

NEW TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY: SOCIAL POLICY AND HOUSING
SOC350H1-F – Fall 2020

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Office hours: by appointment; virtual only

Course Description

Affordable housing is a world-wide problem, the consequences of which are experienced particularly acutely by young people. This course will give students the tools to engage the complexities of this problem. We will consider what housing is—a consumption good, a social right, or an investment asset? We will consider how these different understandings of housing affect how societies develop the institutional structure of their housing systems. We will also consider how housing systems impact wealth distribution and preferences regarding social welfare policies. The first part of the course will cover housing finance systems and social housing policies—essential foundations for the rest of the course. We will examine who has access to mortgage credit and how lending is regulated, as well as subsidized and community housing programs.

COVID-19 particulars

We will work with each other virtually and asynchronously throughout this course. Meaning, there will not be any in-person components of the course for anyone and we will not all be in the same virtual place at the same time. Each week, I will post lecture recordings and discussion prompts or group activities. Your job each week will be to do the readings, view the lecture recordings, and contribute to the discussions/group activities. I recommend that you do these weekly activities in that order: readings, lecture recordings, discussions/group activities. You'll have one week (7 days) from the time I post the recordings and discussion prompts to participate in the discussions/group activities. We will have a midterm test and a final test. Both tests will be taken online. They will be open book and timed. The format of the tests will be short answer essay questions. We will communicate with each other during the course via email, video calls, and our online discussions/group activities. I will be checking in with everyone periodically to find out if the way we're running the course is working. But please don't hesitate to contact me if something isn't working. Please also let me know if something is working really well. COVID-19 teaching and learning is new territory for us all, open communication will be essential to make sure that everyone gets the most they can from the course.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite to take this course is SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 plus two of the following (1.0 FCE): SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without the full prerequisite will be removed from the class and without notice.

Learning Objectives

1. Build a nuanced understanding of what housing is and what is sociological about housing.
2. Develop knowledge regarding the different components of complex housing systems.
3. Critically consider the broader issues in which housing is implicated, including social policy and inequality.
4. Improve communication skills through discussions and group work.
5. Improve critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through a policy proposal or research paper.

Grading

Your overall course grade is meant to assess your academic performance in this course. This grade does not measure your overall potential as a person nor do they assess your overall intelligence or worth. A variety of assessment tools and assignments were designed to assess your knowledge, skills, and achievement of the course objectives.

Component	Weight	Due Date
Participation	15%	
Personal profile	1%	Sept. 18
Self-assessment essay	3%	Nov. 27
Discussions/Group work	11%	each week
Proposal or paper	45%	
Outline	10%	Oct. 9
Draft	15%	Oct. 30
Peer review	10%	Nov. 6
Final version	10%	Dec. 4
Midterm	20%	Oct. 16
Final Assessment	20%	term assessment period, Dec 11-22, 2020

Participation. Learning only happens when you practice using the material we cover. The best place to practice using what you know and getting clarification on what you don't understand yet will be the online discussions. You are expected to participate in these each week. You can respond directly to the posted prompts or reply to someone else's comment/question. I encourage actual discussion, so you will be equally rewarded for posting your own comment/question as you will be for replying to someone else's. Your goal should be adding value to the discussion with respectful and thoughtful contributions and insightful questions. I also encourage you to share relevant, appropriate content in your posts. This could include news articles, YouTube videos, etc. Though, I again stress that they need to be relevant and appropriate. Some weeks I will send prompts to small groups and you should work together over the week to respond as a group to the prompt.

Personal profile. By midnight on Sept. 18th, please submit via Quercus a profile of yourself. Include: 1) a recent photo, 2) your major(s)/minor(s), 3) one thing you expect to get from this class, 4) what you hope to do after college, 5) one non-academic activity you enjoy, 6) one positive and one negative Covid-19 experience, 7) anything else you wish to include about yourself.

Self-assessment essay. By midnight on Nov. 27th, please submit via Quercus your participation self-assessment essay. This should be a 200 to 300-word essay evaluating your participation in the course. You should ask yourself the following questions: 1) How have I contributed to the course environment? 2) Did I treat everyone with respect and dignity? How? 3) What did I learn? What did I take away? You should demonstrate your answers to these questions in the essay with evidence from your participation throughout the semester. You may wish to write down a few sentences each week to summarize your involvement. That way, you can continuously evaluate your participation, as well as keep evidence/examples for when you write your essay.

Policy proposal/research paper. This proposal/paper is another opportunity for you to practice using the material we cover. You may choose to write a policy proposal in which you propose a particular housing-related policy and make a case for it, including what issue the policy is meant to address. You may also choose to write a research paper in which you pose a housing-related research question and conduct research to answer it. You will be expected to draw on appropriate course material to inform your proposal or research. You will develop the final proposal/paper in stages.

Outline. By midnight on Oct. 9th, please submit via Quercus a detailed outline. Your policy proposal or research question should be clearly stated. The outline should also include several topic sentences for the body of your paper, along with detailed notes on supporting documentation for the topic sentences. See some bare-bones examples for the outline under the assignments tab on Quercus. Your outline should be more filled out than these examples.

Draft. By midnight on Oct. 30th, please submit via Quercus a complete rough draft of your proposal/research paper. A copy of your draft will be shared with another student for peer review. Since we'll be doing peer review and these will be graded, it's important to get your draft done on time so that you can participate in the peer review. See the instructions and grading rubric for the draft on Quercus.

Peer review. By midnight on Nov. 6th, please submit via Quercus your peer review of your partner's paper. Get the instructions and the set of questions to answer for the peer review from the assignments tab on Quercus.

Final version. On Dec. 4th, please submit via Quercus the final draft of your proposal or research paper.

You should submit your written responses via Quercus and Turnitin by midnight on the day that they are due. Turning in written assignments through Turnitin is voluntary. If you wish not to submit via Turnitin, please email me your written assignment instead and explain that you do not wish to use Turnitin.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0 %) **unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper**, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Test & Final Assessment. The midterm and final assessment will be composed of short-answer, essay-style questions. The final assessment will cover all material from readings, lecture recordings, and discussions.

Midterm. The midterm will cover material through Oct. 9th. You should take the midterm on Quercus by midnight on Oct. 16th. Please mark this date on your calendar, as alternative arrangements are available only on an exceptional basis. You will have two hours to complete the test. Although the test is open book, you won't have enough time during the test to look everything up. So, you'll want to have done the readings and studied beforehand.

Final. The final will cover material from Oct. 19th through the end of the course. The final will occur during the December Assessment Period. The schedule for the final assessment will be determined later. You will have two hours to complete the test. Although the test is open book, you won't have enough time during the test to look everything up. So, you'll want to have done the readings and studied beforehand.

Course Policies

Assistance and accessibility. Please let me know of any difficulties that you may be experiencing as soon as possible so that I can provide appropriate assistance and/or direct you to someone who can. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: www.accessibility.utoronto.ca.

Make-up test. If you will require a make-up due to illness, email the instructor prior to missing the test. You must also declare your “absence” on ACORN. You will need to provide appropriate supporting documentation for make-ups necessary due to other approved reasons—personal or family crisis, or accessibility-related issues. Supporting documentation for a personal or family crisis – have your college registrar email me directly (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). For documentation for accessibility-related issues, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>. Students will not be given a make-up test due to personal conflicts such as travel, weddings, employment, etc. You are expected to plan ahead. Mis-reading the syllabus is also not an approved reason for a make-up. You are expected to take responsibility for yourself. If you require a make-up for an approved reason, you must inform me as soon as possible and this timeframe should correspond to the timeframe indicated on your supporting documentation, otherwise the make-up may not be granted.

Late assignments. Similar to the policy on make-ups for tests, if you will be late submitting an assignment due to illness, email the instructor prior to the submission deadline. You must also declare your “absence” on ACORN. If you are going to be late with an assignment for another approved reason—personal or family crisis, have your college registrar email me directly. Please also inform me as soon as possible and this timeframe should correspond to the timeframe indicated on your supporting documentation, otherwise late penalties will apply.

If you are going to be late with an assignment for an unapproved reason, I do not want to be informed about your reason. Instead, please take responsibility for yourself by gracefully accepting the late penalty and being better prepared next time. However, please do inform me once the assignment is submitted. 5% of the grade will be deducted for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late. If the assignment is submitted 1 week (7 days, including weekends) late, the grade will be reduced by 35%. Assignments submitted more than 1 week (7 days, including weekends) late will not be graded and given a 0.

Remarking. Please submit a detailed memo in writing, which should specify the questions or portions of the assignment or test that you believe were marked incorrectly, and why you think the marking was incorrect. Please also submit the assignment or test along with the memo. We will not remark any work based on a student’s verbal request. The deadline for requesting a remarking is no sooner than 24 hours after receiving your grade and no later than 2 weeks after the graded work was made available for students to pick up. Late requests will not be accepted.

To request a re-grade, you must submit your written request explaining precisely why you believe your assignment should receive a different grade. You should highlight the specific portion of the assessment you felt was marked incorrectly and provide a rationale outlining

why. **During the re-grading process, grades can increase, decrease, or remain the same.** The teaching assistant will review the assessment that has been submitted for a re-grade. The grade after the re-grade will be the grade recorded for your assignment.

If you are not satisfied after the teaching assistant has reviewed your assessment, you should immediately (within 3 days of receiving it back from the TA) request that the instructor re-grade your assignment. Please note that any work re-graded by the instructor will involve the entire assessment, not simply the questions or portion you believe was scored improperly. As mentioned previously, your revised grade may increase, decrease, or stay the same.

Academic integrity. The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct seriously as do I. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your U of T degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement.

The [University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Please be advised that instructors are required to report any instance of suspected academic dishonesty. Offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment. This includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Working with someone else when the test is supposed to be individual work.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

Copyright. Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish lectures and course material to a website or sell them in any form without written permission

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

MODULE I: What Is Housing?

1 – Week of Sept. 7th – Welcome and introduction to the course

Reading:

- 1) Krieger, James, and Donna L. Higgins. 2002. Housing and Health: Time Again for Public Health Action. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5), 758-768.
- 2) Riis, Jacob. 1957. *How the Other Half Lives*. Pg. 5-10.

Optional reading:

- 1) Special issue in 1910 of the *American Journal of Sociology* on “Chicago Housing Conditions”.
- 2) Dunn, James, and Michael V. Hayes. 2000. “Social Inequality, Population Health, and Housing: A Study of Two Vancouver Neighborhoods.” *Social Science & Medicine* 51 (4): 563-587.

2 - Week of Sept. 14th – Housing as Market Commodity or Social Right, Part I

Reading:

- 1) Block, Fred. 2001. “Introduction” in Karl Polanyi 2001 [1944] *The Great Transformation*. Pg. xxiii (Polanyi’s Concept of Embeddedness) through/including pg. xxix (The Consequences of Impossibility).
- 2) Pattillo, Mary. 2013. “Housing: Commodity Versus Right.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 509-531.

Assignment:

- 1) Personal profile due by midnight Sept. 18th. See profile assignment instructions above in the syllabus. Submit via Quercus.

Optional reading:

- 1) Saval, Nikil. 2019. “The Plight of the Urban Planner.” *The New Yorker*, November 20, 2019.

3 - Week of Sept. 21th – Housing as Market Commodity or Social Right, Part II

Reading:

- 1) Van Dyk, Nick. 1995. "Financing Social Housing in Canada." *Housing Policy Debate*, 6 (4): 815-848.
- 2) Been, Vicki, Ingrid Gould Ellen, and Katherine O'Regan. 2019. "Supply skepticism: Housing supply and affordability." *Housing Policy Debate* 29 (1): 25-40.

Optional reading:

- 1) Dachis, Ben, Gilles Duranton, and Matthew A. Turner. 2011. "The Effects of Land Transfer Taxes on Real Estate Markets: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Toronto." *Journal of Economic Geography* 12 (2): 327-354.
- 2) Glaeser, Edward L., and Erzo FP Luttmer. 2003. "The Misallocation of Housing Under Rent Control." *American Economic Review*, 93 (4): 1027-1046.
- 3) Farha, Leilani. 2017. "Housing is a Human Right, Not A Commodity." *The Globe and Mail*, March 30, 2017.

4 - Week of Sept. 28th – Social Housing and Housing Tenure

Reading:

- 1) Dreier, Peter. 1982. "The Status of Tenants in the United States." *Social Problems* 30: 179–188. (Read up to the section on "zoning regulations".)
- 2) Suttor, Greg. 2016. *Still Renovating: A History of Canadian Social Housing Policy* (Vol. 6), McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP. Chapter 1 Introduction.

Available in electronic form through the U of T library.

MODULE II: Social Actors and Components of Housing Systems

5 - Week of Oct. 5th – Zoning and Developers

Reading:

- 1) Dreier, Peter. 1982. "The Status of Tenants in the United States." *Social Problems* 30: 188–189.
- 2) Rudel, Thomas K. 2009. "How Do People Transform Landscapes? A Sociological Perspective on Suburban Sprawl and Tropical Deforestation." *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (1): 129-154.

- 3) Urban Toronto, “Considering Inclusionary Zoning: Toronto's Giant Leap Toward Affordable Housing” <https://urbantoronto.ca/news/2019/08/considering-inclusionary-zoning-torontos-giant-leap-toward-affordable-housing>

Assignment:

- 1) Outline for policy proposal or research paper due by midnight Oct. 9th. See bare-bones examples for the outline under the assignments tab on Quercus. Submit via Quercus.

Optional reading:

- 1) Massey, Douglas S., Len Albright, Rebecca Casciano, Elizabeth Derickson, and David N. Kinsey. 2013. *Climbing Mount Laurel: The Struggle for Affordable Housing and Social Mobility in an American Suburb*. Princeton University Press.
- 2) Saval, Nikil. 2019. “The Plight of the Urban Planner.” *The New Yorker*, November 20, 2019.
- 3) Prevost, Lisa. 2019. “‘She Build’: Creating an All-Women Real Estate Development Team.” *New York Times*, November 12, 2019.

6 - Week of Oct. 12th – MIDTERM to be taken on Quercus by midnight on Oct. 16th

7 - Week of Oct. 19th – Regulation and Lenders

Reading:

- 1) Green, Richard, K., and Susan M. Wachter. 2005. “The American Mortgage in Historical and International Context.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19 (4): 93-114.
- 2) Immergluck Dan. 2009. “Core of the Crisis: Deregulation, the Global Savings Glut, and Financial Innovation in the Subprime Debacle.” *City Community*, 8: 341–45.

8 - Week of Oct. 26th – Housing Finance and Global Capital

Reading:

- 1) Gotham, Kevin Fox. 2006. “The Secondary Circuit of Capital Reconsidered: Globalization and the US Real Estate Sector.” *American journal of sociology* 112 (1): 231-275.

Assignment:

- 1) Draft of policy proposal or research paper due by midnight Oct. 30th. See instructions and

grading rubric on Quercus. Submit via Quercus.

Optional Reading:

- 1) Sassen, Saskia. 2008. "Mortgage Capital and its Particularities: A New Frontier for Global Finance." *Journal of International Affairs*: 187-212.

MODULE III: Broader Issues of Housing

9 - Week of Nov. 2nd – Housing and Economic Growth

Reading:

- 1) Reisenbichler, Alexander. 2019. "The Politics of Quantitative Easing and Housing Stimulus by the Federal Reserve and European Central Bank, 2008–2018." *West European Politics*: 1-21.

Assignment:

- 1) Peer review of partner's paper due by midnight Nov. 6th. Get peer review questions to answer on Quercus. Submit via Quercus.

Week of Nov. 9th – READING WEEK

10 - Week of Nov. 16th – Housing and Social Policy

Reading:

- 1) Quinn, Sarah. 2020. On the Sociological Approach to Public Finance. *economic sociology_european electronic newsletter*. Vol 21, Mar. 2020.
- 2) Conley, Dalton, and Brian Gifford. 2006. "Home Ownership, Social Insurance, and the Welfare State." *Sociological forum*. Vol. 21. No. 1.

Optional Reading:

- 1) Schwartz, Herman M., and Leonard Seabrooke. 2009. "Varieties of Residential Capitalism in the International Political Economy: Old Welfare States and the New Politics of Housing." *The politics of housing booms and busts*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. 1-27.

- 2) Quinn, Sarah. 2019. *American Bonds: How Credit Markets Shaped a Nation*. Princeton University Press.

11 - Week of Nov. 23rd – Housing and Inequality Part I

Reading:

- 1) Adkins, Lisa, Melinda Cooper, and Martijn Konings. 2019. “Class in the 21st Century: Asset Inflation and the New Logic of Inequality.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*: 0308518X19873673.

Assignment:

- 1) Participation self-assessment essay due by midnight on Nov. 27th. See instructions in syllabus above. Submit via Quercus.

Optional reading:

- 1) Kahrl, Andrew. 2019. “Black People’s Land Was Stolen.” *New York Times*, June 20, 2019.
- 2) Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2019. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. UNC Press Books.
- 3) Cohen, Daniel Aldana. 2019. “A Green New Deal for Housing.” *Jacobin*, February 8, 2019.
- 4) Saval, Nikil. 2019. “The Plight of the Urban Planner.” *The New Yorker*, November 20, 2019.

12 - Week of Nov. 30th – Housing and Inequality Part II

Reading:

- 1) Christophers, Brett. 2018. “Intergenerational Inequality? Labour, Capital, and Housing Through the Ages.” *Antipode* 50 (1): 101-121.

Assignment:

- 1) Policy proposal or research paper due by midnight on Dec. 4th. See instructions on Quercus. Submit via Quercus.

Final Assessment – to be taken on Quercus during the End of Term Assessment Period, Dec. 11-22, 2020.