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 Zoom Office hrs: xxx  
 & by appointment

**COMPARATIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT:  
 Seeing like a State vs Seeing Like a Citizen  
 (to be given in person)**

Focus and Scope of the Course

The course is designed to introduce you to the study of comparative local government by focusing on cities as laboratories of civilization, as complex forms of collective action and as mixture of good and bad life, including the practice of everyday democracy and its enemies.

The course is comparative and interdisciplinary in method and content. It builds on three themes:

1. What differences if any political forms (unitary vs. federal) make in the conduct of local governance and in the provision of public services? To answer this question we compare and contrast local government in unitary and federal systems. France exemplifies unitary democracies, the United States represents federal or polycentric democracies.
2. Canada has a mix of federal and unitary features. Hence, we want to know why, how and when different types of local government (gargantua, amalgamation, region, and polycentricity) work or do not work across provinces and territories, including Indigenous communities. We will keep an eye on the local fall election in Montreal.
3. Democracy of everyday life and its enemies in different time, place and regimes: when, under what conditions and why the biblical injunction (“love thy neighbor as thyself”) works and does not work. Police violence is much in the US news, all the more important to discover the challenges that await us as to why this is so and, more generally, the production of services like peace and security. What kind of good is peace and security and what is the role of citizens in the production of peace and security at the local level in the USA and Canada? What can we learn from the Japanese experience? What are the challenges of being good neighbors in good and bad times? What factors help us to understand the success of local collective efforts in countries like Japan, Switzerland, Spain and the Philippines? In the course of answering these questions, we will also focus on the importance of environmental issues and visual arts.

We start the course with the challenge of how to take hold of the subject matter. A widespread belief is that many of the problems and anxieties that citizens experience are beyond the proper sphere of their local units of government. There is truth in this but it is not the whole truth. For example, most essential public goods and services are produced at the local level, as Covid 19 has,

unfortunately, made this abundantly clear. Most citizens experience “the state” and government policies through their encounter with street-level bureaucrats like the police and health care operators. At the same time, the course tries to show that ordinary citizens can and often do make a difference in the world they live and the coproduction of labour-intensive public services. The piazza in the Mediterranean world remains a meeting place for all sorts of human activities, including protests like those in the Tahrir Square in Cairo. The Tahrir piazza is at the heart of Cairo and at the heart of Egypt. All this to say that the piazza as commons is not unique to Italy.

The course cannot cover everything in comparative local government and across the world. But it is hoped that, by the end of the term, you will have gained a better understanding and appreciation of core issues like *organized complexity*, *institutional creativity* and *human resilience* in governance and come to appreciate what Jane Jacobs and Elinor Ostrom, among others, set out to do: to marvel at the complexity of organized existence and the capacity of ordinary people to continue, in spite of obstacles, to act as co-creators of the world in which they live.

Keep in mind their lesson, we explore what difference varied forms of governance and practice make for community life: what happens when we filter local reality through the eyes of ordinary people and not just state officials or the police?

Digital books and documents on Order in the Bookstore and may also be available electronically in the library:

E. Gleaser. 2011. *Triumph of the city*. Penguin.

*Where Angels come to Earth. An evocation of the Italian Piazza*. 2020. Ed. by V. Pietropaolo and Mark Frutkin. Montreal: Longbridge Books.

Digital copies of the readings are available as the course pack, and individually through the library.

#### InPerson Teaching Resumption

Minor adjustments can be expected. Please note that in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the instructor’s or the university’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is sub subject to change.

Lectures will recorded and posted on MyCourses.

Conferences, which start probably on Week 3 (Sept 17), for a total of 8 meetings, subject to the approval of the Teaching Assistants yet to be named. The conferences will be held in a “fixed” format, meaning that each conference section will have a block of time to meet each week. All students in the class need to sign up for a conference and “attend” that conference.

#### **Course Requirements**

Conference Participation	10%
Three Discussion Questions throughout the term	15%
Two short essays	40% (20% each)
Take-home Final Exam (during finals week)	35%

### Breakdown of Grade Components

- **Conference Participation (10%) and Discussion Questions (15 %):** Attendance and participation in conferences is required and students are expected to keep up with the readings and lectures. While speaking up is important, please keep in mind that it is not just quantity, that matters, but also quality. Conferences will be set up once the semester begins.  
The three discussion questions count for 15 %; these cover the readings over the term. Each assigned question (you have a choice of one out of least two) can be answered in a short paragraph. One discussion question will focus on the Montreal local election. E.g. why national parties do not participate in local elections in Montreal?  
The assessment of participation will happen on a weekly basis, on weeks where there are conferences. A rubric for participation will be made available through MyCourses.
- **Two Short Essays (20% each):** Throughout the semester you will be assigned to write two short essays (max. 750 words). These essays will have to respond to a set of questions that ask you to connect the lectures and readings assigned for the class. There will be four short essay topics, and you write essays on two of them. The questions for each essay will be made available one week before the essay due date.

The general topics and due dates for the essays are the following:

- choose one, either types of goods and services OR unitary vs federal systems of local governance (the commune in France and the township in America). Due Oct 19.
- choose one, either democracy of everyday life found in collective efforts (e.g.Spain, the Philippines or Japan, the piazza), OR Democracy of everyday life as it applies to policing. Due Nov. 23.

All essays need to be submitted via MyCourses, under the appropriate assignment. Essays must be turned in on Word or pdf. Please follow these guidelines:

- Length: Maximum 750 words (title page, question prompts, bibliographic references do not count towards word limit)
- Format: double spaced, using regular margins.
- Title page: In addition to the essay itself, your essay should have a title page with your name, student ID, and word count (excluding bibliography).

- **Take Home Final Exam (35%):** During finals week, there will be a take home final exam covering the lectures, readings, essays, and conferences. The exam is cumulative and covers materials from the whole semester (including the topics covered in the short essays you did). Format of the exam will be communicated during the term, but it will include a set of shorter (objective) ID questions, and a set of longer (more analytical) questions. Each question will have a strict word limit for the answers you provide. The exact schedule for accessing the final take home exam will depend on Final Exam scheduling. Note: the due date for the take home final exam is university scheduled.

From the date of access, you will have 72 hours to complete it, on your own without any unauthorized help.

The exam needs to be submitted via MyCourses, under the appropriate assignment. Exams need to be turned in on Word or pdf. Please follow these guidelines:

- Length: each question has a maximum length in words, which will be made explicit in each question. Do not go over the word limit, as content that exceeds the word limit will not be graded.

- Format: double spaced, using regular margins.

Question: ensure you make clear which question you are answering.

- Title page: In addition to the exam itself, the exam should have a title page with your name and student ID.

Please note, the date of the final take home exam is set by the university. For the moment, please keep in mind that the final take home exam will consist of 3 parts, each of equal weight, consisting of 1000 words each part, for a total of 3000 words. If you answer in French, please also send a copy to my email address.

In fine, you need to observe the word count for each part of the exam. If you find yourself going over the word limit, go back and edit, trying to cut out every single sentence or word that is not absolutely necessary to make your point and to defend your answer/thesis. At each point in the exam, you should honestly be able to answer yes to the question: is this bit here really necessary for the answering the question? You will not be penalized if you go over the word limit only if it is clear that to the reader that the extra length was absolutely crucial to your argument and so warranted. Otherwise, cut.

Each answer will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. analytical rigour (logic precision, clarity of argument, consideration of counterargument etc).

2. originality/creativity

3. essay mechanics (structures of essay clear and logical, clear thesis in addressing and answer essay type question). For the IDs you will be asked to identify, describe and discuss the importance of the (5) items you have chosen out of possibly 8 items.

4. sentence mechanics (quality of prose in either English or French).

5. scholarship (accurate representation of author's cited).

6. proper citation of sources. And Please note:

7. Academic integrity. McGill university values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity)) Please abide by these rules. Needless to add, all the written work can be in either English or French.

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Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information in English and French).

Please note: All content of this course, including slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

### **Topic I. Creativity and Organized Complexity: Theoretically and Historically**

#### 1. Getting hold of the subject matter: (2 weeks)

Required Readings: digital Course Pack.

- Jane Jacobs.(1961). "The Kind of Problem the City is." Pp.428-448. In her *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. N.Y: Random House. City issues are more complex than independent/dependent variable perspective.
- Core elements in organized complexity (chart to be distributed to class):
- Mark Sproule-Jones (1993). "A Framework for Institutional Analysis and Policy Analysis." In his *Governments at Work*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 21-33.
- Vincent Ostrom, Charles M. Tiebout and Robert Warren (1961). "The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry." *American Political Science Review* 55 (December): 831-842.
- Paul Dragos Aligica and Peter Boettke (2009). "Crossing the great divide: the nature of public economies." In their *Challenging Institutional Analysis and Development. The Bloomington School*. New York: Routledge, 30-51.
- Justin Farrell (2015). "Bringing moral culture into the fray." In *The Battle for Yellowstone*. Princeton: Princeton UP. Introduction, 1-33.

### **Topic II. Seeing like a State or Seeing like a Citizen:**

#### 2. Local Governance in Unitary and Federal Systems: France and the United States (3 weeks)

Required Readings: Course Pack

Diagrams French administrative organization and evolution of ideological political families in French politics. Will make these diagrams available to the class.

- Thomas Derenczi 2004. “The Republic: A French Myth.” Pp. 100-108. In S. Godfrey and F.Unger, eds., *The Shifting Foundations of Modern Nation States*. Toronto: Uof Toronto Press.
- J-C. Thoenig (1978). “State Bureaucracies and Local Government in France.” In Fritz W. Scharpf, ed, *Inter-organization Policy Making*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 167-197.
- Dominique Lorrain (1991). “Public Goods and Private Operators in France.” Pp. 89-109. In R. Batley and G. Stoker, ed., *Trends and developments*. London: Palgrave.
- J-C. Thoenig (2006). “Modernizing subnational government in France: institutional creativity and systemic stability.” Pp. 39-58. In *State and Local Government Reforms in France and Germany. Divergences and Convergence*. Berlin: Springer.(Optional, for those seeking greater depth).
- Alexis de Tocqueville ([1835] 1992). *Democracy in America* vol 1. New York: Harper, 61-98.
- V. Ostrom, R. Bish & E. Ostrom (1988). *Local Government in the United States*. San Francisco: ICS Press, 1-38.

### Topic III.

#### Local Government in Canada: Gargantua and Polycentricity

#### 3. Canadian Local Government (three weeks)

##### Required Readings: Course Pack:

- Guy Bourassa (1976). “The Political Elite of Montreal: From Aristocracy to Democracy.” In *Politics and Government of Urban Canada*. Ed. By LD. Feldman and M. D. Goldrick, Toronto: Methuen, 146-156. A classic still worthwhile to read.
- Andrew Sancton (2000). *Merger Mania*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UPP, chap 5 and conclusion, 113-140, 161-168.
- Jen Nelles and C. Alcantara (2011). “Strengthening the ties that Bind? An Analysis of Aboriginal-Municipal Intergovernmental Agreements in Canada.” *Canadian Public Administration* 54 (no.3): 315-334.
- S. Morrison (2019). “The City that could have been. Vancouver didn’t just happen.” *The Literary Review of Canada* vol 27 no. 4 (May): 10-13.
- A. Perl, Matt Hern et al. 2020. “Globalized Agendas Confront Local Priorities.” In their *Big Moves. Global Agendas, Local Aspirations and Urban Mobility in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP,
- Review article, optional. Elinor Ostrom (1972). Metropolitan Reform: Propositions derived from two traditions.” *Social Science Quarterly* 53 (December): 474-93. This article is fundamental for a proper understanding of the competing claims about gargantua and polycentricity in local governance and as we will see later, why police forces in metropolitan areas have militarized (more on this later, but read carefully Sancton above).

### Topic IV.

#### Democracy of Everyday Life across the world

## Civic Competence and Conflict

### 4. Good Neighbors: Peace and Conflict (1 week)

#### Required Readings:

- Nancy L Rosenblum (2016). *Good Neighbours. The Democracy of Everyday Life in America* (Princeton: Princeton UP), 1-20.
- Justin Farrell (2015). *The Battle for Yellowstone*. Princeton: Princeton UP. Introduction, 1-13; and chap.4 between good and evil: wolf conflict 168-216.
- *Where Angels come to Earth. An Evocation of the Italian Piazza* ed. Bt V. Pietropaolo and M. Frutkin. Montreal: Longbridge Books, 2020. A visual way of learning about local politics.

### 5. Peace, Security and Policing: what happens when the state meets the street (street level bureaucracy)? The account of Rosa Brooks on being a police officer on the beat, and the case against gargantua in policing (listed below) are fundamental.

(2 weeks)

#### Required Readings: Course Pack

- Vlad Tarko 2017. *Elinor Ostrom. An intellectual biography*. Lanham,MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 19-51.
- OPTIONAL P.Boettke et al. 2015. "Reevaluating community policing in a polycentric system." Dept Economics, George Mason U. working paper no. 15-40. 19 pp.
- Rosa Brooks 2021. *Tangled Up in Blue. Policing the American City*.New York: Penguin, 1-18, 44-59, 310-342.
- R.V. Ericson (1982). *Reproducing Order: A Study of Police Patrol Work*, 3-32. Skim to be able to answer this question: What do police officers do on patrol in Toronto?
- D. H. Bayley (1976). *Forces of Order. Policing Modern Japan*, 11-30. A different kind of policing.
- J. Jacobs (1961). "The Uses of Sidewalk Safety". *In The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House) pp. 29-54.
- F. Sabetti (2002). "The Regime of Self-Reliance." Pp. 95-110. In his *Village Politics and the Mafia in Sicily*. San Francisco: ICS Press.
- F. Ianni, "The Gypsy Cabs: Organized Crime or Minority Business Enterprise?" *The Black Mafia*, pp. 237-268.

### 6. Creativity and Resilience in Collective Efforts: remaking our collective life (2 weeks)

#### Required Readings:

- E. Glaeser (2011). *Triumph of the City. How our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*. N.Y. Penguin. Short and effective. Read esp. introduction, chap 1. On what do they make in Bangalore?; chap. 2 on why cities decline; chap. 3 what's good about slums?; what's so great about 6 what is so great about skyscrapers?, and chap. 9 on how do cities succeed?. Chapters are short, clear and provocative. (For a critique, *not* required reading: Jamie Peck. 2016. "Economic Rationality meets Celebrity Urbanology." *International Journal of Urban and Regional*



Research doi 10.1111/1468-2427.12321)

- Elinor Ostrom (1990). *Governing the Commons. The evolution of institutions for collective action*. New York: Cambridge UP, chap. 3, 58-101. Choose two case studies from the following:
  - 1) Communal tenure in meadows and forests, Japan and Switzerland
  - 2) Irrigation institutions in Valencia, Spain
  - 3) Zaniera irrigation communities in the Philippines.
 Keep in mind the similarities and differences in each case and what makes them long-enduring and self-governing. For research on the Brazilian Amazon:
 

Eduardo S. Brondizio et al 2021. "Making place-based sustainability initiative visible in the Brazilian Amazon." *Current Opinion in environmental Sustainability* 49: 66-78.

**AND**, visual politics on the piazza as commons:

- *Where Angels come to Earth. An Evocation of the Italian Piazza* ed. Bt V. Pietropaolo and M. Frutkin. Montreal: Longbridge Books, 2020. A visual way of learning about the politics of everyday democracy.

### **Conclusions**

7. What We Have Done and What Remains to Be Done in understanding organized complexity



