

One of the requirements for this course is that you write a 5 to 7 page essay on a topic related to one of the subjects covered in the course readings and /or lecture. The essay should be focused on *a specific question or problem statement*. Depending on the topic you select, you will need to use some mix of academic research (beyond the material in the assigned reading), journalistic material (newspaper archives) and/or primary source interviews to address the topic you have selected.

Examples of potential topics are listed below. Remember, you are free to select a different topic, as long as it is approved by Donovan. Your essay must be original work, with any and all references to supporting material, evidence, and other people's ideas must be thoroughly documented with references in the text of the paper. A list of your sources / references should also be included.

The paper is due Nov. 24th, typed, double-spaced, with standard margins.

Possible topics:

The history of America's political party "urban machines." Which social groups benefited from the urban machine?

Challenges to local development. A case study of political response to growth and development at the local level. Did the "growth machine" lose? Who opposed them?

Attempts at state-wide land use planning, such as Washington's GMA. Discuss evidence of the effects that the GMA has had in Washington (and/or other states).

New urbanism. Are government regulations required for 'new urbanism' to have an effect on sprawl?

Does the ballot initiative process need to be reformed? What are some of the potential consequences of some of some reforms that have been proposed?

What are the origins of rules that bar felons from voting? Does variation in such rules across states have consequences for levels of voter participation?

The history of judicial selection in the states. What are the justifications for various methods? What difference does method of selection make?