

Spring 2012
The Geography of Housing in the United States

GEOG 383

Monday: 17.35-20.15

Room: HN 1021

Stephen Boatright – Instructor

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All Email Correspondence MUST include the Course Name in the Subject

Office Hours: Monday 16.30-17.30 (HN 1032)

Subject to Change

Description:

This course will draw from a range of academic and popular sources in order to give students a strong foundational understanding of the geographic, social, and economic realities of housing in the United States. We will critically examine the geography of housing development as it has varied in time and place. We will query the popular ambivalence towards renting, the normative ideology of ownership, and look at the community-based attempts to rethink and reconstruct residential property relations. We will investigate major local, state, and federal housing laws and policies of the past century. We will demystify the relationship between the US housing market and the global economy. Based on what we learn through these lines of inquiry we will take up and grapple with the key issues in housing today: gentrification, uneven development, local housing shortages, the affordable housing crisis and the foreclosure crisis.

Objectives and Expectations:

The main objective of this course is to develop students' critical thinking skills so that they are able to coherently grapple with the diversity and dynamism of social and spatial phenomena. Specifically, we will try to make sense of the myriad aspects of housing in the United States by looking at history, government policy, social problems, and the current mortgage crisis. As critical and creative thought must be coherently argued in language, this course will be writing intensive, and students will be expected to improve on all aspects of their writing, including grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Moreover, as class readings will be compiled from a variety of sources, it will be of the utmost importance for students to cultivate a sensitive reading eye; so a further objective of the course will be to hone reading skills in order to understand how authorial intentions, semantic ambiguities, and cultural allusions add to and/or subtract from the texts.

Assessment:

This will be a writing and discussion intensive course. Students will be required to maintain a blog throughout the semester with weekly 300-word postings and submit a 3000-word essay at the end of the semester. In addition, students will need to compose two questions on the readings to be discussed in class. We will discuss these assignments in detail at the beginning of the semester. All students will be expected to turn in well-composed and proofread writing assignments and to come to class on time prepared to engage in thoughtful and critical conversation.

Final Project – Research paper on the history and geo-social context of the students' first (or current) residential address. This should involve a well-theorized real estate-development history, local contextualization, and discussion of relevant laws/policies.

Class Participation and Weekly Reading Questions (2 per class): 20%

Blog Entries (12 postings 300 words each): 40%

Final Paper (3000 words): 40%

Attendance is mandatory and excessive tardiness will not be tolerated. All unexcused absences over two will result in a grade deduction; two instances of tardiness will be regarded as one unexcused absence. Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after the original due date, after that no credit will be given. Incompletes will not be given except in the case of exceptional and well-documented circumstances. Breaches in academic integrity will not be tolerated and will result in an 'F' for the relevant assignment.

Statement on Academic Integrity:

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Required Texts (Available at Shakespeare and Co. 939 Lexington Ave.):

Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York.

Immergluck, Dan. (2009) *Foreclosed*. Cornell: Ithaca, NY.

All other readings will be made available in class.

Week-by-Week Syllabus:

January 30 – **Introduction** – presentation of variety of extant housing forms in US + pre-history of pre-New Deal housing in US (long lecture)

- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 1: Introduction' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 1-12
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 2: Trends, Patterns, Problems' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 13-50
- Immergluck, Dan (2009) Introduction 'Housing Finance, Ideology, and the Rise of High-Risk Mortgage Markets' in *Foreclosed*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. pp. 1-16

February 6 – **Home**

- Saegert, Susan (1985) 'The Role of Housing in the Experience of Dwelling' in *Home Environments*, ed. I. Altman and C. M. Werner – Chapter 12 – Dwelling and Housing Plenum Press: New York. pp. 287-309.
- Cooper, Clare (1976) 'House as Symbol of the Self' in *Environmental Psychology: People and Their Physical Settings*, ed. Proshansky, Ittelson, and Rivlin. Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York. pp. 435-448
- Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1987). 'Rhizome' in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. B. Massumi. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis. pp. 3-25

February 13 – NO CLASS

February 20 – NO CLASS

February 21 – **The American Dream**

- Immergluck, Dan (2009) 'Chapter 1: U.S. Mortgage Market Development and Federal Policy to the Early 1990s' in *Foreclosed*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY pp. 17-46
- Hayden, D. (2003) 'Streetcar Build-outs' in *Building Suburbia*. Vintage Books: New York. pp. 71-96

- Hayden, D. (2002) 'Architecture: Roof, Fire, and Center' in *Redesigning the American Dream*. Norton: New York. pp 141-190

February 27 – **Personal Finance** (Discussion of homeownership counseling)

- Surowiecki, James (2006) 'Safe as Houses?' in *The New Yorker*. October 30, 2006
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/30/061030ta_talk_surowiecki
- Reyes, Paul (2010) 'Paradise swamped: The boom and bust of the middle-class dream' in *Harper's Magazine*. August, 2010. <http://harpers.org/archive/2010/08/0083064>
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 12: Homeownership and Income Integration' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 291-310
- Immergluck, Dan (2009) 'Chapter 5: The Economic and Social Costs of High Risk Mortgage Lending' in *Foreclosed*. Cornell University Press: Ithica, NY. pp. 133-166
- Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele (2011). 'Home From War and Facing Eviction: New housing policies threaten to take away homes from the newest generation of America's veterans.' in *Mother Jones*. Jul. 28, 2011. <http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/07/veterans-home-war-facing-eviction-foreclosure-mills>
- Information from Non-for-Profit Housing Agencies
- [HUD Homeownership Voucher Program](#)

March 5 – **Real Estate, Place, and Property**

- Kirp, David. (2001) 'Chapter 6: A Suburb at Odds: The Epic Battle of Mount Laurel' in *Almost Home: America's Love-Hate Relationship with Community*. Princeton University Press: Princeton. pp. 107-130
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 4: Taxing and Housing' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 89-102
- Self, Robert O. (2006) 'The Politics of the "Tax Dollar" in Postwar California' in *The New Suburban History*. pp. 144-160.
- Achtenberg, EP and Marcuse, P. (1986) 'Toward the Decommodification of Housing.' in *Critical Perspectives on Housing*. Rachel G. Bratt, Chester Hartman and Ann Meyerson, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. pp. 474-483.
- Pow, C-P. (2009): "Good" and "real" places: a geographical moral critique of territorial place-making.' in *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*. 91 (2): 91-105

March 12 – **Political Economy of Housing**

- Marcuse, Peter (2001) 'The Liberal/Conservative Divide In The History Of Housing Policy In The United States' in *Housing Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 6, 717-736
- Hoffman, Susan. (2001) 'Chapter 6: Progressivism and the S&L Framework' and/or 'Chapter 7: Credit Unionism and Populist Public Philosophy: Questions of Control' in *Politics and banking: ideas, public policy, and the creation of financial institutions*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD.
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 3: Housing Finance' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 51-88
- Recommended:
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 9: State and Local Housing Policy and the Nonprofit Sector' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 209-238

March 19 – **Political Economy of Housing**

- Immergluck, Dan (2009) 'Chapter 2: Mortgage Market Disparities and the Dual Regulatory System in the Twentieth Century' in *Foreclosed*. Cornell University Press: Ithica, NY. pp. 47-67
- Hoffman, Susan. (2001) 'Chapter 6: Progressivism and the S&L Framework' and/or 'Chapter 7: Credit Unionism and Populist Public Philosophy: Questions of Control' in *Politics and banking: ideas,*

public policy, and the creation of financial institutions. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD.

- Basolo, V. 2007. Explaining the Support for Homeownership Policy in US Cities: A Political Economy Perspective. *Housing Studies* 22(1):99-119

March 26 – **Current Mortgage Crisis**

- Immergluck, Dan. (2009) Chapter 3-4 & 6 in *Forclosed*. Cornell: Ithaca, NY.
- Hudson, Michael (2006) 'The new road to serfdom: An illustrated guide to the coming real estate collapse' in *Harper's Magazine*. May 2006. <http://harpers.org/archive/2006/05/0081029>
- Recommended:
- Aaron, Kat and Michael Lawson (2011) 'US Homeownership Timeline 1995-2010' in *Mother Jones*. Fri Jul. 29, 2011. <http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/07/homeownership-trends-timeline>
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April 2 – **Suburban (Community) – GUEST LECTURER – DAN RODGERS**

- Cuff, Dana. (2005) 'Enduring Proximity: The Figure of the Neighbor in Suburban America' in *Postmodern Culture*, Volume 15, Number 2, January 2005
- David Harvey. (1997) 'The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap' in *Harvard Design Magazine*. Winter/Spring, Number 1.
- Rymer, Russ. (1996) 'Back to the future: Disney reinvents the company town' in *Harper's Magazine*. October 1996. <http://harpers.org/archive/1996/10/0008146>
- Charmes, Eric. (2010) 'Cul-de-sacs, Superblocks and Environmental Areas as Supports of Residential Territorialization' in *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 15. No. 3, 357-374

April 9 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

April 15 – **Suburban (Gated Community)**

- Low, Setha M. (2001) 'The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear.' In *American Anthropologist*; Mar2001, Vol. 103 Issue 1, p45, 14p,
- García-Ellí, Juan C. (2009) 'Gated Communities and Housing Projects: The Control of Public Space in San Juan' in *southeastern geographer*, 49(4) 2009: pp. 354-375
- Joost Zonneveld. (2001) Defending the Suburban Dream: Gated Communities in Calabasas, California in *Etnofoor* Vol. 14, No. 1, SUBURBIA (2001) (pp. 31-59)

April 22 – **Urban**

- Keating, Dennis W. (1998) 'Rent Regulation in New York City: A Protracted Saga' in *Rent Control: Regulation and the Rental Housing Market* eds. Dennis W. Keating, et al. Center for Urban Policy Research: New Brunswick, NJ. pp. 151-168
- Katz, Alissa. (2009) 'Chapter 8: Tenants No More' in *Our Lot*. Bloomsbury: New York. pp. 185-212.
- Wright, G. (1981) 'Public Housing for The Worthy Poor' in *Building the Dream*. pp. 215 - 239
- Ford, Richard. (1992) 'An urge for going: Why I don't live where I used to live' in *Harper's Magazine*. February 1992. <http://harpers.org/archive/1992/02/0000776>

April 29 – **Urban**

- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 6: Public Housing' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 125-156
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 8: Vouchers' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 177-208
- Deutsche, Rosalyn (1986). 'Property Values: Hans Haacke, Real Estate, and the Museum' in *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA pp. 20-37

- Brook, Daniel. (2005) 'Unnecessary excellence: What public-housing design can learn from its past' in *Harper's Magazine*. <http://harpers.org/media/pages/2005/03/pdf/HarpersMagazine-2005-03-0080464.pdf>

May 7 – **Community (Resistance)**

- Taylor, Astra (2011) 'Occupy Wall Street on Your Street' in *The Nation*. December 7, 2011. <http://www.thenation.com/article/165024/occupy-wall-street-your-street>
- Angotti, Tom (2008) Chapter 3: 'From Dislocation to Resistance: The Roots of Community Planning' in *New York for Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA. pp. 82-109
- Saegert, S. (2006) Building Civic Capacity in Urban Neighborhoods: An Empirically Grounded Anatomy. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 28:275-96
- Schwartz, Alex. F. (2010) 'Chapter 11: Fair Housing and Community Reinvestment' in *Housing Policy in the United States*, ed. 2nd. Routledge: New York. pp. 253-290

May 14 – **Community (Alternatives)**

- Angotti, Tom (2008) 'Mutual Housing and Community Land Trust' in Chapter 4 'From Protest to Community Plan' in *New York for Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA pp. 121-124.
- Ruonavaara, Hannu (2005) 'How Divergent Housing Institutions Evolve: A Comparison of Swedish Tenant Co-operatives and Finnish Shareholders' Housing Companies.' in *Housing, Theory & Society*. Dec2005. Vol. 22:4, p213-236
- Hayden, D. (2002) 'Reconstructing Domestic Space' in Center' in *Redesigning the American Dream*. Norton: New York. pp 191-224

Maybe add something about Detroit for last two weeks