The Housing Crisis!
City Planning 98/198 (1 unit)
Spring 2024
University of California, Berkeley

Course Facilitators: Elena Fu & Andy Chaidez
Emails: elenafu@berkeley.edu & achaidez@berkeley.edu (please email both)
Time: Mondays, 6:30-8 PM
Instruction: In Person
Faculty Sponsor: Ben Metcalf

Cal Habitat for Humanity facilitates this DeCal to educate the campus community about housing and promote access to affordable housing. The DeCal will be taught by two undergraduate students who are experienced leaders in Cal Habitat.

This student-led course will examine why there is a need for decent, affordable housing and how this need can be addressed. The course analyzes frameworks—both failed ones from the past, and a host of recent new ways of thinking from the present—as a way of understanding the complexity of the issue. The course will feature guest speakers from academia, government, and nonprofit organizations sharing unique perspectives on housing. Students will participate in discussions and group activities to further reflect on material presented by lecturers. While there is no final exam for this course, students will demonstrate their knowledge through field work and a final group presentation.

This course is designed to give an overview of issues related to affordable housing. Topics include: housing segregation, public policy, land and city planning, evictions, informal housing, and more.

Course Requirements: No prior knowledge or experience necessary.

Grading Policy: Failing to complete the course requirements or achieve a grade of at least 70% will result in a “No Pass” grade. Please communicate any accommodations or personal situations with the course facilitators as soon as possible.

Attendance/Participation: 35%
Homework: 20%
Field Work: 15%
Final Project: 30%

Last Updated: 10/23/2023
Attendance and Participation:
- Attendance will be tracked with a sign-in form each week.
- You may make up missed attendance points by finding a video, talk, article, or reading on the topic presented that week. Write 1 page double spaced paper (MLA format) about what you learned about the topic. Please submit this to the ‘Absent Make-Up’ assignment on bCourses.
- Excused absences include certain pre-set events (email us in advance) or health/family emergencies (email us after to notify us).
- All absences (excused or unexcused) must be made up before the next time the class meets. Students are allowed only 2 unexcused absences.
  - Find video, talk, article, or reading on the same topic. Write 1 page double spaced paper (MLA format) about what you learned about the topic. Turn in under ‘Absent Make-Up Assignment’ on bCourses.
- Active participation: Discussions will make for a more lively and engaging class.
- Attendance is HIGHLY important and accounts for a large portion of the course. Our guest speakers are taking time out of their busy schedules to speak to our class, so please be respectful of their time!

Homework:
- A discussion post will follow each class session with critical questions for further reflection on the subjects. Students will be required to a) respond to the questions in their post and b) respond thoughtfully to another peer’s discussion post.
- Short readings will be provided throughout the semester to supplement lectures and stimulate class discussion. Some will be incorporated into prompts for responses.

Field Work:
- As part of this course, you will be required to participate in 8 hours of service with an anti-poverty organization and citizen advocacy (e.g. Cal Habitat for Humanity, Defend People’s Park, Youth Spirit Artworks, etc). You will send picture proof at a service event, as well as write a one-page reflection in MLA format.
- Field work will constitute 15% of the class grade.
- Proof of field work and 1 page reflection must be turned in by Monday, December 11 at 11:59 p.m. on bCourses.

Final Project:
- A final tract project will be assigned towards the end of the semester. The project will either be following a policy advocate/analysis tract or an affordable housing

Last Updated: 10/23/2023
developer tract, depending on their interests. Students will present their final project during dead week.
- Final projects must be turned in by Monday, December 11 at 11:59 p.m. on bCourses.

Course Structure:
- This course is intended to be collaborative and exploratory. Through speakers and discussions, we hope to introduce students to the many aspects of housing, and different frameworks that people use to look at—and come up with solutions for—the housing crisis. The intention of the course is for students to leave with an expanded understanding and knowledge base of the different facets of housing, and the many different players who aim to tackle aspects of the issue. Through the final tract project, students will follow their path of interest as a potential actor attempting to address the housing crisis through the angle of the policy advocate, the policy analyst, and the affordable housing developer.
- An average class session will generally involve an introduction warm-up activity (5-15min), a talk by a speaker (45min), and a follow-up discussion to dive into the material learned (20-30min).

→ Module 1: History & Scoping the Problem
   Length: 2-3 class sessions
   Goals: Learn what housing looks like in the context of the United States history of housing, slowly narrowing in to look at California, and the Bay Area. Understand how there are disproportionalities—and that these disparities under various lines and intersections of identities exacerbate the housing issue for certain people. Learn to identify major misconceptions and outdated frameworks of understanding the housing crisis, identifying some ways in which people have tried to fix the situation, and failed. Learn about examples of housing on a global scale.
   Skills: Identify past major frameworks of understanding the housing crisis.
   Conceptualize key moments in housing crisis history.
   Hone in on issues of disproportionality. Identify common misconceptions about the housing crisis.

→ Module 2: Institutions
   Length: 1-2 class sessions
   Goals: Learn how institutions, touched upon in the historical scope, currently shape the housing issues. Understand how financial institutions, regulatory institutions, and other outside interests play a role in shaping conversation, political movement, and
housing outcomes. Be able to connect institutions to their political, historical origin, as well as to the present-day effects.

**Skills:** Be able to identify institutions, the roles they play, and how they interact with each other. Be able to draw connections between historical context and current state of institutions. Compare and contrast ineffective and effective policies and actions of the institutions. Institutions created by policy, such as rent boards, tenants organizations.

→ **Module 3: Housing Development**

**Length:** 2 class sessions  
**Goals:** Understand the complexity of the housing crisis. Be able to explain why we can’t easily just ‘build more housing’. Learn about the barriers to making affordable housing. Understanding how affordable housing politics shape location and place, as well as local environments. How can affordable housing be a good or bad tool for addressing the housing crisis? Learn about perspectives from both private affordable housing developers and nonprofit affordable housing developers. How do the perspectives differ? What frameworks do each use to identify and address the housing crisis?

**Skills:** Be able to outline and explain the key parts and process of affordable housing development. Be able to identify barriers to quick and optimal affordable housing. How do the institutions learned about in module 2 both help or hinder the process of building affordable housing? How do the various sectors—private and nonprofit—address these challenges? Be able to explain: how does affordable housing attempt to address the housing crisis? Do you think this is an effective strategy? Why?

→ **Module 4: Policy Advocacy**

**Length:** 3 class sessions  
**Goals:** Learn about proposed policy changes and societal reforms/action. Be able to build upon the foundation from the previous modules: how do institutions shape the policy conversation? Policy is embedded in the government and legislative institutions, which also is swayed by lobbyists and constituent opinions—how can that be both detrimental and beneficial to policy? How do affordable housing development goals shape political advocacy conversation? What are various strategies for political advocacy, and how are they effective? Be able to answer such questions, and argue for certain policies.
Skills: Understand how advocacy can be a powerful tool for addressing the housing crisis. Connect how the various interest groups at play work together to achieve housing solutions. Compare and contrast historical impact of past policies to current advocacy work of modern policies. Evaluate the effectiveness of such campaigns and the policies suggested.

→ Module 5: Solutions?/UC Berkeley

Length: 2 class sessions

Goals: Understand what framework institutions, policy advocates, and housing developers take in addressing the housing crisis. Evaluate the effectiveness of such approaches. How do they differ? Understand how each has its own merits, and be able to engage in thoughtful conversation about potential solutions to the housing crisis. Be able to flesh out the nuances of various solutions, and understand the complexity of the issue. How might different solutions work worse or better? Does that change depending on the context? Think critically about what role we can play to work towards solutions.

Skills: Evaluate solutions critically. Understand that there is never one right way of addressing a particular issue. We will also take a special look at the case of UC Berkeley. How does the housing crisis specifically affect us and our surrounding environment? We are on stolen lands—what does this look like in the scope of housing debates? The UC berkely situation: in particular, resources, organizations, etc. How students have gotten involved.
Class Schedule (subject to change):

**MODULE 1: History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLASS #1:</strong> Monday, February 5, 6:30-8 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES:</strong> INTRO TO THE HOUSING CRISIS!: We will review the syllabus and expectations of the course, as well as do icebreakers. We will then provide a general overview of the class structure, and start diving into some of the major frameworks surrounding the past and present of the housing crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HW DUE:</strong> 1) Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLASS #2:</strong> Monday, February 12, 6:30-8 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES:</strong> HISTORY OF THE HOUSING CRISIS!: This class will contain a deep dive of the frameworks touched last class, zooming into the historical context, as well as trying to frame the problem in terms of the disproportionality. We will look both generally at the United States as a whole, as well as California and Bay Area’s specific issues pertaining to the housing crisis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **HW DUE:** 1) Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.  
2) Come prepared to class for discussion. Discussion is only as good as its participants! |

**MODULE 2: Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLASS #3:</strong> Monday, February 19, 6:30-8 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES:</strong> This class will cover the basics of the institutions that play a role in housing. We will compare what we learn about here to the history learned about in the last class. How do financial institutions, government agencies, private and nonprofit organizations play off each other to shape the housing environment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **HW DUE:** 1) Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.  
2) Come prepared to class for discussion. Discussion is only as good as its participants! |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLASS #4:</strong> Monday, February 26, 6:30-8 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES:</strong> We will start with a brief introductory activity, then will be having a speaker come in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Last Updated: 10/23/2023*
and talk about the topic in further depth. We will close out with a discussion and Q&A.

Speaker: Igor Tregub, Berkeley Rent Board
Topics: Experience on rent board, policies, how the rent board and other institutions operate within the scope of addressing the housing crisis, how policies passed can hurt or help the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HW DUE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Come prepared to class for discussion. Discussion is only as good as its participants!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MODULE 3 : Housing Development**

**CLASS #5: Monday, March 4, 6:30-8 pm**

**OBJECTIVES:** We will be mainly covering housing developers in this unit! We will be having speakers come in from both private and nonprofit sectors of affordable housing development, gaining perspectives from each. This class will feature Muhammad Alameldin, who will lay the groundwork to thinking about affordable housing development.

Speaker: Muhammad Alameldin, Terner Center
Topics: Housing development, how to think mindfully about the details of creating affordable, sustainable, and equitable solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HW DUE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLASS #6: Monday, March 11, 6:30-8 pm**

**OBJECTIVES:** We will be mainly covering housing developers in this unit! We will be having speakers come in from both private and nonprofit sectors of affordable housing development, gaining perspectives from each.

Speakers: Michelle Williams, SAHA & Alex Wilson, YSA
Topics: Housing development, and specifically SAHA’s housing development and the tiny house village. What the project stands for, the values it represents and the theory of change behind it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HW DUE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Last Updated: 10/23/2023*
## MODULE 4: Policy Advocacy

### CLASS #7: Monday, March 18, 6:30-8 pm

**OBJECTIVES:** Turning from housing development from the last unit, we will be transitioning to a closer look at how different political advocates are championing policies to address the housing crisis. We will be laying our theoretical foundation for this course, setting ourselves up for discussion with our speakers the following two weeks, while also making connections to the past weeks looking at housing development.

**HW DUE:**
1. Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.
2. Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.

### CLASS #8: Monday, April 1, 6:30-8 pm

**OBJECTIVES:** We will be bringing in a speaker who works in political advocacy, as well as do activities that relate to the topic.

Speaker: Ali Sapirman, Housing Action Coalition
Topics: Talking about political advocacy, the process of advocating for more housing, the theory of change behind it, and the work that HAC does.

**HW DUE:**
1. Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.

### CLASS #9: Monday, April 8, 6:30-8 pm

**OBJECTIVES:** We will be bringing in a speaker who works in political advocacy, as well as do activities that relate to the topic.

Speaker: Jeremy Levine, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo
Topics: Political advocacy and the housing crisis. Different policies, perspectives on policies, niches within that. What it looks like on a day to day basis as well as potentially the theoretical basis for why policy works.

**HW DUE:**
1. Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.

## MODULE 5: Solutions? / UC Berkeley

### CLASS #10: Monday, April 15, 6:30-8 pm

**OBJECTIVES:** This class will focus on synthesizing the information from our past modules of class.
We will be mainly focusing in on facilitating discussion: what do you think are solutions to the housing crisis? This day is all about assembling the big picture.

**HW DUE:**
1. Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.
2. Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.

**CLASS #11: Monday, April 22, 6:30-8 pm**

**OBJECTIVES:**
During our last class, we’ll be covering the particular case of UC Berkeley! What are some of the local housing issues the community faces? Who are the people championing for said causes? What can we do about it?

Speaker: Jordan Grimes, Greenbelt Alliance

**HW DUE:**
1. Complete guided reflection assignment on bCourses.
2. Readings as found in unit folder on bCourses.

---

**No Class Monday, April 29 (Dead Week)**

---

**FINAL PROJECT: DUE Monday, May 6, 2023**

**OBJECTIVES:**
FINAL PROJECTS: Students will present (in groups of 2-3) a proposal for a sustainable, affordable housing project development in a city of their choosing OR submit a policy memo. See [bCourses assignment for details](#).

**HW DUE:**
1. Upload final project presentation to assignment on bCourses.

---

_Last Updated: 10/23/2023_