NEWARK AND URBAN AMERICA

40: 834:330:01 Topics in Public Service (SPAA)

Fall 2014

Conklin 445

Instructor: Steven Diner

e-mail: sdiner@andromeda.rutgers.edu

office: Conklin 420

telephone: (973) 353-2508

office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11 AM-12 PM

Class Time: Tuesday, 2:30 to 5:20 pm

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the twentieth century, American cities experienced widespread decline due to suburbanization, disinvestment and erosion of traditional manufacturing jobs. Toward the end of the century, many cities experienced substantial revitalization. Newark, New Jersey's largest city, became a national symbol of decline after the civil disturbances of 1967. It has undergone significant revitalization in the last decade, but large numbers of Newark residents still confront severe poverty and social ills. This course will examine the causes of Newark’s decline and recent revitalization, and consider the extent to which Newark reflects broader trends in urban America.

Class will be devoted to discussions of weekly assigned readings. Class attendance and participation in discussion are mandatory. You will undertake a research project on a social/policy issue in Newark today and will need to talk with people in a social/government agency working to address that issue today. And you will be expected to share what you have learned with the rest of the class through oral reports.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Class will be conducted as a seminar. Active participation in class discussion is required. Grades will be determined as follows:

Research paper: 30%
Participation in class discussion: 20%
Take-home midterm exam: 20%
Take-home final exam: 30%
Extra credit can be earned by attending conferences or lectures about Newark and writing a two-page summary of the issues discussed. The instructor will bring such opportunities to your attention.

There will be no in-class exam.

**ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Class attendance is required. You should arrive before the class begins. You should not leave the classroom while the class is in session except during the designated break. You should not leave class before it is over. Absence, lateness and departure during class discussion will lower your grade.

**BOOKS**


All other assigned readings are available on Blackboard.

**RESEARCH PAPER**

Your research paper will examine one of the social problems or policy issues confronting Newark today which we will discuss in class. These are:

- Creating Jobs
- Building Newark’s Economy
- Revitalizing Downtown
- Revitalizing a particular neighborhood
- K-12 education
- Youth
- Immigrants
- Poverty
- Crime/ Public Safety
- Public housing
- Public health
- The environment
- Government effectiveness
You can select a different topic with the instructor’s approval.

Your paper should focus on a specific Newark organization or public agency that is addressing the issue you are studying. Begin your project by interviewing one or more people in the organization/agency. After the initial interview(s), you will be able to determine what other sources you can use to research the issue. These could include additional interviews with employees of the organization/agency, people served by it, records or reports, and more general research on your topic nationally and locally. For local research, you should visit the Charles Cummings New Jersey Reference Division of the Newark Public Library on Washington Street. Your interview(s) should be highlighted in your paper. Be sure to include information or insights gather from your interview(s) in your paper.

TAKE-HOME ESSAYS

In the take-home midterm and final essays, you will need to write an integrative essay drawn from the knowledge and insights you have acquired from your readings and class discussions. Questions for the take-home essays will be given to you at least one week before your essays are due.

COURSE CALENDAR

September 2
Topic: Historical Context

September 9
Topic: Historical Context

September 16
Topic: Newark’s Image
Readings:

Scott Raab, “The Battle of Newark,” *Esquire* 4 (2008), and Cory Booker letter to Executive Editor of *Esquire*, June 11, 2008


Issue of *Radius: Brick City and Beyond*
View: TV documentary, “Brick City.”

Due: Topic for Research paper & name of organization/agency where you will interview.

September 23

Topic: Newark’s Economy

Readings:

Opportunity Newark: Jobs and Community Development for the 21st Century, Executive Summary

Brick City Development Corporation, Market Forecast, March 5, 2013.

Newark Regional Business Partnership, Northern New Jersey: Commercial Real Estate Outlook, March 5, 2013.

September 30

Topic: Downtown Revitalization

Readings:


“Teachers Village Opens First Two Buildings in Downtown Newark; Three Schools up and Running, With Retail and Apartments to Follow,” Prudential.com, September 26, 2013.


“Shaquille O’Neal to break ground in Newark for new apartment building,” nj.com/business, September 27, 2013.


“Nicolas Berggruen Is Building First Phase of 15 Million Square Foot Development In Downtown Newark,” jewishbusinessnews.com, October 9, 2013.

Maura P. McDermott, “Credit crisis or not, Newark plans for revival of Broad Street area,” nj.com, December 3, 2008.

October 7

Topic: The Arts & Newark’s Revitalization

Readings:


Americans for the Arts, Arts and Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of Newark, NJ (2007)


October 14

Topic: Poverty

Readings:

Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies, Barriers to Upward Mobility (2013).


October 21

Topic: Crime and Public Safety

Readings:


“Newark police, city officials take ‘neighborhood walks’” Star Ledger (July 19, 2014).

“Newark mayor says efforts to reform police department already underway,” Star Ledger (July 28, 2014).

October 28

Topic: Public and Environmental Health

Readings:


Due: Mid-term Take-Home Essay

November 4

Topic: K-12 Education

Readings:

Curvin, Inside Newark, chapter 9.

One Newark Website, prepared by Newark Public Schools. In particular, you should read two items in the website’s “Supporting Materials” section: December 2013,” Building a System: One Newark,” and March 2014, :Correcting the Facts About One Newark Plan.”


Mark Weber and Bruce Baker, “An Empirical Critique of ‘One Newark’.”

November 11

Topic: Youth

Readings:

Association for Children of New Jersey, *Newark Kids Count 2012/13*.


November 18

Topic: Immigration

Readings:

Kimberly DaCosta Holton, “Pride, Prejudice and Politics: Performing Portuguese Folklore Amid Newark’s Urban Renaissance” (2005)


Due: Research Paper

November 25

No Class

December 2

Topic: Sharpe James & Cory Booker

Readings:
Sharpe James, Political Prisoner: A Memoir, chapter 9, “Newark’s Cheerleader.” (2013)


Curvin, Inside Newark, chapters 7 and 8.

December 9

Topic: The Baraka Administration

Readings: Curvin, Inside Newark, Conclusion.

Additional readings to be determined

December 16

No class – exam period

Due: Final Essay

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The university’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf. When submitting your research paper and final essay, please attach the following statement with your signature: On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.