Professor Regina Freer, Politics
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Office Hours: M 2:30-4; Tu 1:30-3; by appt.

Professor Martha Matsuoka, UEP
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Course Description

While we often locate the study of urban politics within the formal governmental arena, examining the elected officials who operate there, other actors hold a great deal of sway over the allocation of resources and power. This course will examine institutional actors who have had and continue to have an impact on politics in Los Angeles in particular. By exploring the role of government, colleges and universities, museums, various types of non-profit organizations, media outlets, business associations, and unions, we will attempt to develop a broader and more comprehensive understanding of how power is exercised and by whom. How have such institutions impacted geography, demography, and land use? What role have they played in electing and defeating political office holders? How do these institutional actors balance, share, and/or compete for power? How much power do they and should they have?

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to critically recognize and analyze power, and institutional power in particular, and the role it plays in the development of urban places. Students will:

- Gain a critical perspective on Los Angeles as a dynamic city
- Gain insight about cities, urban and environmental issues, and their solutions
- Develop analytic skills to make connections between the environment and community, economic development, neighborhood and regional planning, community health, labor and workforce development organizing and advocacy, and public policy
● Learn new theoretical concepts and then critically examine how they do and do not apply to the communities and institutions we examine
● Analyze how the past informs present day Los Angeles
● Gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for the complexity of Los Angeles

Course Texts:
Our class discussions will rely upon the readings, so please bring assigned articles and texts to class for each day.

*Davis. City of Quartz. [available in the bookstore]

Additional readings for this course:
● Electronic readings available through the electronic course reserves through Moodle
● We may also handout additional readings/references in class or via email or Moodle as they become relevant to the class topics and discussions. We will make announcements of these readings in class.
● Various films and videos in seminar and/or evening screenings

Course Requirements

● Participation (25%): Attendance, film screenings and course-related events; completion of readings before the first class meeting for which they are assigned; informed engagement in class discussions; Once a week, students will bring relevant news articles to class and expect to be called upon randomly to discuss them.
● Essay (15%): Handed out January 31 and Due February 12
● Midterm Exam 20%: March 7, in class
● Final Project Assignment
  ○ Group presentation of case study 20%
  ○ Individual paper (due finals week) 20%

Topics, Readings, and Class Schedule
(Note: Schedule and its content may be modified with advanced notice.)

T 1/22  Course Overview and Introductions
Th 1/24  Power and Institutions 101

Readings:

T 1/29  Landscapes of Power

Readings:


Assignments:
* Find Current Organizational Charts for Los Angeles City Government and Los Angeles County Government (bring copies to class)

Th 1/31  Elite Power

Readings:
* Davis, “Powerlines” in City of Quartz

* Sitton. Chapter 13: “Did the Ruling Class Rule at City Hall in 1920s Los Angeles” in Metropolis in the Making.

Assignments:
* Essay #1 Handed Out

Tu Feb. 5  Growth and Power

Readings:
* Fogleson. Read the following chapters in The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930.
  - “Introduction” and “From Pueblo to Town”
  - “Private Enterprise, Public Authority, and Urban Expansion”
  - “Transportation, Water, and Real Estate”
Th Feb. 7  Growth and Power - cont.

Readings:
*see readings for 2/5

T Feb. 12  Case Study: LA Times
Guest Speaker: Professor Robert Gottlieb, co-author of Thinking Big: The Story of the Los Angeles Times, its Publishers, and their Influence on Southern California. 1977

Readings:

Assignments:
Essay # 1 Due

Th Feb 14  Progress for Who?

Readings:
*Davis “Boosters and Debunkers” in City of Quartz.
*Villa, Chapter 1: “Creative Destruction” in Barrio- Logos.

T Feb 19  Bottom Up Power

Readings:
*Stevens. “A City Divided” in Radical LA. pgs. 3-21
*Gottlieb et al. “Mosaic of Movements” in The Next Los Angeles

Th Feb 21  The Ideal of Home

Readings:
T Feb 26  Place Making Institutions

Readings:
*McWilliams. Chapter 9 “I’m a Stranger Here Myself” in Southern California: An Island on the Land.
*Davis. Chapter 3 “Homegrown Revolution” in City of Quartz.

Th Feb 28  Housing, Baseball, and Creeping Socialism

Readings:
http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/05/local/la-me-adv-chavez-ravine-20120405

T March 5  Case Study:  Downtown and Civic Identity

Readings:
*Davis. “Fortress LA” in City of Quartz

Th March 7  Midterm - in class

March 11-15  SPRING BREAK

T March 19  Case Study: Development in South Park

Readings:
* Leavitt. “Linking Housing to Economic Development with Community Benefits Agreements: The Case of the Figueroa Corridor” in Community Economic Development in Minority Communities. Ong and Loukaitou-Sideris, editors

Th March 21  South Park Case Study, cont.
Readings:
* see readings for 3/19

T March 26 Transportation History

Readings:

Th March 28 Transportation Contemporary Issues

Readings:
* TBD

T April 2 Case Study: Los Angeles County Measure J (2012)
Assignment:
* Student Group Presentation of Case Study

Th April 4 Work and Economy in LA: History

Readings:
* Soja. “It All Comes Together in LA” in Postmodern Geographies.

T April 9 Work and Economy in LA: Contemporary Issues

Guest Speaker: Lola Smallwood Cuevas, Black Worker Center (invited)

Readings:

Th April 11 Case Study: Street Vendors Policy

Assignment:
* Student Group Presentation of Case Study

T April 16 Housing and Economic Development
Readings:

*re-read Leavitt (see 3/19)

Th April 18 Case Study: USC Specific Plan

Assignment:
*Student Group Presentation of Case Study

T April 23 Environmental LA

Readings:

*Culver. “America’s Playground: Recreation and Race” in Los Angeles Companion.

Th April 25 Environment LA: Current Debates

Guest Speaker: Adrian Martinez, Natural Resources Defense Council (invited)

T April 30 Case Study: Southern California International Gateway Project (SCIG)

Assignment:
*Student Group Presentation of Case Study

Th May 2 Wrap up/last day of class

Course Policies

Grading
Students will turn in assignments and papers before class on the due dates indicated. Late assignments: The grade will be lowered by one-third (i.e.: A to A-, C+ to C) for each day late.
Assignments due Friday which are delivered on Monday will incur the equivalent of a 2-day penalty. No extensions will be given except in the case of legitimately documented emergencies.

Classroom Responsibilities
Teachers and students share the responsibility of creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other and the professor. In order to ensure open, honest, thoughtful, and respectful learning, teaching, and class discussions please:

- Use laptops, tablet, or other electronic devices only for work directly related to what we are doing in class. Do not use cell phones to talk or text. Instructors reserve the right to confiscate electronics used in a disruptive way and return them at the end of the class period.
- Inform the professor when you may have to arrive late or leave early;
- Engage in active and courteous listening to other students and respectful contributions to class discussions.

Academic Integrity
As stated in the Occidental College Student Handbook, intellectual honesty is “essential to the educational purposes and fairness of the academic enterprise. Occidental College assumes that students and faculty will embrace a high ethical standard for academic work. In all work, students shall behave conscientiously, taking and giving credit where credit is due, avoiding even an appearance of impropriety, and when in doubt, consulting the instructor or other knowledgeable persons as to whether particular conduct, collaboration, and/or acknowledgement of sources in appropriate. Academic misconduct occurs when a student misrepresents others’ work as her/his own or otherwise behaves so as to unfairly advantage her/himself or another student academically. Examples of misconduct include cheating and plagiarism. If this or other misconduct occurs to any extent in connection with any academic work, it will be subject to disciplinary action.” For further information, please see the Occidental College Student Handbook (available at http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics).

Support Services
The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers. See www.departments.oxy.edu/cae. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this resource.

If you have specific physical or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let us know early in the semester so that we can meet your learning needs. The College’s mission is to
support learning for all students and provides **Disability Services** for students with learning disabilities. Please contact Ericka O’Neal Howard, Associate Dean of Students at (323) 259-2969 and/or by email: onealhoward@oxy.edu or visit her in AGC 111.

The **Emmons Health and Counseling Center** provides support for issues of stress, medical and mental health. [www.departments.oxy.edu/emmons](http://www.departments.oxy.edu/emmons)