THE HELLER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Home, Housing, Homelessness: Housing Policy in the U.S.

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Course Description

An essential human need, few things intersect and influence as many aspects of our lives as housing does. At its minimal meaning, a home provides shelter from the elements. Housing provides a private space for family life, relaxation. The location of where the home sits matters, determining access to quality schools, parks, transportation, shopping and much more. And housing can be a major component of building financial wealth. As this incomplete list of various aspects of housing indicates, housing impacts people in many different ways, and this course will provide a general introduction on some of the dominant themes: Homeownership, renters, housing instability and homelessness, neighborhoods and segregation, as well as the impact of housing on health and mental health.

Housing policies in the United States comprise a vast field of policies, our tax system, and programmatic responses. Although relative small in comparison to health and education, the field of housing policy is fragmented and specialized. This module will present an introduction to a range of these separate and connected topics.

There are no prerequisites for this class which is open to Phd and advanced MPP students

Readings from the following books:

Eric S Belsky, Christopher E. Herbert, Jennifer M. Molinksy (eds) (2014.).Homeownership Built to Last: Balancing access, affordability, and risk after the housing crisis.

Matthew Desmond (2016). Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.

Select chapters and additional readings will be posted on Latte.
Assignments
There will be one final paper on a housing policy and one presentations on the topic selected for the paper. Details for each assignment, the presentation and final research paper will be presented in class.

Grading
Class presentations 30 %
Final research paper 50 %
Participation 20 %
100%

Course Attendance
Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If a student is unable to attend a class, she/he needs to notify the professor ahead of time. Students are expected to write a 3-5 page response to the readings of the class they miss and submit this assignment before the next class. There are exception to this requirement for extraordinary circumstances (e.g. death in the family, severe illness)

Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity is central to the mission of education excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source.

This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the sources of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. Violations of university policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure in the course or on an assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Notice: If you have a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and require accommodations, please bring it to the instructor’s attention prior to the second meeting of the class.

Heller School Policy on Use of Computers in the Classroom
Laptops may be used in Heller classrooms at the discretion of the course instructor. The instructor may ban them or restrict their use. In no case shall students use laptops for purposes other than taking notes or other instructor approved tasks. Surfing the web, email and text messaging are not permitted under any circumstances and are a breach of professional conduct.

Laptops are not permitted to be used during exams unless the instructor deems them integral to the taking of the exam. Cell phones and PDAs must be silenced during all classes and may not be used during exams.
Class Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Housing Trends and Patterns, and the Status of the Nation’s Housing

Readings:
  Chapter 1: Introduction
  Chapter 2: Trends, Patterns, and Problems
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (2017). The State of the Nation’s Housing.


Readings:
  Chapter 12: Home Ownership and Income Integration
Eric S Belsky, Christopher E. Herbert, Jennifer M. Molinksy (eds) (2014): Homeownership Built to Last
  Introduction: Balancing Access, Affordability, and Risk after the Housing Crisis
  Chapter 4, The Decision to Own Among Low Income People, p153-165
  Chapter1: Chasing the American Dream
  Chapter 2: The Happy Homeowner Narrative

Guest speaker: Rachel Drew, PhD, formerly Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University

Week 3: Renters (who are they?), their (lack of) Protection, and Federal Housing Assistance

Readings:
  Chapter 6: Public Housing
  Chapter 8: Vouchers
Matthew Desmond (2016). Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City
  Chapter 1: The Business of Owning the City
  Chapter 2: Making Rent
Guest speaker: Josephine McNeil, Executive Director CAN-DO, Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton Development Organization

Week 4: Housing Instability and Homelessness: The rise in homelessness in the US since 1980, early responses to homelessness, and changes in homeless policies over the past 2 decades

Readings:
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty: Homelessness in the America: Overview of Data and Causes
Meschede (2004). Bridges and Barrier to Housing for Chronically Homeless Street Dwellers
Meschede (2007). The First Two Years of Housing First in Quincy, Massachusetts
http://scholarworks.umb.edu/csp_pubs/11/

Invited guest speaker: Jeff Olivet, CEO/President Center for Social Innovation, Needham, MA
A conversation about racism and homelessness:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaJKy2O51wsQGBLRPnl9fgzm4cwc23L0L

Week 5: Redlining, Segregation, Gentrification, Fair Housing, NIMBY (Not in my backyard) and the YIMBY (Yes in my backyard)

DUE: Paper topic and outline of final paper

Watch: Race: The Power of an Illusion,
Episode 3: The House We Live in
https://brandeis.kanopystreaming.com/video/race-power-illusion-0
Readings:
   Chapter 11: Fair Housing and Community Reinvestment
Eric S Belsky, Christopher E. Herbert, Jennifer M. Molinksy (eds) (2014): Homeownership Built to Last
   Chapter 1: Homeownership, Wealth, and the Production of Racialized Space (john a. powell and Kalomoa Cardwell)
   https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/
Richard Florida (2015). This is what Happens after a Neighborhood gets Gentrified. The Atlantic.
   EPI forum:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ0IMTA640E

Week 6: Impact of housing on health and mental health, and housing for older people and people with special needs

Readings:
   Chapter 10: Housing for People with Special Needs
Meschede and Gaeta (2007). Housing as a Prescription for Improved Health of Chronically Homeless Persons
   https://apha.confex.com/apha/135am/recordingredirect.cgi/id/16832
   https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/47.1.96

Week 7: A discussion of the complexity of home, housing, and homelessness.

Student presentations and discussions of paper topics