

Urban Policy

Last Updated: Wed, 07/23/2025

Course prefix: PUBP

Course number: 4211

Section: 1

CRN (you may add up to five):
89916

Instructor First Name: David

Instructor Last Name: Edwards

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

In this course, urban policy and urban economic development are examined with a focus on how cities can improve urban outcomes. The framework for the class combines urban planning with municipal management and policy, using a complex adaptive systems approach. The class examines what policies can improve the performance of cities with a focus on neighborhood health. The class features weekly expert guest speakers who have made significant contributions in addressing these issues.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand how cities generate value
- Speak fluently about the “nuts and bolts” of policymaking in today’s urban environment
- Effectively address urban problems and develop practical solutions
- Make effective presentations and communicate complex ideas
- Interact meaningfully with local political and nonprofit leaders

Required course materials:

There is no assigned textbook for this course. All readings are posted on Canvas.

Grading policy:

Weekly Commentaries (30%) - Submit a short (1- or 2-paragraph) written commentary from the readings for each week. Graded on a three point scale. A response scoring a (3) will have at least one key insight that you have learned from each of the assigned readings and at least one question that you would like to discuss or get clarity on in class. A response scoring a (1) will merely demonstrate that the assignments have been read.

One-time Presentation (20%) - Small student teams will make a brief presentation to the class and facilitate a conversation about how a policy analyst should go about advising a mayor on an assigned public policy problem.

Semester-Long Project (30%)- Each team will be assigned a neighborhood in Atlanta and will build a strategy for how to improve its performance. Three presentations will be made over the course of the semester.

Class Participation and Attendance (15%) - Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active class participation and discussion. You will be rewarded with a perfect score if you come to all classes and actively contribute to the class discussion during lectures and during conversations with guest speakers. Your contributions should offer different and unique, but relevant, perspectives, move the discussion and analysis forward and build on the comments of others.

Peer Review (5%) - For the semester-long project, each team member will provide a review of each of their teammates' performance based on the following criteria:

- Provided material and substance thought leadership
- Delivered their contributions in a timely and equitable fashion
- Demonstrated willingness to work as a part of a team towards a shared goal

Attendance policy:

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the course material. The classroom should be viewed as an important forum for collegial exchange – this includes constructive criticism, reaction, and discussion with colleagues. Multi-tasking is not acceptable in class. Please refrain from using cell phones. **No technology should be used during conversations with speakers.**

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.