assignment I will ask you to attend at least three events including any of the following: city council or neighborhood council meetings, planning meetings (e.g., housing), PTA meetings, and/or civil society groups involved in local issues. If possible, attend the same type of meeting all three times, but you are welcome to reach these three meetings in any combination you like. We will attend a meeting as a class, schedule pending, to give you some experience navigating the logistics.

*Note that meeting attendance need not be partisan and can pertain to any issue relevant to local government, local representation, and issues relevant to NYC or the surrounding area. In each meeting you attend, aim to speak with one attendee and one staff member/organizer/representative at the meeting to learn why they participate and how they see local government. You will present on your experience in our last class.

For the city council meeting schedule see this [link](#).

For a schedule of community board meetings, see this [link](#).

Fieldnotes and interviews from NYC Government Experiences (5%) You will be asked to take field notes for each of the required meetings in the field assignment – notes on your observations about the people in attendance, what they say, what issues they bring up, how the meeting is run, etc. You will also be asked to interview 2 people at your events. One of the interviewees should be in government or a civic group. The second can be an attendee or regular resident.

Partner YouTube Video/Podcast on a Local Government Position or government agency (5%). For this assignment, I ask you to develop an informational video on a position of local government or government agency (excluding the mayor) in NYC. We will watch your videos on the last day of class.

Midterm (25%) You will ask to write a take-home midterm exam based on course content prior to the policy section of the course. You will have one week to complete it.

Take-Home Final (30%). Students will be required to write a take-home final exam consisting of a short answer section and an essay section. The essay will be in the form of a policy memo.

Extra Credit (1%). If you want to engage even more, there will be a 1% extra credit bonus for reaching 100 points on civic bootcamp (end of this syllabus) beyond the basic requirements of

this course. You will need to write 1-2 sentences on each activity you complete and how you felt about it/what you learned.

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 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. We will have a 30 minute break at the half-way point of the class where you can take time to eat.
- 4) Laptops should be used only for class purposes and I will ask you to close your laptops during activities and discussions.

AI and Academic Ethics

AI Use, Plagiarism and Other Violations of Code of Conduct: All assignments in this course fall under Columbia University's College's code of conduct. Generative AI tools are not permitted in this course for any written assignments. Students must rely on their own originality, creativity and critical thinking skills to complete assignments, complete take-home exams, write papers, and engage with course material. Any violation (including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, relying on AI, and plagiarism) will result in the student being held accountable to the full extent of university guidelines. This includes self-plagiarism – meaning, cases where students re-use material they wrote themselves for other courses.

Barnard Honor Code

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources.

We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

The Barnard Honor Code includes relevant language for the proper use of electronic class material. “We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print,

electronic, or other academic resources.. ” To be clear, this means that **recorded class content** — from lectures, labs, seminars, office hours and discussion groups — is the intellectual property of your professor and your fellow students, and should not be distributed or shared outside of class.

Barnard Wellness Statement

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several areas of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them.

Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

Primary Care at Barnard: <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>
Counseling: <https://barnard.edu/about-counseling> Wellness:
<http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>

Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS)

If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please feel free to contact me and/or the Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS). Any student with approved academic accommodations is encouraged to contact me during office hours or via email. If you have questions regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester, please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634, cards@barnard.edu, or learn more at barnard.edu/disability-services. CARDS is located in Diana 307.

Academic Integrity

By joining this class, students agree to adhere to Columbia’s Standards of Intellectual Integrity, reproduced below: “The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free

discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Barnard College.

READINGS

All required readings will be posted on Courseworks or via library e-reserves. Recommended articles are optional and likely to be references in lecture in case you want to read in more depth. This course requires you to carefully read all required readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. Generally, 3 articles or book chapters are assigned each session (since each class is equivalent to one week) with occasional media pieces to illustrate course concepts. Make sure you not only understand the basic argument of each reading, but also give yourself time to think critically about them. You should complete the reading worksheet provided at the end of this syllabus on at least one reading per week to get practice reading actively and critically.

Required Books

Available at the bookstore and as an ebook at the library:

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

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PART 1: THE POWER AND INSTITUTIONS OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY

7/6: What is Local Democracy and What Does Local Government Do?

PART 1: Class Introductions and Syllabus

PART 2: Who Does What in NYC Government and How Can You Engage Them?

Homework: Pick a block in NYC. Observe what you see for 30 minutes. What are the conversations about? What types of people do you see and what are they doing? What kinds of emotion are they showing? What kinds of relationships do you see? What kinds of concerns are being expressed? What kinds of tasks are they doing? Are people mostly alone or with groups of people?

7/8: How Much Power Does the Mayor Have? NYC in Comparative Perspective

Learning Goals: Understand local authority in the United States and How it Varies Across States and Countries.

In-Class Activity: Practice participant observation and interviewing.

Part 1: Decentralization and Local Authority: How Does Decentralization (Local Power) and Institution (How power is shared) Vary Across Contexts?

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

Berg, Bruce F. 2018. "The Charter, the Mayor, and the Other Guys." In *New York City Politics: Governing Gotham* (2nd ed.), 175–209. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

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

Part 2: Introduction to Interviews and participant observation

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, Linda Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pages 169-182.

Leech, Beth. 2002. "Asking Questions: Techniques for Semi-Structured Interviews." *Political Science and Politics* 35 (4) 665-68.

7/13: Voter Turnout

Learning Goals: Understand patterns of voter turnout in local elections and why turnout varies across cities. Evaluate evidence on reforms and GOTV strategies designed to increase participation, particularly among younger and lower-income voters.

In-Class Activity: Develop an evidence-based strategy to increase voter turnout in local elections using insights from the assigned readings.

Part 1: Local Voter Turnout: The Challenge

Hajnal, Zoltan L., Vladimir Kogan, G. Augustin Markarian. 2022. "Who Votes: City Election Timing and Voter Composition." *American Political Science Review* 116 (1): 374-383.

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

Part 2: Getting Out the Vote: What Works? Create a local election GOTV campaign and policy proposal.

New York Times. 2025. ["After Decades of Low Turnout for Mayor's Races, Voting Surges in New York."](#)

Holbein, John B., and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2020. *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: "The Puzzle of Low Youth Turnout."

Donald P. Green, Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson. 2003. "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments." *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 1083–1096.

7/15: Civic Engagement Beyond the Voting Booth

Learning Goals: Understand how bottom-up pressure from civil society shapes government performance and what gaps in citizen participation in urban politics.

Assignment: Attend your first government meeting or organization meeting before this class. We'll discuss your experiences in the second half of class.

Part 1: Citizen Engagement and Who Participates?

Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. 2019. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics* 17 (1): 28–46.

Nuamah, Sally A., and Thomas Ogorzalek. 2021. "Close to Home: Place-based mobilization in racialized contexts." *American Political Science Review* 115 (3) 757-774. [Read the introduction and conclusion].

Einstein, Katherine Levine, David Glick, Luisa Godinez Puig, and Maxwell Palmer. 2023. "Still Muted: The limited participatory democracy of Zoom public meetings." *Urban Affairs Review* 59 (4) 1279-1291.

Hersh, Eitan. 2017. ["The Problem With Participatory Democracy Is the Participants."](#) The New York Times. June 29.

Part 2: Civic Engagement in NYC and Field Project Check-In

Possible group visit to the Community Board 9 meeting (confirming the meeting happens as it is tentative). Otherwise we'll talk about NYC participation in the second half and explore cases of citizen influence.

7/20: Local News and Civic Education

Learning Goal: Understand the decline of local news in the United States and its consequences for democratic accountability. Evaluate how citizens can stay informed about local government and hold elected officials accountable.

Assignment for Today: Watch a debate for mayor or another NYC elected office (e.g., comptroller, public advocate, borough president, or City Council) from any election in the past 15 years. As you watch, consider: What issues receive the most attention? What information do voters learn about the candidates? What questions should have been asked but were not? In your response for the day, discuss what you saw and what it says about accountability.

Part 1: Local News and Its Decline

Watch in Class: The Fall of Newspapers, Rise of Misinformation

Brookings. "[Local Journalism in Crisis. Why America Must Revive Its Local Newsrooms.](#)" [Read the full report available in the course drop box folder].

In-Class Activity: Working in small groups, develop a strategy for staying informed about one local issue (e.g., housing, policing, education, transportation, or climate). Identify the news outlets, government agencies, elected officials, public meetings, and community organizations you would follow.

Part 2: Electoral Accountability

Arnold, R. Douglas, and Nicholas Carnes. 2012. "Holding Mayors Accountable: New York's executives from Koch to Bloomberg." *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (4) 949-963.

Burnett, Craig M., and Vladimir Kogan. 2017. "The Politics of Potholes: Service quality and retrospective voting in local elections." *The Journal of Politics* 79 (1) 302-314.

Watch a local election debate (See above)

7/22: Civic Education and Race and Descriptive Representation

Learning Goal: Evaluate evidence on the effectiveness of civic education in increasing political participation. Understand how descriptive representation influences political participation, trust in government, and policy outcomes.

Part 1: Civic Education

Levine, Peter, and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg. 2017. "The Republic is (Still) at Risk—and Civics is Part of the Solution." Medford, MA: Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University.

Holbein, John B., and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2020. "Rethinking Civic Education." In *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action*, 118–154. New York: Cambridge University Press.

In-Class Activity: Design a civic education lesson in small groups.

Part 2: Descriptive Representation

Midterm will be handed out. You have one week to complete it

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'." *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 628-657.

Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2006. *Changing White Attitudes Toward Black Political Leadership*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction (1-12).

The New York Times. 2025. ["New York Elects Its First Muslim Mayor."](#) November 5, 2025.

7/27: Housing I: Segregation, Gentrification, and Homelessness

Learning Goals: Understand how local land-use decisions shape housing supply and affordability, and learn how tenants can use local government and collective action to protect their rights. Midterm due at the start of class.

Part 1: Racial Bias in Housing: Redlining

Watch an Excerpt in Class: Anderson, Kelly, dir. *My Brooklyn*, 2012. Documentary.

Trounstein, Jessica. 2020. "The Geography of Inequality: How Land Use Regulation Produces Segregation." *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 443–455.

Part 2: Gentrification and Class

Freeman, Lance. 2006. *There Goes the 'Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up*. Chapter 2.

Shinn, Marybeth, and Jill Khadduri. *In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What to Do About It*. John Wiley & Sons, 2020. Chapter 2: "What Causes Homelessness?"

7/29: Housing II: Zoning, Tenant Rights, and Civic Engagement

Part 1: Local Battles Over New Housing: Zoning Wars

Demas, Jerusalem. 2022. "Community Input is Bad, Actually." *The Atlantic*.

Brouwer, N. R., and Jessica Trounstein. 2024. "NIMBYs, YIMBYs, and the Politics of Land Use in American cities." *Annual Review of Political Science* 27.

Part 2: Tenant Rights and Civic Engagement

In-Class Activity: Develop an action plan to address a challenge facing tenant in NYC.

Moskowitz, Peter. 2017. *How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood*. Chapter 12, "Fight Back." New York: Nation Books.

[NY State Attorney. Residential Tenants Rights Guide](#)

[Met Council on Housing: Getting Repairs.](#)

8/3: Citizen Action and Police Accountability

Learning Goal: Understand different policing strategies and evaluate how citizens and local institutions influence policing and police accountability.

Part 1: Policing Strategies in Comparative Perspective

Moskos, Peter. 2008. *Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4 ("On the Job") 71–98.

[Vera Institute of Justice](#). 2026. *New York City Needs a Stronger Vision for Effective, Accountable Policing*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice

Watch in Class: *The Wire*, Season 1, Episode 2.

Part 2: Civic Engagement and Police Reform

In-Class Activity: Reforming Policing in Your Neighborhood

Olzak, Susan. "Does Protest Against Police Violence Matter? Evidence from US Cities, 1990 through 2019." *American Sociological Review* 86 (6) 1066-1099.

Knafo, Saki. 2021. "Bridging the Divide Between the Police and the Policed." *The New Yorker*, April 28. *The New Yorker*.

8/5: Social Infrastructure and Citizen Engagement

Learning Goals: Understand how residents work with city agencies and elected officials to improve neighborhood services and quality of life.

Final exam handed out at the start of class.

Part 1: Public Services and Citizen Engagement

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House. Chapter 2: "The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2018. *Palaces for the People*. Chapter 2: "Why People Need Places." New York: Crown.

Kuntzman, Gersh. 2020. "[EXCLUSIVE: DOT Will Take the Lead on Future of 34th Avenue as a 'Permanent' Open Street](#)." *Streetsblog NYC*, October 22. Streetsblog NYC.

Part 2: Field Project Check-In and Activity.

In-Class Activity: Improve Your Neighborhood Exercise

Saving the second half of class for field project and YouTube Video check-ins.

8/10: Environmental Justice and Citizen Engagement + YouTube Video Workshop

Part 1: Environmental Justice

Guest Speaker: Justin Schott, Director of the Energy Equity Project, University of Michigan.

Reading TBA.

Part 2: Environmental Justice and Local Democracy

We will present the youtube videos and have a discussion about civic education through technology.

8/12: Class Workshop and Conclusion

Learning Goal: Discuss field project experiences and have a broad conversation about the course and local democracy broadly.

Part 1: Field Projects Conference

Upload your slides to Courseworks before class. Sign up to be a discussant for one presentation by another student.

Part 2: Course Conclusion Discussion

Katz, Bruce, and Jennifer Bradley. 2013. *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. Introduction.

Fallows, James. 2018. "The Reinvention of America." *The Atlantic*, April 25.

Local Politics Bootcamp

Goal: Earn 120 points across at least 8 activities (roughly one in-person action every two weeks).
At least one 'Teach' action is strongly encouraged.

Learn and Engage

- 5 — Sign up for your Community Board newsletter (nyc.gov/site/cau/community-boards)
- 5 — Sign up for your City Council member's newsletter
- 5 — Follow your City Council Member and State Assembly Member on social media
- 5 — Subscribe to a local news outlet
- 5 — Find a bill or resolution your Council Member is sponsoring
- 5 — Subscribe to a local news outlet (Gothamist, The City, NY Daily News, etc.).
- 5 — Subscribe to a local news podcast ([FAQ NYC](#), [Off Topic On Politics](#), etc.).
- 10 — Attend a lecture, panel, or talk on NYC government or policy.
- 10 — Live stream events with the mayor or city council on YouTube or attend a local government meeting by zoom.
- 15 — Attend a Community Board, City Council, School Board (CEC), or zoning meeting (in person or online)
- 15 — Attend a meeting of a civic or advocacy group (ask one question or make one comment)
- 15 — Meet (office hours / Zoom) with a local representative or civic org staffer
- 15 — Introduce yourself to guest speakers in NYC Civics sessions and learn how to get involved.
- 20 — Attend a city council meeting or neighborhood board meeting.
- 20 — Meet (office hours/Zoom) with a local representative or civic org staffer
- 20 — Attend a lecture in-person with a government official on campus
- 20 — Attend a lecture in-person on campus or elsewhere on local government or local policy
- 20 — Volunteer for a local government official or civic group
- 20 — Participate in civic actions related to a local issue
- 30 — Complete all Civic Sessions at Old Stone House (for participants in Park Slope)

Build Community

- 5 — Attend a NY Civics Happy Hour after class or something similar.
- 10 — Create a GroupMe / WhatsApp / Discord for 5+ neighbors or friends around a local or state issue.
- 10 — Introduce yourself to someone in the NYC Civics Program and plan to go to a civic event together.
- 10 — Bring 5 friends to a local government, policy, or civic event.
- 20 — Organize a community event (film screening, book club, happy hour) to discuss local issues.
- 20 — Plan a volunteer day relevant to a local civic issue (*park cleanup, mutual aid pantry, housing court watch, food distribution*)
- 20 — Join a community group tied to a civic or social issue
- 20 — Start a short newsletter / flyer / Substack/ FB page for your building, or neighborhood.
- 30 — Run for (or already serve in) a leadership role in any organization

Teach Other People

- 15 — Recruit a friend or family member to participate in this Bootcamp
- 15 — Have a structured conversation about NYC politics or state politics with a family member or friend.
- 15 — Teach family or friends about how one state or country differs from another on a particular issue of institution (example: health care, welfare programs, homelessness)
- 20 — Create a 2 minute video explaining a government position or local issue and post it on social media.
- 25 — Create a 2–3 minute explainer video or a one-page infographic on a local issue and post it on social media.

Build Community

- 10 — Create a GroupMe/WhatsApp/Discord for 5+ classmates/neighbors/friends on a local issue.
- 15 — Bring 5 friends to a local-government or policy event
- 15 — Recruit a friend/classmate to participate in Civic Bootcamp
- 20 — Organize a small campus event (film screening, dorm discussion)
- 20 — Plan a volunteer day (Park/beach cleanup, park beautification/volunteer for a food pantry)
- 20 — Join a student group related to any civic/social issue
- 30 — Start a short newsletter/flyer/Substack for your dorm, building, or student org
- 40 — Run for (or already serve in) a leadership role in any organization
- 30 — Lead a dorm/club event or film screening on a civic issue
- 30 — Teach a short lesson or discussion on local government (excluding the required activity for class)
- 10 — Volunteer for a local cause (food bank, housing advocacy, environmental group)

Influence Politics

- 10 — Register to vote in New York (or update your registration)
- 10 — Sign a petition on a NYC issue you care about (*housing, transit, climate, education, public safety*)
- 10 — Volunteer for a local cause (mutual aid, housing advocacy, environmental justice, court watch)
- 20 — Convince 5+ people to register to vote before the deadline for the general election in November
- 10 — Join a civic or student organization with a NYC focus
- 10 — Share an article or post about NYC government on social media and tag your Council Member
- 30 — Apply to be a community board member, run for school board, join the PTA of your child's school, organize a community event on a NYC civic issue
- 30 — Create and share an online video about NYC local politics.
- 30 — Create an online video about local politics and share it on social media.

Reading Worksheet

For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, you should fill out the following (nongraded) 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.