

**\*draft\* Fall 2021**

# **URBAN HOUSING**

**URPL 6405/ ARCH 6205/ LDAR 6755**



**Dr. Jennifer Steffel Johnson**

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Wednesdays 2:00pm-4:45pm

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30pm and by appointment (in-person, phone, or video)

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course recognizes that housing is a vital element of the urban fabric. We will examine the sociological, physical, economic, and political aspects of urban housing in the U.S. The course bridges the fields of planning and design, exploring how urban housing policies impact the creation, location, and design of housing. The big questions that guide the class include:

- Why do people live where they do? (demand-side factors)
- What housing gets built and why? (supply-side factors)
- In what ways does the U.S. housing system fail, and what are some solutions?

This class is intentionally interdisciplinary. Housing is a complex challenge, and developing creative design and policy solutions requires effective collaboration between people with diverse skills and perspectives. Through our weekly discussions and in-class activities, as well as our class projects, we will learn together and from each other.

In the first half of the semester, we will work in interdisciplinary teams to conduct background research for and participate in real-client affordable housing design charrettes that will take place in three Colorado locations in late September. In the second half of the semester, students will investigate a local housing issue of their interest, including both primary and secondary research, and produce a white paper that documents the issue and recommends solutions.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. recognize that housing is not merely shelter, but that it connects individuals to or separates them from essential systems of everyday life such as employment, health, education and transportation.
2. define “affordable” housing and describe both the supply- and demand-side factors that affect housing affordability.
3. recognize the priorities, problem-solving approaches, and skills different professional disciplines bring to the housing field, and implement best practices for interdisciplinary teamwork.
4. describe key local and national housing policies, programs and regulations and identify how they form the context for housing development.
5. use a variety of sources to locate data and utilize it to identify and interpret major trends in urban housing supply and demand at local, state, and national levels.
6. examine the ways that the housing system contributes to wider problems in U.S. metropolitan areas such as homelessness, gentrification, and racial and economic segregation, and evaluate the efficacy of various housing policy interventions and design solutions to address these issues.
7. investigate local housing issues, evaluate alternative approaches, and propose innovative solutions.
8. integrate the physical, social, regulatory, and financial challenges and opportunities affordable housing development presents and contribute to the design of well-planned, high-quality housing developments.

## COURSE VIRTUES:

- **Intellectual curiosity.** Be open to new ideas; ask questions; reflect on what you’re learning; think about things in new ways.
- **Analytic thinking.** Look for hidden assumptions in readings; compare and contrast theoretical perspectives; check theoretical ideas against your own experience; look critically at the world around you; notice inconsistencies in arguments; entertain counter-arguments.
- **Professionalism.** Complete reading assignments before class; give careful thought to writing assignments; proofread writing before turning it in; give yourself the time necessary to do each task well; meet assignment deadlines; arrive on time to every class.
- **Collaborative learning.** Be respectful towards other students’ ideas, especially when you disagree; actively participate in discussions and small group tasks; ask for clarification; address your comments and questions to each other as much as to the instructor; learn from each other.

### **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THIS COURSE:**

In my classroom, I seek to create a learning environment in which each person feels safe and respected, and in which a diversity of perspectives and experiences is treated as an asset and an opportunity to learn from each other. Like many people, I am continually learning about diverse perspectives and identities and seeking to address implicit biases. While we will seek to maintain an environment of mutual respect, if something is said in class (by anyone) that makes you feel uncomfortable, please raise the issue or talk to me about it.

Class rosters are provided to me by the university with your legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronouns. Simply let me know.

I recognize that many academic and professional publications have been written from the perspective of a small subset of historically privileged voices. I have made an effort to assign readings from a diverse group of authors that represent a range of viewpoints. However, I acknowledge that overt and implicit biases in the material likely remain. I welcome your suggestions for improving the quality of the course materials.

### **CANVAS AND COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:**

All assigned readings, as well as optional readings, team project information, and important announcements will be provided through Canvas. Make sure you know how the materials for this course are organized and that you can access everything. I generally send emails to students through Canvas, so it is essential that you check your school email regularly (or have it forwarded to another email address that you typically use.) You are responsible for being aware of any messages, assignment updates, or schedule changes I send you via email or post on Canvas.

### **COURSE EVALUATION/REQUIREMENTS:**

For each major assignment, I will provide you with a grading rubric that outlines my expectations for your work. Please review the rubric in advance of each assignment and ask questions if anything is unclear. Please work with me in a timely manner to resolve any problems you may encounter.

**Active Class Participation and Regular Attendance (30%) – Class attendance and participation are essential for success in this course.** Because this is a graduate seminar, you are expected to complete all the assigned readings on time and come to class prepared to make substantive contributions to the weekly class discussions and in-class activities. A significant portion of our class time will involve active participation in small-group work and discussion; the goal of this work is to deepen our understanding of the course topics and learn from each other. As part of your participation grade, you will occasionally be required to collect a small amount of data or prepare a brief synopsis to share with the class.

**Housing Colorado Affordable Housing Design Charrette (35% total)** – Working in interdisciplinary teams, our class will conduct background research for and participate in real-

client affordable housing design charrettes on sites in Denver, Brighton, and Limon. Your grade for this project is based 1) on your team members' evaluation of your contributions to your team, and 2) your completion of a thoughtfully written reflection paper.

- pre-charrette and post-charrette peer reviews: **15%**
- charrette reflection paper: **20%**

Participation in the housing charrette (which takes place on a Thursday-Friday-Saturday) is required. I would be happy to communicate with other professors, your employer, etc. to resolve any conflicts this may cause. Please discuss any issues with me as soon as possible.

**Local Housing Issue White Paper (35% total)** – You will select a local housing issue that interests you and investigate it using primary research (such as interviewing stakeholders, producing photographs or drawings of a site, etc.) as well as secondary sources such as local newspapers. In addition, you will research the policies or practices or design solutions employed elsewhere to address similar issues. From this research, you will recommend a local response to the issue and present it in a white paper written for a specific audience. Finally, you will make a professional presentation of your work to the class.

**Extra Credit opportunities (if they are taking place in 2021):**

- Participating in Project Homeless Connect (Denver Convention Center)
- Presenting your team's charrette project at the Housing Colorado Conference (October 15, 2021)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

This is a ***tentative schedule*** of course topics, readings and assignments. Please monitor updates on Canvas and as announced in class. **All readings will be made available on Canvas.**

### **1) August 25: Course Overview; Housing as Home**

(optional reading) Dovey, Kimberly (1985). "Home and Homelessness." In *Home Environments*, ed. Irwin Altman and Carol Werner. New York: Plenum Press, 33-64.

(optional reading) Cooper Marcus, Clare (1972). "The House as Symbol." *Design and Environment* 3(3).

### **2) September 1: A Case for the Right to Housing; Factors in Housing Choice; Affordable Housing Design Charrette Kickoff**

*Guest Speakers: Housing Colorado Affordable Housing Design Charrette team leaders*

Hartman, Chester (2006). "The Case for the Right to Housing." In Rachel G. Bratt, Michael E. Stone, and Chester Hartman, eds. *A Right to Housing*. Temple University Press, 177-192.

Hayden, Dolores (2002). "Awakening from the Dream." In *Redesigning the American Dream: Gender, Housing and Family Life, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* New York: W.W. Norton, 57-77.

Ahrentzen, Sherry B. (1999). "Choice in Housing." *Harvard Design Magazine* 8(Summer): 1-6.

**Student data collection- DUE Sunday, September 5, 11 pm**

### **3) September 8: Housing Quality, Demand and Supply Trends in the U.S., Colorado and Denver**

*The State of the Nation's Housing 2019*, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University: Graduate School of Design, Harvard Kennedy School.

### **4) September 15: "Affordable" Housing**

Mallach, Alan (2009). "The Case for Affordable Housing." *A Decent Home: Planning, Building, and Preserving Affordable Housing*, Chicago: American Planning Association, Planners Press, 1-26.

National Low-Income Housing Coalition (2019). *Out of Reach 2019*, pp. vi-18, 41-45.

Newcomer, Jennifer and Phyllis Resnick (2018). *Factors Impacting Housing Affordability*. Shift Research Lab, pp. 1-9 assigned.

## 5) September 22: Affordable Housing Development and Finance

*Guest speaker: Ken Hoagland, Community Capital Corporation*

Hoagland, Ken (2012). "Low-Income Housing Tax Credits: A Layperson's Guide."

Bratt, Rachel G. (2007). "Financing Production of Low- and Moderate-Income Housing." *Financing Low-Income Communities: Models, Obstacles, and Future Directions*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bach, Alexa, et al. (2007). *Ten Principles for Developing Affordable Housing*. Urban Land Institute.

## 6) September 29: No class!

**Pre-Charrette Team Member Evaluations DUE, 11:59 pm**

**\*\* Thursday, September 30 – Saturday, October 2: Affordable Housing Design Charrettes**

## 7) October 6: Tiny Houses and Other Housing Design Innovations

Kolson Hurley, Amanda (2016). "Will US Cities Design Their Way Out of the Affordable Housing Crisis?" *Housing Solutions*. Next City, 5-11.

Kilston, Lyra (2014). "The Design Solution for Homelessness." *Housing Solutions*. Next City, 20-24

Kinney, Jen (2016). "Architect Open-Sources Affordable Housing Design." *Housing Solutions*. Next City, 25-26.

Tortorello, Michael (2014). "Small World, Big Idea." *The New York Times*, February 19.  
Available from: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/20/garden/small-world-big-idea.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/20/garden/small-world-big-idea.html?_r=2)

**Charrette Team Peer Reviews DUE**

## 8) October 13: Housing for Older Adults

Tanner, Bronwyn, Cheryl Tilse, and Desleigh de Jonge (2008). "Restoring and Sustaining Home: The Impact of Home Modifications on the Meaning of Home for Older People." *Journal of Housing for the Elderly* 22(3): 195-215.

Ball, M. Scott (n.d.). *Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments*. Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission and Community Housing Resource Center.

**In-class charrette presentations**

**Friday, October 15: (optional) Charrette presentations at Housing Colorado Now! Conference**

**9) October 20: Housing's Connections to Everyday Life**

von Hoffman, Alexander, Eric S. Belsky, and Kwan Lee (2006). *The Impact of Housing on Community: A Review of Scholarly Theories and Empirical Research*. Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies. (Executive Summary, pp. 29-42 assigned).

Students will be assigned to complete the readings in one of the following topic areas:

Education

McKoy, Deborah L. and Jeffrey M. Vincent (2008). "Housing and Education: The Inextricable Link." In James H. Carr and Nandinee K. Kutty, eds. *Segregation: The Rising Costs for America*.

Lubell, Jeffrey and Maya Brennan (2007). *Framing the Issues: The Positive Impact of Affordable Housing on Education*. Center for Housing Policy.

Health

Hartig, Terry and Roderick J. Lawrence (2003). "Introduction: The Residential Context of Health." *Journal of Social Issues* 59(3): 455-473.

Lubell, Jeffrey, Rosalyn Crain, and Rebecca Cohen (2007). *Framing the Issues: The Positive Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health*. Center for Housing Policy.

Transportation

Center for Transit-Oriented Development (2007). *The Case for Mixed-Income Transit-Oriented Development in the Denver Region*. (pages 1-4, 10-11, 25-26 minimum assigned)

Employment and Economic Opportunity

Swanstrom, Todd, Peter Dreier, and John Mollenkopf (2002). "Economic Inequality and Public Policy: The Power of Place." *City & Community* 1(4): 349-372.

Wardrip, Keith, Laura Williams, and Suzanne Hague (2011). *The Role of Affordable Housing in Creating Jobs and Stimulating Local Economic Development: A Review of the Literature*. Center for Housing Policy.

**10) October 27: U.S. Housing Policy and Programs- History and Ideologies**

Joseph, Mark (2006). "Is Mixed-Income Development an Antidote to Urban Poverty?" *Housing Policy Debate* 17(2): 209-234.

Hays, R. Allen (2005). "Power, Ideology and Public Policy," and "The Ideological Context of Housing Policy." *The Federal Government and Urban Housing*. Albany: SUNY Press.

<http://www.npr.org/2017/05/10/527660512/section-8-vouchers-help-the-poor-but-only-if-housing-is-available>

## Charrette Reflection Paper Due

### **11) November 3: Development Regulations: Tools for Housing Density and Diversity**

*Guest Speaker: Laura Brudzynski, Director of Housing Policy, Programs and HOPE Initiative, Department of Economic Development and Opportunity, City & County of Denver*

Schill, Michael (2005). "Regulations and Housing Development: What We Know."

Center for Housing Policy. "Don't Put It Here!" Does Affordable Housing Cause Nearby Property Values to Decline?

Tighe, J. Rosie (2010). "Public Opinion and Affordable Housing: A Review of the Literature." *Journal of Planning Literature* 25(1): 3-17.

## White Paper Proposal Due

### **12) November 10: Segregation, Discrimination and Fair Housing**

*Guest Speaker: Dindi Wade, Fair Housing Outreach Specialist, Denver Metro Fair Housing Center*

[Podcast: This American Life- House Rules \(Act 1\)](#)

Briggs, Xavier de Souza (2018). "Foreword—Fostering Inclusion: Whose Problem? Which Problem?" In *A Shared Future: Fostering Communities of Inclusion in an Era of Inequality*. Joint Housing Center, Harvard University.

Denver Metro Fair Housing Center (2014). *Access Denied: A Report on Rental Housing Discrimination in the Denver Metro Area*.

### **13) November 17: Homelessness**

Brown, Jennifer (2014). "Trying to Live, Trying to Learn." *Denver Post*. Available from: <http://extras.denverpost.com/homelessstudents/>

Gladwell, Malcolm (2006). Million-Dollar Murray: Why Problems Like Homelessness May Be Easier to Solve Than to Manage." *The New Yorker* 81(46).

Kertesz, Stefan G. and Saul J. Weiner (2009). Housing the Chronically Homeless: High Hopes, Complex Realities." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 301(17): 1822-1824.

**14) November 24: No Class (Thanksgiving/ Fall Break)**

**15) December 1: The Role of Housing in Gentrification**

Duany, Andres (2001). "Three Cheers for Gentrification." *The American Enterprise*, April.

Denver Office of Economic Development (2016). *Gentrification Study: Strategies to Mitigate Involuntary Displacement*.

Badger, Emily (2016). "How to Make Expensive Cities Affordable for Everyone Again." *The Washington Post*, February 19.

**15) December 8: White Paper Project Presentations - Urban & Regional Planning students**

**16) December 15: Finals Week**

**White Paper Project Presentations – Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design students**

**White Paper Projects DUE (everyone)**

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and dismissal from the University.

Accommodation: I am committed to providing everyone the support and services needed to participate in this course. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Resources and Services in a timely manner (e. g. for assignment or activity accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the activity) so that your needs can be addressed.

Religious Observances: I will make every effort to reasonably and fairly accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled classes, assignments, or required activities. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The University of Colorado Denver is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment. University policy and Title IX prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, pregnancy, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. All students shall have the same fundamental rights to equal respect, due process, and judgment of them based solely on factors demonstrably related to performance and expectations as students.