

The Politics of Housing

Instructor of Record

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Meeting Time

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
3:30 PM - 5:25 PM
ICC 204

Office Hours

Friday
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
ICC Third Floor Lobby

Course Description

This course explores the political forces which have shaped American housing policy. Politics fundamentally shape where and how people may live. In turn, where and how people live can be fundamental to their political attitudes. Housing is a powerful lens through which we can examine the unequal distribution of power in American politics, and how power reproduces and rewards itself through exclusion. In the face of a growing housing affordability crisis, this course will explore proposed policy solutions in terms of interest group support and considerations of how politics shapes what is possible. How have various groups conceptualized the problem of housing affordability and attempted to fix it? In what ways are the concerns of marginalized people voiced in our politics? This course will aim to engage with big questions, including racism in politics and policy, whether housing is a human right, how policy choices can reshape our politics, and the fundamental question of Who Governs.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should:

- a) Understand the history of the government's role in housing in the United States
- b) Understand the role of race in historic and current housing politics
- c) Be able to apply concepts of federalism, interest groups, political participation, and political institutions to explain observed realities of housing politics
- d) Be able to identify key political actors in local debates and evaluate their positions and relative influence

Class Expectations

Housing politics is a topic with strongly held viewpoints on all sides of the debate. This class will engage with current political debates and sensitive topics, including systemic racism. Debate and disagreement are encouraged, but these debates must be grounded in empathy and respect for others.

You are free to use laptops and other devices for note-taking and participation in class activities, but I expect you to be engaged in the course material while class is in session.

Please try to attend all class meetings. If you need to miss class for any reason, please let me know in advance. Missing a substantial number of classes will inhibit your ability to succeed in this class. Each additional unexcused absence after the second will result in a letter grade deduction from your class participation grade.

There is no assigned textbook for this class, and you are not expected to purchase any books. All readings will be published to Canvas.

Grade Components

- Four short weekly reading reflections (40%)
- Class Participation (20%)
 - Reading discussant: 15%
 - Attendance and class discussion: 5%
- Final paper (40%)

Assignments

Reading Reflections

For each week, you should prepare a one-page, single-spaced reflection on the readings. You will be expected to select several of the readings (you do not need to mention them all, but you may do so), briefly summarize their arguments, and explain how the readings relate. Do the authors agree or disagree? How can their arguments be synthesized to reach a more complete conclusion? What questions are you left with? Reading is important in this course, and these reflections will evaluate your engagement with the material, give practice in synthesizing arguments, and encourage brevity in your writing.

Participation

This class will have discussion in addition to lecture. Participation in these discussions is a component of your grade, and to do so effectively, you will need to complete readings *before* class. The schedule in the section below contains the core readings, but is subject to change on Canvas.

Class participation will be primarily assessed by serving as a discussant for readings. At the beginning of the course, you will sign up to be a discussant for several readings. On the day that reading is assigned, you will be expected to speak briefly on that reading. This should include a summary of the key argument of the piece, what methods or evidence the author used to make their claims, your reaction to the reading (comments/criticism), and a question to kick off the class discussion. You do not need to create slides/Powerpoint or a written document for a discussant role, but may do so if that is helpful to you.

Your participation as a discussant will be the primary portion of your participation grade, but I will also factor in your participation in class discussions outside of that (see the Grade Components above). Discussion boards on Canvas will be an available substitute to participating verbally in class.

Final Paper

The final paper for this class will require you to select and evaluate a real-world case study of a housing policy or program. This class is focused on American politics, but I will accept paper topics that examine comparative cases from other countries. Consider the political factors that

influenced the ultimate outcome and discuss what we can learn from it. We will frequently discuss examples of housing policies and programs in the course readings and lectures; you are welcome to select one of these examples for your final paper, but you may also bring in something from outside of class.

At the end of the third week of class, you will submit a paper proposal for a grade, identifying a topic and a research design. All papers must cite relevant course readings; connecting specifics of the case study to broader lessons from the literature and class lectures is a required component. The paper must also include “data”, but these data may be quantitative, qualitative, or a mix of both. Newspaper articles, meeting transcripts & recordings, census & economic data, interest group data, and even a relevant interview can all be used to bolster your argument drawing on the literature.

A complete rubric will be provided in the third week of class.

Schedule

Each week will cover a different topic. A daily reading list will be assigned, with 1-2 short readings per class meeting. Scholarly readings will usually be paired with news articles, including current events if applicable. Keeping up with the reading is important for this class for both the reading reflections and class participation. The reading list below is subject to change before the first class; some may be added, and some on the list may be transitioned to “recommended”. For the listed books, note the chapter or page selection.

Week 1: Conceptualizations of Housing and the Role of Government

In the first week, we will talk more theoretically and abstractly about how housing fits into the responsibilities of the American government, and why housing might be a useful lens for studying American politics.

7/10

- Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2014. *After the “Master Theory”: Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis. Perspectives on Politics.*
- Trountine, Jessica. 2009. "All Politics Is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (3):611-618.

7/11

- Jefferson, Thomas. 1785. “Notes on Virginia,” Query XIX
- Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (a.k.a The Kerner Commission Report)

7/12

- Goetz, Edward G. 2013. *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1: “The Quiet Successes and Loud Failures of Public Housing” (pages 24-47)

7/13

- Pierson, Paul. 1994. Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment, Cambridge studies in comparative politics. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4: “Retrenchment in a Vulnerable Sector: Housing Policy”

Week 2: Race and Housing — Segregation, Redlining, and Modern Discrimination

In the second week, we will foreground the role of systemic racism in shaping the politics and policy of housing in the United States, both in the past and the present.

7/17

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*, June 2014.
- Michener, Jamila. 2019. "Policy Feedback in a Racialized Polity." *Policy Studies Journal* 47 (2):423-450.

7/18

- Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liverlight Publishing Corporation. Chapter 3: Racial Zoning

7/19

- Trounstein, Jessica. 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: A Theory of Segregation by Design

7/20

- Ndubizu, Rosemary Nonye. 2019. "Reagan's Austerity Bureaucrats: Examining the Racial and Gender Bias of Ronald Reagan's Housing Vouchers." *Du Bois Review* 16 (2):535-554.
- Galvez, Martha M., Solomon Greene, Alyse D. Oneto, and Patrick Spauster. 2020. Protecting Housing Choice Voucher Holders from Discrimination. Urban Institute.

Week 3: NIMBYism and the Politics of Exclusion

In the third week, we will turn our eye locally, and discuss the prevalent topic of "Not in my Backyard"-ism (NIMBYism). The readings for this week will guide a discussion of how privileged actors use political institutions to maintain a favorable status quo, and protect their privilege by excluding others.

7/24

- Shklar, Judith N. 1995. *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. Introduction

7/25

- Fischel, William A. 2001. *The Homevoter Hypothesis: How Home Values Influence Local Government Taxation, School Finance, and Land-Use Policies*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- McCabe, Brian J. 2016. *No Place Like Home: Wealth, Community, and the Politics of Homeownership*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1: Introduction.

7/26

- Einstein, Katherine Levine, David Matthew Glick, and Maxwell Palmer. 2020. "Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis." *Political Science Quarterly*.

7/27

- Desmond, Matthew. 2017. "How Homeownership became the Engine of American Inequality." *The New York Times Magazine*
- Hankinson, Michael. 2018. "When Do Renters Behave Like Homeowners? High Rent, Price Anxiety, and NIMBYism." *American Political Science Review*.

Week 4: Policymaking in Context – Interest Groups and Federalism

In the fourth week, we will discuss how states and cities make housing policies, looking beyond zoning to affordable housing policies such as rent control and housing trust funds. In these state and local policymaking arenas, elected officials are influenced by interest groups and constrained by federalism.

7/31

- Peterson, Paul E., Barry George Rabe, and Kenneth K. Wong. 1986. *When Federalism Works*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution. Pages 1-31.

8/1

- Wong, Kenneth K. 1990. *City Choices: Education and Housing*, SUNY Series in Urban Public Policy. Albany: State University of New York Press. Chapter 2: In Pursuit of a Housing Strategy.
- Goodman, Christopher B, and Megan E Hatch. 2022. "State Preemption and Affordable Housing Policy." *Urban Studies*.

8/2

- Anzia, Sarah F. 2022. *Local Interests: Politics, Policy, and Interest Groups in US City Governments*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 7: Business and Growth, pages 163-168 & 182-200.

8/3

- Michener, Jamila, and Mallory SoRelle. 2021. "Politics, Power, and Precarity: How Tenant Organizations Transform Local Political Life." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*.

Week 5: Local Solutions – Attempting to Solve Homelessness and Housing Unaffordability

In the fifth week, we will discuss the varied housing policies cities use to address issues such as homelessness and housing unaffordability. How are policy scholars attempting to solve homelessness? Based on what we've learned in prior weeks, are these ideas likely to succeed politically? This section of the class will include discussion of your final paper topics in addition to the assigned readings.

8/7

- Schuetz, Jenny. 2022. *Fixer-Upper: How to Repair America's Broken Housing Systems*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press. Chapter 8: Build Political Coalitions around Better Policies.

8/8

- Rosen, Eva. 2020. *The Voucher Promise : "Section 8" and the Fate of an American Neighborhood*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8: Conclusion

8/9

- Hatch, Megan E. 2017. "Statutory Protection for Renters: Classification of State Landlord-Tenant Policy Approaches." *Housing Policy Debate* 27 (1):98-119.

8/10

- [Reserved for discussion of final paper topics]

Copyright Protection of Course Materials

The materials used in this and all Georgetown University courses ("Course Materials") are the intellectual property of the course instructor and of the textbooks we use. Course Materials may not be disseminated or reproduced in any form for public distribution (e.g., sale, exchange, etc.) without the written permission of the course instructor. Course Materials include all written or electronic documents and materials, including all lectures and PowerPoint slides, current and past examination questions/answers, the syllabus, and tapes and videos of lectures. Course Materials may only be used by students enrolled in the course for academic (course-related) purposes.

In other words, Course Materials may be used by you now and in the future for your own personal reference. You may also share them with other current Georgetown students while studying and doing your classwork. But they should not be shared outside of the Georgetown community. They should not be posted to the internet. This prohibition includes on your own website or on any other websites, such as those that collect and share course materials. Lack of adherence to these rules will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be referred to Georgetown's Honor Council.

Finally, published course readings (book chapters, articles, reports, etc.) available in Canvas are copyrighted material. These works are made available to students through licensed databases or fair use. They are protected by copyright law, and may not be further disseminated or reproduced in any form for distribution (e.g., uploading to websites, sale, exchange, etc.) without permission of the copyright owner.

More information about intellectual property and copyright can be found here:
<https://www.library.georgetown.edu/copyright>

Policies and Assistance

Academic Resource Center/Disability Support:

If you believe you have a disability, contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335 (202-687-8354). The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ASA) and University policies. If you need an accommodation for this class, please reach out to them, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions. For more information, go to <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>.

Important Academic Policies and Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to uphold the academic policies set forth by Georgetown University. Students should therefore familiarize themselves with all the rules, regulations, and procedures listed in Georgetown's Honor System. The policies are located at: <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies/>

Counseling and Psychiatric Services

The office of Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) can be reached at (202) 687-6985. Or after hours, call (833) 960-3006 to reach Fonemed, a telehealth service; individuals may ask for the on-call CAPS clinician.

Provost's Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances:

In this classroom, we promote respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Please notify me in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean.

Title IX Syllabus Statement (endorsed by Faculty Senate)

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title

IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/resourcecenter>.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: confidential email sarp@georgetown.edu

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202.687.6985 or after hours, call (833) 960-3006 to reach Fonemed, a telehealth service; individuals may ask for the on-call CAPS clinician

More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the [Sexual Misconduct Website](#).

(Above statement and TIX faculty resources found at: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help/guidance-for-faculty-and-staff-on-how-to-support-students/>)

Title IX Pregnancy Modifications and Adjustments

I am committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant students. At any point throughout their pregnancy students may request adjustments/modifications based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication or medical need. Students may also request accommodations following labor and delivery based on a complication or medical need.

SCS students must complete the [Pregnancy Adjustment Request Form \(https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/\)](https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/) and submit it to the SCS Deputy Title IX Coordinator at titleixscs@georgetown.edu. Upon receiving the completed form, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the requested adjustments and implementation process.

More information about pregnancy modifications can be found on the [Title IX at Georgetown University Website](#).

Policy on Children in Class

Babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support feeding relationship (breastfeeding or via bottle). Because not all people/parents can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your baby are welcome in class anytime.

For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving them with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable

with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please give up seats near the door if a parenting classmate needs to bring their child to class and use that seat.