Overview: This course, taught jointly by faculty members of the School of Law and the Wagner School, offers students an opportunity to explore the theoretical underpinnings of arguments being advanced in current debates about such critical urban policy issues as the causes and consequences of the housing crisis; the impacts of various efforts to increase the production of affordable housing; and the successes and failures of efforts to improve and equalize the quality of education. The course is not taught in a lecture format. Rather, the colloquium focuses on discussions of academic works in progress by scholars from around the country, working in such disciplines as planning, law, public policy, and economics. In colloquium weeks, students participate in an in-depth discussion of the paper with the author, and academics and policy experts from the New York area. Students submit a short paper critiquing the work in progress, and have the opportunity to meet informally (usually over dinner) with a few authors to discuss the topic further. In non-speaker weeks, students meet with the instructors to discuss supplemental readings and learn the background necessary to understand upcoming papers.

This semester the outside speakers will focus on one of three themes: homelessness prevention and housing for vulnerable populations; land use regulation; and the aftermath of the housing crisis. Each theme begins with a set of background readings, and a class dedicated to the topic.

Prerequisites for Wagner students: CORE-GP.1011; PADM-GP.2140 or URPL-GP.2608

Meeting Times and Places:

The Colloquium will meet on Wednesdays from 2:00 - 3:50 p.m. in Room 202 of Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Square South. Note: the course follows the Law School calendar, with the first class held on January 23rd, and the last class on May 1st. Wagner students who will not be back on campus may be excused from the first class meeting, but it would be preferable for all students to attend.

Schedule of the Course:
(Sessions highlighted in bold are open to the public)

Class 1 - January 23rd Introduction to Colloquium; background lecture on basics of
research design and quantitative methods

Readings:

Howell E. Jackson et al., Chapters 8 (Fundamentals of Statistical Analysis) and 9 (Multivariate Statistics), in *Analytical Methods for Lawyers*, 2003 (a not very good copy is available on Blackboard)

Been, Critiquing Empirical Work (available on Blackboard)

Ellen, Lens and O'Regan, American Murder Mystery Revisited: Do Housing Voucher Households Cause Crime? (available on Blackboard)

Optional background readings:

Hanna Rosin, American Murder Mystery, The Atlantic (July/August 2008)


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**Weeks 2-5**

**Homelessness Prevention and Housing for Vulnerable Populations**

**Class 2 - January 30th**

Background on Homelessness Prevention and Housing for Vulnerable Populations

Readings:


**Class 3 - February 6th**

**Brendan O’Flaherty**, Professor of Economics, Columbia University  
**Paper:** Does Homelessness Prevention Work? Evidence from New York City’s HomeBase Program (with Peter Messeri and Sarena Goodman)

**Class 4 – February 13th**

**Matthew Desmond**, Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows & Assistant Professor of Sociology and of Social Studies, Harvard University  
**Paper:** Mechanisms of Neighborhood Selection: Why and How Poor Families Move

**Class 5 - February 20th**

**Peter Rosenblatt**, Assistant Professor, Sociology, Loyola University Chicago  
**Paper:** Why Poor People Move (and Where They Go): Residential Mobility, Selection, and Stratification (with Stephanie DeLuca and Holly Wood)

**Weeks 6 – 10**

**Land Use Regulation**

**Class 6 - February 27th**

Background on the Land Use Regulatory System

Readings: TBA

**Class 7 – March 6th**

**TBA:**

**Paper:** TBA

**Class 8 – March 13th**

**Nestor Davidson,**  
**Paper:** Tieboutian Regionalism (with Sheila Foster)

No class March 20th – Spring Break

**Class 9- March 27th**

**Stephanie Stern**, Irving S. Ribicoff Visiting Associate Professor
of Law, Yale Law School; Associate Professor of Law and Norman and Edna Freehling Scholar at the Illinois Institute of Technology Chicago-Kent College of Law

**Paper:** *The Dark Side of Town: The Social Capital Revolution in Residential Property Law*

**Weeks 11-14**

**Aftermath of the Housing Crisis**

Class 10 – April 3rd

Background on the Housing Crisis

Readings: TBA

Class 11 April 10th

No Class – Attend “Big Ideas for the Big Apple: Mayoral Forum on Affordable Housing” presented by NYU Furman Center's Moelis Institute for Affordable Housing Policy

Class 12 – April 17th

**J. Michael Collins,** Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin at Madison and faculty director of the Center for Financial Security

**Paper:**

Class 13 – April 24th

**Stephanie Moulton,** Assistant Professor, John Glenn School of Public Affairs, Ohio State University

**Paper:** *A Field Experiment of Post-Purchase Monitoring on the Financial Outcomes of First-Time Homebuyers* (with Caezilia Loibl, J. Michael Collins and Anya Samak)

Class 14 – May 1st

**Kristopher S. Gerardi,** Financial Economist and Associate Policy Adviser, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

**Paper:** *Foreclosure Externalities: Some New Evidence* (with Eric Rosenblatt, Paul S. Willen and Vincent W. Yao)

**Course materials:**

The course materials will be posted on Blackboard (for Law Students) or NYU Classes (for Wagner Students) no less than a week before class). Required readings include the papers authored by our speakers and background readings assigned for each of the preview sessions.
Assignments:

The colloquium will consider ten papers, listed above in the course schedule. For each paper, students must submit two questions to address to the author about the paper. Those questions must be e-mailed to Urban@exchange.law.nyu.edu no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Sunday before the colloquium session attended by the author (in order to give the faculty time to suggest how you might sharpen the questions). Please use the following form in subject line: Student Last Name_Questions for [Last Name of First Listed Author of Paper. For example: Been_Questions for Ellen

Students also are required to submit a critique of five of the papers. The critiques must be e-mailed to the faculty by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday following the presentation. Each critique should be between 800 and 1000 words. The critique should assume that the reader is familiar with the paper, and should not summarize its contents. Instead, the critique should analyze such questions as:

Is the question the study seeks to answer, or the argument the analysis advances, clear, precise, and important?
What assumptions underlie the methodology or argument, and are they justified?
How, if at all, would relaxing assumptions underlying the argument change the result?
Are there any flaws in the study's methodology?
Are there any flaws in the argument's logic?
Does the methodology actually test the hypothesis?
What questions did the author ignore that should have been considered?
Are there alternative explanations for the study's findings?
Are there features of the data that might limit the findings?

These questions are suggestions only, and are not meant to be exhaustive. A critique should tackle just one or a few of the questions, not all of them. Again, please email the critiques to Urban@exchange.law.nyu.edu. Attach a word file to the email with your critique, and name the file as follows: Student Last Name_Critique #[(1-5)] of [Last Name of First Listed Author of paper being critiqued. For example: Ellen_Critique #1 of Been.

Course requirements:

1. Class Participation: Students will be expected to attend and participate in each class and to submit questions in advance of each session with an outside speaker. Class participation will count for 25% of a student's grade.

2. Papers: The five critiques will collectively count for 75% of a student's grade.
Professors’ Contact Information:

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