



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

URPL-GP 4638.002

Housing and Community Development Policy II Spring 2022

[Updated: Feb 11]

Instructor Information

- Ken Zimmerman
- Email: khz220@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: [FILL IN] at Ken's Furman Center office, Wilf Building, 2nd Floor (139 MacDougal Street) (other hours can be arranged by appointment)

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays 4:55 pm – 6:35 pm, March 22 through May 3, 2022.
- Class Location: FILL IN

Course Prerequisites

- CORE-GP.1022 or URPL-GP.2660, URPL-GP 4636 [recommended?]

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This second course in the Housing and Community Development sequence expands upon the foundational understanding of housing and community development policy by focusing on how key policy drivers, the current political and social moment, and core stakeholders are likely to create and/or limit opportunities moving forward. The course will examine the ways that policy does and does not change, primarily by focusing on selected high-profile issues such as pandemic responses related to housing, gentrification, efforts to address racial inequality, and the ongoing challenges of homelessness. It will also use the dynamics related to political movements and the tensions between competing ideologies at the national and state level to better understand the dynamics at play. A key goal for the course is to further students' policy

development understanding and skills through examination of the key political factors that influence the development of housing and community development policy and the leverage points and forms of intervention that public and private sector actors use.

The course is designed to accomplish the following goals:

- Further understanding of housing and community development policy such that students can identify the core issues raised by major proposals and frame the appropriate questions and additional information needed to evaluate them;
- Survey and explore the key political factors and other influences that shape the development of housing and community development program and policy, with a focus on current opportunities and challenges and what affects the potential for change;
- Deepen understanding of and appreciation for key leverage points and forms of intervention with their respective strengths and weaknesses that public and private actors can use to further desired social aims.
- Foster creativity and analysis in considering novel approaches to remake housing and community development policy.
- Strengthen skills to (1) quickly analyze potential proposals and present them succinctly but with nuance in writing, (2) critically assess literature and other information in developing or responding to policy proposals, and (3) advance ability to use analytic frameworks and identify potential options and challenges in shifting policy and practice settings, including by engaging with adverse perspectives.

Learning Assessment Table

Graded Assignment	Course Objective Covered
Short Analytic Papers (2)	#1, #2, #3, #5
Final Paper	#1, #3, #4, #5

Required Readings:

- Most readings will be linked on the syllabus, or posted in the Resources folder of NYU Classes. There are two books also used in the first section of the course which will be used for more than one class and therefore worth accessing regularly:
 - Schwartz, Alex F., third edition 2015. [Housing Policy in the United States](#), New York: Routledge. Available for free electronically through NYU Library website. Page references are for the 3rd edition (2015). Bobst will have one physical copy of the new edition on reserve (though it may take several more weeks). The 2014 edition is available for free electronically through NYU's Library website for students not wishing to purchase the updated text. Updated 2021 Version here: [Housing Policy in the United States](#)

- [Dream Revisited](#), edited by Ingrid Ellen and Justin Steil. Available for free electronically through NYU Library website. Assessment Assignments and Evaluation

Assessment

- Class participation (including breakout room leadership) = 25%
- Two Analytic Papers = 35%
- Final Paper, 40%

CLASS BY CLASS Course Overview

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY: WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO SOLVE, HOW ARE WE DOING SO, AND WHAT DYNAMICS SHAPE ITS PROSPECTS

In the evolution of housing and community development policy, multiple ambitions and challenges have been stated, retracted, reconsidered, and amplified over time. This class will introduce different interpretive frameworks to assess the potential and constraints regarding change in housing and community development policy, including core tensions that have and continue to challenge constituents, policy makers and the public. In doing so, we will aim to clarify how we think about policy change in this field, both placing housing and community development policy in a larger political and historical framework and focusing upon the analytics that enable assessment of the potential and constraints in a particular situation.

And then, in the second part of class, we will seek to deploy these analytic frameworks the context of a bold and controversial housing policy proposal to address homelessness currently being put forward by the Mayor of Sacramento. This proposal seeks to revisit the responsibilities and expectations of both government in terms of providing housing and individuals in terms of accepting housing.

Throughout, we will ask:

- How do the ways in which the purposes of housing policy are defined affect the ways in which we assess the value (costs and benefits) of particular benefits?
- Recognizing the way in which race has been fundamental to the construction of modern housing policy, what policy and analytic frameworks might be most helpful in advancing racial equity in housing and community development policy moving forward?
- In the context of pressing and politically volatile hot-button housing issues, how can and should these analytic approaches advance development of a specific (and controversial) housing proposal?

Class Two (March 29)

[Note: Assignment One due Monday March 28 by 5pm]

MAKING CHANGE IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY: LESSONS FROM HISTORY

To deepen our perspective on how change in housing and community development occurs, we will examine some of the constraints and dynamics that historically have influenced the potential for significant change and then look at several historical examples of significant efforts to promote change in housing and community development policy.

We will start by examining key aspects of the environment in which these proposals arise, examining issues related to budgets, politics, and narrative. And we will then delve into the historical examples both to understand their purposes and how they might be assessed and their effects anticipated.

In terms of the historical examples, these have sometimes been driven by recognition of failures or potential for improvement, sometimes by recognition of new dynamics that require response, and sometimes because new energy or leadership enters that tries new things. In examining several different situations, we will focus on the factors that influenced their success or failure, how they shaped future efforts in policy or program, and any lessons that might be drawn.

Class Three (April 5)

Note: student assignments for expanded participation roles in one of the remaining classes will be distributed in advance of Class Three (see assignments for more information).

HOUSING POLICY IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC AND RACIAL RECKONING: POLICY-MAKING IN A TIME OF CRISIS AND ITS ASSOCIATED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The past two years have unsettled many policy spheres, very much including housing and community development. As the nation has grappled with the economic fall-out of the pandemic and the racial reckoning spurred by George Floyd's killing, there have been unprecedented housing-related interventions amidst significant shifts in settlement patterns that may or may not signal longer-term trends. The interventions include the virtually unprecedented eviction moratorium and related supports for tenants, even as the suggestion of an extensive urban exodus has upended at least temporarily some of the dynamics of urban housing markets.

In this class, we will grapple with what it means to develop and advance housing policy in a time of national crisis and uncertainty. Using the tenant support interventions as a notable example, we will examine what short-term relief programs should and should not aspire to, and the program dynamics that are relied upon to bring such an effort to scale in a short time frame.

At the same time, we will also extend our discussion into how to advance housing policy at a time when it is difficult to assess the longevity of some of the notable trends, such as preliminary evidence of an urban out-migration (aka exodus). In certain respects, the pandemic has

upended some of the most significant areas of housing policy focus of recent years, and raised questions about how much to continue to prioritize such as issues as responding to gentrification.

In engaging around both areas, we will look especially at how issues of race and poverty are engaged or not engaged. Building on prior conversations about the significance of place and opportunities to access opportunity-rich neighborhoods, we will examine how these responses engage racial disparities.

Other key questions include:

- How can and should one attempt to balance short and long-term policy consequences in an emergency situation, including using novel approaches as a basis for longer-term shifts in policy and practice?
- As reflected in the effort to support tenants in the post-pandemic response, how can and should implementation dynamics be taken into account, particularly between federal, state and local governments and between the public and private sectors?
- What is the appropriate way to proceed with large-scale housing policy questions in the face of such uncertainty, such as the uncertainty about the long-term migration dynamics triggered by the pandemic? What frameworks should be deployed and what expectation of evidence base should attach to such decisions?

In the latter part of class, we will be joined by Dorian Warren of the Center for Community Change, one of the preeminent community organizing groups in the nation with a long-time focus on community development and housing.

Guest Speaker: [Dorian Warren](#), Executive Director, Community Change

CLASS FOUR: THE POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF USING A HEALTH LENS TO ADVANCE HOUSING POLICY (April 12)

Note: this class will include short explanation of final paper topic options with topic to be finalized by Class 6.

In considering potential ways to advance housing policy, one area of increasing attention is the intersection between housing and related social policy domains, particularly health and healthcare. From a family's perspective, this reflects the self-evident proposition that quality housing in a neighborhood of opportunity advances multiple interests, including furthering access to employment and education and addressing challenges that negatively affect one's health.

In this class, we will dig more deeply into the policy dynamics that arise from using a health lens and engaging health-oriented actors to advance housing policy and practice. We will begin by examining some of the evidentiary base for this interconnection and framework offered by the rubric of "the social determinants of health." We will then dig into the policy implications of this

connection, noting some of the examples in how the health lens has been used and ways in which health resources (including Medicaid) and constituencies (health insurers) have begun to attend to housing policy and practice.

In doing so, we will explore several core questions:

- What are the advantages of a health-oriented lens to housing policy, including the significance of new resources, constituencies, narratives, and potential program opportunities?
- What are the disadvantages and constraints of such a frame, including the ways in which health sector priorities potentially distort housing policy objectives and the challenges to operationalize a health lens in a housing context?
- How some of the most visible and pressing questions and challenges regarding the health connection to housing might be addressed?

Guest Speaker: [Deb DeSantis](#), CEO and President, Corporation for Supportive Housing

Class Five: HOMELESSNESS AND THE CHALLENGE OF POLICY COMPLEXITY AND PUBLIC FRUSTRATION (April 19)

The challenge of homelessness is frequently seen as the most obvious example of the failure of U.S. housing policy. In this class, we will delve into the issue by attending to the programmatic, political, and institutional dynamics that are at play in considering how the nation has and should respond to the challenges posed by the reality of 600,000 persons remaining unsheltered at any given time.

To do so, we will start by considering what is meant when policy-makers attempt to address “homelessness,” including who the evidence says about who is unsheltered and why, including how one defines those who are homeless affects the potential solutions sets. We will then dig into policy and program efforts that attempt to address “homelessness” by looking in greater depth at specific efforts in California (especially Los Angeles) and at the federal level. In doing so, we will consider not only specific policy approaches but the significance of political forces and narrative frames that implicate what is pursued. In addition, we will look in more detail at the concept and application of Housing First to understand how it has advanced – and failed to advance-- policy and practice.

Core questions we will engage include:

- To what extent can and should housing policy be viewed as the central tenet in addressing U.S. homelessness?
- In a multi-dimensional challenge such as homelessness, what mechanisms and institutional reforms might be pursued to improve interventions?
- How can and should political pressures be integrated to adopting effective and just policy responses, especially given the long-term and structural challenges that exist?

Class Six (April 26)

Note final paper topic must be approved by this class.

FAIR HOUSING, LOCAL REGULATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF PLACE, PEOPLE, AND AFFORDABILITY

The question of local regulation as a prime driver of housing unaffordability has become increasingly prominent, with recent Administrations of both parties as well as numerous state and local efforts focusing upon this dynamic as a key leverage point for change. Noting this as a prime example of how the use and misuse of policy and issue framing, we will first focus broadly on the dynamics that have led to over-regulation and then delve more deeply into Mt. Laurel—the legal framework created by the New Jersey Supreme Court to address the state’s rampant exclusionary zoning. In this part of class, we will be joined by guest speaker Adam Gordon who leads the Fair Share Housing Center and is an expert, as well as participants, in what is arguably the most sustained effort to rebalance state and local roles and regulation in expanding housing availability.

In this class, questions to be explored include:

- What are the different sources and purposes of housing regulation that are most responsible for increased housing costs, and how do we differentiate between socially valuable local regulation and excessive (and unnecessary) regulation)?
- In considering this question how do we assess the importance and application of broader social policy purposes, such as racial equity and climate change, in revisiting the question of appropriate regulation?
- In examining efforts to revisit local regulation, what role can and should litigation-based approaches play (as under the Mt. Laurel doctrine and the federal Fair Housing Act), including the most valuable and challenging aspects of using such tools?

Guest Speaker: [Adam Gordon](#), Executive Director, Fair Share Housing Center

Class Seven (May 3)

Note: Final papers due no later than 5pm on Monday, May 11

FAIR HOUSING’S AFFIRMATIVE OBLIGATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERILS AND POTENTIAL OF MAKING CHANGE ON THE HARD STUFF (Kathy O’Regan to join)

In this class, we will focus on the challenges and potential of building equity specific agendas into housing policy, using as a case study the specific housing and community development equity mandate known as Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). Looking closely at the approach adopted by the Obama Administration and the response of the Trump Administration, we will discuss how to balance advancing bold social policy goals with the potential of backlash

and political trade-offs. In other words, we'll examine the relationship between political will and policy potential, and consider alternatives to advance reform in such areas.

In particular, we'll engage around the following questions:

- To what extent is the use of process-related reforms an effective mechanism for advancing equity related objectives, especially given the decentralized nature of housing policy and multiple stakeholders involved?
- Looking at what happened with AFFH, what does this suggest about the approach taken and, more significantly, what might be done in the future?
- Drawing on these lessons, what might this suggest about ensuring equity issues are made fundamental to ongoing pandemic-related responses in housing and community development domains?

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU's Wellness Exchange

[NYU's Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.