

# COMPARATIVE HOUSING

As the consequences of the sub-prime mortgage meltdown and its impact on the housing market in the United States unfolds around us, we are able to witness the heated debates that have long played out in the housing arena, particularly those around the role of the State and that of private markets. This course will dive into the current conversations on housing by examining the theoretical and policy debates in the field, such as the historical debates between, and the experiences of, state-led versus market-led housing models. Through discussions, readings, and video presentations, the course will focus on some of the significant themes in housing, such as public policy, financing structures, housing markets, and socio-economic arrangements, that have long shaped and continue to impact housing and patterns of urban communities in the United States. While doing so, the course will bring in a comparative international and global perspective of housing in the developing world as a way to learn from and inform our own views of housing. The course will conclude with a critical assessment of some of the policies and practices that are at the root of the current crises in the housing market in the United States.

The purpose of this course is to craft a global and broad understanding of issues in housing. We will investigate and debate topics such as:

- How are housing policies defined and pursued over time and with what results?
- What roles do the public and the private play in housing?
- How do we understand the historical connections between urbanization and housing?
- What does it mean to be homeless in a world that considers homeownership a virtue?
- How does housing inform our view of struggles over urban space?
- What does housing tell us about urban markets in a global economy
- How can we use housing as a lens to examine urban governance, State power, and grassroots resistance?

The course will expose you to a wide array of institutions and actors involved in housing processes and policies in a variety of urban settings. At the end of this course, students will be able to independently analyze, assess, and evaluate the dynamic processes that are associated with and shape housing globally.

## COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

This class is schedule twice a week for three and half hours and is organized around a discussion/video presentations format. Course readings are based on journal articles and book chapters, and will be posted on Blackboard not more than two weeks prior to the class. Readings can be found under section titled ‘Course Documents’ on Blackboard, organized according to weekly themes.

**Attendance and Class Participation:** Students are expected to attend classes regularly, read all assigned materials, and come prepared to participate in the discussion of readings.

**Reaction Papers (50% of the Grade):** During each session students will be asked to electronically (through email) submit a reaction paper, about 1-2 double-spaced pages in length in clearly legible font

type and size. Reaction papers should be a critical examination of the authors' arguments, and not a summary of the readings. They should convey the themes/issues that caught your attention, discuss main arguments in the article, opine whether you are in agreement or not with the argument and why, illustrate your points with examples or experiences you have had, and make comparisons to previous articles you have read in this or other classes. Reaction papers will be evaluated on a scale of 10, based upon the clarity of writing (succinct with no spelling errors), ability to critically analyze arguments, articulation of your thoughts and opinions, ability to make a strong case/point through examples/illustrations.

**In-Class Presentation (10% of the Grade):** Students are expected to make one presentation during the course. This will be a 15 – 20 min presentation of the weekly readings that addresses the main points in the articles for that week. Students will be randomly assigned to a week and are expected to come prepared and organized to lead a discussion and answer questions on the readings for that week. Presentations will be evaluated on its clarity and quality.

**Final Take Home Exam (40% of the Grade):** A take home exam will be given to you (electronically by email) on the day prior to the last class (June 23, 6:00pm). This will consist of two questions, based on the main themes and issues covered in class, and will require your detailed response. Each question will be worth 20 points. Your response should be no more than 3 double-spaced typed pages for each question. The exams are due back by 10:00pm on June 24, with no exceptions to this deadline.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Grading:** Your final grade will be based on a combination of activities and assignments mentioned above and the grade breakdown and structure is given below.

### *Grade Breakdown*

Activities	Percentage
Reaction Papers	50%
In-Class Presentation	10%
Final Take Home Exam	40%

### *Grade Structure*

Letter Grade	Point Range
A+	98 - 100
A	94 - 97
A-	90 - 93
B+	87 - 89
B	84 - 86
B-	80 - 83
C+	77 - 79
C	74 - 76
C-	70 - 73
D	≤69

**Late Works and Missed Assignments:** Late work in general will not be tolerated. If you plan to miss a class, please hand in your reaction papers within 24 hours of the missed class. Alternative arrangement can be made, but only with prior approval. Students are expected to keep track of assignment deadlines

and grades. If you did not receive your reaction paper back or are missing a grade, please bring it to the attention of the instructor.

**Plagiarism Statement:** The copying of any work in whole or in part without citation is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Students, whose work has been confirmed as plagiarized: a) will not receive any points for the plagiarized assignment, and/or b) in the case of more serious violation will receive a Fail (F) grade for the entire course.

**Office Hours and Contact:** Office hours will be held by appointment in Fuller Building (FLR) prior to class on Tuesday between 4:45 and 5:45 pm. Questions about course, readings, and assignments can be addressed through email as well: [mukherji@bu.edu](mailto:mukherji@bu.edu). Please give 48 hours for a response.

## COURSE THEMES AND READINGS

### SESSION 1: INTRODUCTIONS, SYLLABUS, & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Video:** *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream* (2004), by Gregory Greene. Produced by: The Electric Wallpaper, 78 Minutes

### SESSION 2: FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

**Video:** *Caracas: The Informal City* (2004), by Rob Schröder. Produced by: VPRO / International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam / U-TT Caracas, 104 Minutes

Quigley, John M. (1999) Why should the government play a role in housing? A view from North America, *Housing, Theory and Society*, (16) 4, pp. 201-203

The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. (2010) The State of the Nation's Housing. <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/markets/son2010/index.htm>

Pugh, Cedric. (2001) The theory and practice of housing sector development for developing countries, 1950-99, *Housing Studies*, (16) 4, pp. 399-423

Davis, Mike. (2007) *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso  
Chapter 1, "The Urban Climacteric"  
Chapter 2, "The Prevalence of Slums"

### SESSION 3: POLICY PERSPECTIVES

**Video:** *Sprawling from Grace: Driven to Madness* (2008), by David M. Edwards. Produced by: EMotion Pictures Productions, LLC, 82 Minutes

Jackson, Kenneth. (1985) *Crabgrass Frontier*. New York: Oxford University Press  
Chapter 11, “Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: How Washington Changed the American Housing Market.”

Bauman, John F., Biles, Roger & Szylvian, Kristin M. (Eds.) (2000) *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press  
Biles, Roger, “Epilogue”

Gilbert, Alan. (2002) Power, ideology, and the Washington consensus: The development and spread of Chilean housing policy, *Housing Studies*, (17) 2, pp. 305-324

Miraftab, Faranak. (2003) The perils of participatory discourse: Housing policy in post-apartheid South Africa, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, (22) 3, pp. 226-239

#### **SESSION 4: MECHANICS OF HOUSING MARKETS AND FINANCE**

Green, Richard K, & Malpezzi, Stephen. (2003) *A Primer on U.S. Housing Markets and Housing Policy*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.

Bratt, R.G., Hartman, C. and Meyerson. A. (1986) *Critical Perspectives on Housing*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.  
Chapter 4: Meyerson, Ann, “Deregulation and the Restructuring of the Housing Finance System”

Dowall, David. (1989) Bangkok: A profile of an efficiently performing housing market, *Urban Studies*, (26), pp. 327-339.

Bradley, D. S., Nothaft, F. E., & Freund, J. L. (1998) Financing multifamily properties: A play with new actors and new lines, *Cityscape*, (4) 1, pp. 5 – 17

#### **SESSION 5: AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS**

**Video:** *Homes and Hands: Community Land Trusts in Action*. Produced by: GroundSpark, 36 Minutes

*Affordable Green Housing* (2007), by Tad Fettig. Produced for PBS - E<sup>2</sup> Series (Design, Season 2, Episode 4) by: Kontent Real LLC, 25 Minutes

Shlay, Anne B. (2006) Low-income homeownership: American dream or delusion?, *Urban Studies*, (43) 3, pp. 511-531

Crankshaw, Owen, Gilbert, Alan, & Morris, Alan. (2000) Backyard Soweto, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, (24) 4, pp. 841-857

Greene, Margarita & Rojas, Eduardo. (2008) "Incremental construction: A strategy to facilitate access to housing" in *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 89-208

## **SESSION 6: PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Video:** *Investigative Reports - HUD: America's Slumlord*, (1994). Produced by: A&E  
50 Minutes

*This is My Home: The fight for public housing in New Orleans*, (2007). Produced by:  
Ouida Washington, 22 Minutes

Bratt, R.G., Hartman, C. and Meyerson. A. (1986) *Critical Perspectives on Housing*.  
Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Chapter 14: Marcuse, Peter, "Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State"

Chapter 20: Bratt, Rachel G., "Public housing: The controversy and contribution"

Bauman, John F., Biles, Roger & Szylvian, Kristin M. (Eds.) (2000) *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press

Chapter 8: Hanchett, Thomas W., "The other 'subsidized housing': Federal aid to suburbanization, 1940s-1960s"

Mueller, Elizabeth J. & Schwartz, Alex. (2008) Reversing the tide: Will state and local governments house the poor as federal direct subsidies decline?, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, (74) 1, pp. 122-135

Gilbert, Alan. (2004) "Helping the poor through housing subsidies: Lessons from Chile, Colombia, and South Africa," *Habitat International* (28), pp. 13-40.

## **SESSION 7: RENTAL VS. HOMEOWNERSHIP**

**Video:** *Northeast Passage: The Inner City and the American Dream* (2002), by Spencer Wolf & Cornelius Swart. Produced by: SydHonda Media LLC, 54 Minutes

Krueckeberg, D.A. (1999) The grapes of rent: A history of renting in a country of owners, *Housing Policy Debate*, (10) 1, pp. 9-30

Turk, Michael. (2004) The question of rent: The emerging urban housing crises in the new century, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, (28) 4, pp. 909-918

Gilbert, Alan. (2008) Slums, tenants, and home-ownership: on blindness to the obvious, *International Development Planning Review*, (30) 2, pp. i-x

## **SESSION 8: TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS**

**Video:** *The Forgotten Americans* (2000). Produced & Directed by Hector Galan, 60 Minutes

Payne, Geoffrey. 2004. "Land tenure and property rights: An introduction" in *Habitat International*, vol. 28, pp. 167-179

DeSoto, Hernando. (1989) *The Other Path*. New York: Basic Books  
Chapter 2, "Informal housing"

Roy, Ananya & AlSayyad, Nezar. (2004) *Urban Informality*. New York: Lexington Books  
Chapter 9: Ward, Peter M. "Informality of housing production at the urban-rural interface: The 'not so strange case' of the Texas Colonias"  
Chapter 10: Bromley, Ray. "Power, property, and poverty: Why De Soto's 'Mystery of Capital' cannot be solved"

Liu, Yuting, et al. (2010) Urban villages under China's rapid urbanization: Unregulated assets and transitional neighborhoods, *Habitat International*, (34) pp. 135-144

## **SESSION 9: URBAN RE-DEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT**

**Video:** *On Borrowed Land* (1990), by Matthew Westfall. Produced by: Amphion Productions, 51 Minutes

Shatkin, Gavin. (2004) Planning to forget: Informal settlements as 'forgotten places' in globalizing Metro Manila, *Urban Studies*, (41) 12, pp. 2469-2484

Shin, Hyun-Bng. (2009) Property-based redevelopment and gentrification: The case of Seoul, South Korea, *Geoforum*, (40), pp. 906-917

Wang, Ya Ping, Wang, Yanglin, & Wu, Jiansheng. (2009) Urbanization and informal development in China: Urban villages in Shenzhen, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, (33) 4, pp. 957-973

## **SESSION 10: INFORMAL HOUSING/DYNAMICS OF SQUATTING**

**Video:** *Kevin McCloud: Slumming It* (2010), by Kevin McCloud. Produced by: Talkback Thames, 48 Minutes  
*Squatters: The Other Philadelphia Story* (1984). Produced by: Charles Koppelman, 27 Minutes

Roy, Ananya & AlSayyad, Nezar. (2004) *Urban Informality*. New York: Lexington Books  
Chapter 7: Soliman, Ahmed M. "Tilting at Sphinxes: Locating urban informality in Egyptian cities"

Angel, Shlomo & Benjamin, Stan. (1976) Seventeen reasons why the squatter problem cannot be solved, *Ekistics*, (242), pp. 20-26

O'Hare, Greg, Abbott, Dina, Barke, Michael. (1998) A review of slum housing policies in Mumbai, *Cities*, (15) 4, pp. 269-283

## **SESSION 11: HOUSING THE HOMELESS**

**Video:** *Dark Days* (2000), by Marc Singer. Produced by: Picture Farm, 94 Minutes

Bratt, R.G., Hartman, C. & Meyerson, A. (1986) *Critical Perspectives on Housing*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Chapter 2: Hopper, Kim & Hamberg, Jill, "The making of America's homeless: From skid row to new poor, 1945-1984"

Minnery, John & Greenhalgh, Emma. (2007) Approaches to homelessness policy in Europe, the United States, and Australia, *Journal of Social Issues*, (63) 3, pp. 641-655

Louis du Toit, Jacques. (2010) Local metropolitan government responses to homelessness in South Africa, *Development South Africa*, (27) 1, pp. 111-128

## **SESSION 12: HOUSING BUBBLES AND THE FORECLOSURE CRISES**

**Video:** *Homes for the Homeless?* Produced by: NOW for PBS, June 26, 2009, 25 Minutes

Packer, George. The Ponzi State: Florida's foreclosure disaster, A Reporter at Large, *The New Yorker*, February 9, 2009

Saegert, Susan. (2009) Deflating the dream: Radical risk and the neoliberalization of homeownership, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, (31) 3, pp. 297-317

Immergluck, Dan. (2009) Core of the crises: Deregulation, the global savings glut, and financial innovation in the sub-prime debacle, *City & Community*, (8) 3, pp. 341-345

Renaud, Bertrand & Kim, Kyung-Hwan. (2007) Global housing price boom and its aftermath, *Housing Finance International*, December

Ellis, Luci. (2008) The housing meltdown: Why did it happen in the United States?, BIS Working Papers No 259

## **SESSION 13: FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE AT 5:00 PM**