

PSCI 226W: Act Locally? Local Government in the US
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The idea that “all politics is local” is a reference to the principle that a politician’s success depends on their ability to connect with the constituents of their district. This course will explore both politics and policymaking at a local level.

Readings, podcasts, guest speakers, and field trips will provide context about local politics, with a focus on Rochester. We will examine a number of significant issues and provide a full perspective by learning to use important texts like public meeting minutes, budgets, and newspaper articles.

Each student will be responsible for a 12-page paper that addresses a significant local political issue (in any municipality across the country). The paper will use primary resources to develop an explication of that issue explaining its genesis, controversy and/or significance, the various sides to the issue, the outcome, and the impact. As the course progresses, all students will present on the development of the topic, relevant sources, and overall findings.

Each class will consist of group reflections on the readings for the week, a facilitated discussion, and a presentation from either a student or guest lecturer. Final grades will consist of the paper (35%), attendance and participation (45%), and class presentations (20%).

Book List:

- Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the 2st Century
- Strike the Hammer
- Your Children are Very Greatly in Danger
- Origin of the Urban Crisis
- The Powerbroker

Week 1:

Discussion: Introduction.

Who are we and why are we in this course? What do politics mean to us?

- Reading: Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of Place Matters and Origins of the Urban Crisis, Part 1
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Week 4:

Field Trip City Hall, Public Library, and Public Market

- Reading: Your Children are Very Greatly in Danger, Chapters 1 – 4

Week 5:

Discussion: Policy insight – Education

Discussion: 3 students present on their work and get feedback from class

- Reading: Powerbroker, Part