Political Science 422: Urban Politics

Spring 2020

Professor B. Adams

**Ordinance Analysis**

*Due: Friday, April 24th (submit to Turnitin at any time)*

IMPORTANT: This assignment is now optional. If you complete the assignment, your grade will be calculated as described in the syllabus. If you do not complete this assignment, each essay will be worth 1/3rd of your course grade and the final will be worth 1/3rd of your course grade.

**Prompt**

For this assignment you will analyze one recently-passed municipal ordinance from a California city (an ordinance is simply a law passed by a city government). For your ordinance, do the following:

1.) Describe what the ordinance does and what changes the ordinance made to existing policy.

2.) Describe the players: who is active in supporting and opposing the ordinance and why.

3.) Describe the arguments for and against the ordinance.

4.) Explain the fiscal implications of the ordinance (if any): how much will it cost and where the money is coming from?

5.) Assess how effective the ordinance is likely to be based on your research.

6.) Discuss any other relevant issues.

**Paper requirements**

1. Papers should be roughly 1,100-1,500 words, but papers can be longer or shorter if you wish. Please do not use a font smaller than 12-point.

2. Papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late (for example, a “B” paper turned in one day late will be marked down to a “B-”).

3. You should include a works cited page and cite all sources appropriately. You can use any format you want (MLA, APA, footnotes, etc.), as long as you do so correctly. Students found intentionally plagiarizing will automatically fail the course and will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further disciplinary action.

4. Students should submit the final version of their paper through Turnitin on blackboard anytime on the due date (the actual due time is set for 11:59 pm). If you have technical troubles submitting your paper to Turnitin, please contact the Student Help Desk at 594-3189. Sometimes problems with uploading are caused by popup and JavaScript settings.

**Grading Criteria**

* Demonstrated knowledge of the ordinance
* Quality of the research
* Correct citation of all sources
* Quality of the analysis
* Coherence and quality of the writing

**Choosing an ordinance**

Below is a list of ordinances to choose from. You can also choose a different ordinance if you want. The only restrictions is that it needs to be from a California city and needs to be fairly recent (last five years or so). If you choose an ordinance that is not on this list, I would urge you to talk to me before you start to confirm that it’s appropriate.

Los Angeles (go [here](https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=c.search&tab=ORD) to find the text of these ordinances)

* Ordinance #185931 (short term rentals)
* Ordinance #186191 (prohibits bans on section 8 renters)
* Ordinance #186477 (bans campaign contributions from developers)

San Francisco (go [here](https://sfbos.org/ordinances) to find the text of these ordinances)

* Ordinance #218-19 (public funding of campaigns)
* Ordinance #122-19 (restricting e-cigarettes)
* Ordinance #103-19 (facial recognition technology ban)

San Diego (go [here](https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/council-resolutions-ordinances) to find the text of these ordinances)

* Ordinance #21071 (prohibition on using vehicles for habitation)
* Ordinance #21167 (inclusionary housing)
* Ordinance #21070 (regulating shared mobility devices)

**Notes on sources**

1.) You can use any relevant sources, both scholarly and popular press ones. You are unlikely to find any scholarly sources on your specific ordinance but you could find some that provide useful background information.

2.) You may use newspaper articles, however your paper should not simply be a summary of them. I expect that your analysis will go deeper than what is typically presented in newspapers articles, and papers that primarily rely on them will likely receive low grades.

3.) You can cite partisan sources, but you need to clearly identify them as such. For example, if you are drawing material from a website maintained by an ordinance’s proponents, you need to write something like “proponents argue that...” rather than stating the information as fact. This also goes for editorials in newspapers.

4.) You can use websites, but before you do you need to verify that the information is trustworthy. To do this, find out who created the website and whether they are in a position to know the information they claim to know. If it’s a group, find out who funds the group, and don’t make assumptions about who the group represents. For example, a “neighborhood” group called “neighbors for fair development” could be a group funded by Walmart to support a zoning variance for a new store. This doesn’t mean you can’t cite it, but you need to identify it as a Walmart-funded front group. Before you cite any website do some detective work to assess the validity of the information presented.

5.) There is no minimum number of sources required, but I expect you to do a thorough search to find and use all relevant sources. You need to go beyond the first few results of a google search, and generally if you only have one or two sources it won’t be sufficient to fully analyze your ordinance.

6.) Be sure to cite all sources appropriately. It should be clear to the reader where all the information is coming from, and readers should be able to work backwards from your citations to find the information you cite. Note that citing sources appropriately is one of the grading criteria, and your paper will be marked down if you do not do so correctly.

**Some tips on how to proceed**

1.) The primary goal for this assignment is for students to develop an understanding of the types of issues that cities address and the debates surrounding them. Thus, it is critical that you not only understand the “basics” of the ordinance but have a thorough understanding of the issue at hand and the content and logic of the arguments relevant to it.

2.) To analyze your ordinance, you need to break down the issue into component parts. The different parts of the analysis are the ones I identified above: what the ordinance does, the arguments for and against, the groups and individuals supporting and opposing it, fiscal implications, etc. What you want to do is discuss each of these issues and then tie them back together. A quality analysis addresses these issues in a systematic and coherent manner, breaking down the issue and then tying the pieces back together.

3.) READ the ordinance. Yes, it’s difficult to read because it’s in legalese, but if you take time to read it you will be able to understand.

4.) You can organize your analysis in any way you see fit. It’s usually not a good idea to address each of the six items listed in the prompt serially, as there is overlap across them.

5.) You can express an opinion on the ordinance if you so choose but it’s not required. If you do express an opinion, be sure that it is firmly grounded in the evidence and analysis that you provide in the paper.

6.) Your thesis statement can take one of three forms. First, you can state an opinion about the merits of the ordinance. If you choose not to offer an opinion, you can make a statement about the nature of the debate or political dynamics over the ordinance. Third, you can draw conclusions about what this ordinance tells us about local politics. Regardless, you should have a thesis statement that is supported by your analysis.

7. I will grade your paper electronically, posting comments directly on the paper, providing a longer comment at the end of the paper, and using a qualitative rubric to provide systematic feedback. I’ll send an e-mail to the class once the graded papers are available.

8. If you have any questions, feel free to come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

9. I am willing to read over drafts of your essay if you bring them to me in person. I will not read and comment on drafts/outlines sent to me via e-mail.

10. If you have a question that only requires a short response (less than one sentence), you can ask me via e-mail. However, don’t ask questions via e-mail that require longer answers (you should do a Zoom office hours for these).

Good luck!